

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Jus & Cher <jusncher@yahoo.com> on behalf of Jus & Cher  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:12 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Shortage differentials

I have been a special education teacher for the past 8 years in Hawaii. Over the course of the 8 years, I have spent money out of my own pocket due to small budgets. As everyone knows, this state has a very hard time securing and retaining quality teachers due to the high cost of living and inadequate pay. We have many teachers in special education positions who are not able to plan their own lessons or write IEPs for their students. This leaves the qualified special education teachers to pick up the slack. When schools closed in March, we were thrown into uncharted waters. I worked many hours to make sure my students and their families were okay and had access to the curriculum. Each student has his/her own set of goals and objectives so a lot of planning has to go into each and every student. I spent close to 12 hours a day working while I had my own two little boys here struggling with their online learning. Now that we are being told to social distance due to COVID, I found out that I am sharing a room with 2 other adults while on campus, one of whom will have access to many students throughout the school day. This increases the risk of getting COVID and the chance of spreading COVID increases as well. We are currently short a special education teacher so I'm being given a heavy workload this school year. To even consider taking the differential special education teachers deserve is absolutely appalling. If anything, you should be giving all teachers hazard pay, not talking about taking pay away! Special education teachers have been disrespected for far too long. We need this differential to retain the quality teachers we have. Our keiki deserve better.

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Lana Haleamau <haleamaulana@hawaii.rr.com> on behalf of Lana Haleamau  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:12 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

To the Board of Education,

My name is Lana-Lynn Haleamau. I am a teacher at Hilo Union School on Hawai'i island. 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 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. I am asking that the Department of Education and Board of Education delay the opening of school for students.

Hair Salons and all businesses in the real world could not reopen until they prepared their area of work with the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for all employees and the general public. There is plexi glass at the stores where cashiers are stationed, plexi glass at the banks where tellers are stationed. There is tape or other markings on the ground at all businesses in the community. Vinyl shower curtain liners are also being used as PPE to cover chairs at the hair salon. It is also used to cover shelves which covers the materials on the shelves.

Why are teachers being expected to report to work without having had the time to prepare our classrooms before students arrive on August 4? Teachers only have 2 (two) days out of the 4 (four) at the start of the school year that are for teacher related business. How can teachers plan for instruction and prepare our classrooms in 2 (two) days?

In speaking with my administrators in a phone conference, I've asked what PPE's we will be provided with. My principal stated that he has purchased cloth face masks from Creative Arts for students that don't have any facemasks. He also said he wants students to leave those "borrowed" school property cloth facemasks in class, where it will be disinfected by the custodians. I am not sure what kind of disinfecting this is, but it didn't sound like washing it. It sounded like it was going to be sprayed with some type of disinfectant. Is that safe? I thought cloth facemasks were supposed to be washed daily. The principal also stated that students that "borrowed" a school cloth facemask would go home with a coffee filter as a mask. Is this safe? The principal stated that there wasn't enough disposable facemasks available for all students daily.

When I asked about face shields and if teachers would be provided with a face shield, the vice principal stated that they didn't have enough for all teachers. When I asked about tape to mark the floor, administration asked what was that for. I can't believe that they don't know that markings with tape are necessary for traffic flow of the students in the classroom. In the real world, businesses, stores, banks all have some type of tape or markings to indicate traffic flow. I asked if they had a supply of tape for teachers available so that we could mark the floor with floor markings. The principal stated that the SASA is going to give us an open Purchase Order for Office Sept to purchase whatever we need. Why doesn't the school have the basic PPE's necessary. Why do teachers need to go out and use our classroom monies to purchase tape for COVID-19 safety. Classroom monies should be used for education purposes, not COVID safety preparation.

I also asked about clear vinyl shower curtains, plastic, or plexi glass. Administration asked what was the purpose of the vinyl shower curtains or plastic. I stated to cover the bookshelves so there was no contamination of books that was on the bookshelves. The principal stated that vinyl or plastic is not a PPE. So, how can we protect our books on the

bookshelves so that students don't touch the books? Why do businesses, like hair salons cover their shelves with supplies? The principal stated that they did not purchase plexi glass either.

Christina Kishimoto stated in a press conference that teachers are being trained in distance learning during the summer. That's a false statement. There has been only one email I received from my principal about 2 weeks ago that include 3 (three) Tech Tools for Online Learning sessions that was offered by HIDOE. These sessions are optional and are during teachers summer vacation. We are not getting any stipend or pay for participating in the online sessions. I watched 2 (two) out of the 3 (three) online training sessions on my own time. However, I am still confused and need a lot more help in understanding the depth of certain online platforms that was presented. So, how and who is responsible to help teachers like me that needs more training? Teachers need to get paid for their personal time for these types of training.

When I asked our principal if our grade level could meet virtually and get a stipend to plan for the school year, he did not give a direct answer. However, he did say that the planning time would come during the first days during opening of the school and during the half work days. This isn't enough time to plan for instruction 2 (two) days prior to students reporting to school and during the days when they arrive.

I kindly ask that you consider delaying the start of school for students so that teachers can prepare our classrooms for the health and safety for all involved. The extra time would also allow administration to secure the necessary PPE's that is needed for everyone's safety. In addition, the extra time would allow teachers to adequately plan our curriculum with the learning model that was selected. Teachers could collaboratively work together virtually for the well being of the students for prepare the curriculum for the needs of the students. The extra time would allow administration to provide teachers with the proper health and safety training and technology training that is needed for us to carry out our jobs.

Teachers should be given the respect that they deserve!

Aloha,  
Lana-Lynn Haleamau

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** John Van Ornum <johnster57@gmail.com> on behalf of John Van Ornum  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:13 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

I, John Van Ornum EdD (teacher at Molokai High School) am providing written testimony on action item “ 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 to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

The schools are not ready to receive students in classrooms or in an online environment, August 4, 2020. There are many unanswered questions and protocols are not in place. These are unprecedented times. Students, teachers, and administrators need firm guidelines to effectively carry out their duties during this pandemic. School and personnel safety are in question, not to mention the safety of our students and communities.

John Van Ornum EdD  
Molokai High School  
[1003689@k12.hi.us](mailto:1003689@k12.hi.us)



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Kealohi Foster <kealohifoster@gmail.com> on behalf of Kealohi Foster  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:14 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

To Whom it May Concern,

Aloha, my name is Ke‘alohi Foster. I am a Hawaiian Language Immersion Kindergarten Teacher at Ke Kula Kaiapuni ‘o Waiau. I am writing to testify and reject the proposal 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 strongly believe that we need to continue to receive the differential pay as we will continue to provide additional resources to the students as we tackle the idea of teaching in the classroom and providing distance learning to some students as well. We kaiapuni teachers have no easy way out - we are forced to either create or translate things that can be used for our students. We will be spending even more time making sure that all of our resources are accessible and make sure that the balance between students in the classroom and students outside of the classroom are guaranteed the education they are needed.

Please reconsider this proposal. We will need all the help that we can get.

--

Na‘u nō me ke aloha,  
*Ke‘alohi Foster*

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Belladonna Magique <belladonna.magique@gmail.com> on behalf of Belladonna Magique  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:15 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Delay the opening of schools

I am the mother of a 5th grader & am concerned that the opening of schools is being carried out too hastily. There has not been enough preparing for our children to be placed in the classrooms. Not enough guidance for teachers or parents. My household is a high risk one & I do not feel comfortable sending my daughter into a situation that hasn't been thoroughly thought out. The opening seems rushed. This is a pandemic, nothing should be rushed. Until the HSTA feels confident in returning to schools it is best that they remain closed. I put my trust in the teachers because it is also their lives directly on the line along with my child's.

Sincerely,

A. Fernandez



Virus-free. [www.avast.com](http://www.avast.com)

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Alleka Kim <alleka.kim@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Alleka Kim  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:15 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Dear whom may it concern,

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 Alleka Kim. I am a second grade teacher at Alvah Scott Elementary School. As an educator, I am still confused and unclear on the necessary measures and steps needed to reduce the risk of Covid spread in our schools.

First, the written guidance on the reopening of school buildings has not been provided from the State of Hawaii's Department of Health. Earlier in July, HDOE agreed to our MOU, but failed to meet with this agreement. Without this information, it will leave many teachers, parents and administration in confusion in how to move forward in this process.

Secondly, I can assume that many parents will seek a 100-percent distance learning option for their children to provide safety measures for their children. As a classroom teacher, I can't imagine having to provide additional instructions on top of teaching in the classroom five days a week. When and how do you expect the classroom teachers to provide a different mode of instructions to teach students 100-percent online? Our work hours are not enough to meet the needs of those families who are wanting this option. What options do you have in planning for these families to provide equity?

Thirdly, addressing the protocols to the students and adults, on a school campus if anyone tests positive for COVID-19 is essential. Not having a plan to situate this problem will lead to many concerns among the parents and teachers for their health safety. Without this in planned, I do not feel safe to return to the school if there's someone who has been tested positive on our school campus.

Lastly, I would like to be trained to teach 100-percent online to be prepared if our school needs to shut down due to a COVID-19 infection. I am open and willing to learn about the new options in teaching the students. I have taught four weeks of summer school 100-percent online this summer. I believe that with the proper assistance in training the teachers 100-percent online, teaching will be possible. However, without any guidance and assistance, it will most definitely be impossible for those who have not been trained to use technology as a method of teaching.

As an educator, I have always been standing up for our keiki's learning environment and safety. It is the reason that I am a teacher today. I feel that it is important for the decision makers to take in

considerations with precautions in this pandemic. We must have the guidance and protocol planned in place before we return to the school campus. Please consider delaying the opening of the school until these questions have been answered.

Sincerely,

Alleka Kim

Alvah Scott Elementary  
Grade 2 Teacher  
Ms. Kim

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Courtney Lau <courtneylau@waikikischool.org> on behalf of Courtney Lau  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:15 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** testimony

Aloha,

I am submitting my testimony to postpone the start of school. The guidelines are too general and teachers have not received adequate training yet. The guidelines are impossible to adhere to without proper funds and support. There is not enough staffing or adequate room on campus to safely return at this time.

Mahalo,

--

Courtney Lau

**Waikiki School-Grade 3**

(808) 971-6900

[courtneylau@waikikischool.org](mailto:courtneylau@waikikischool.org)

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Mr. Kapuniai <kkapuniai@phes.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Mr. Kapuniai  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:16 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Differential

Our pay should not be cut for one because we earned that. Secondly students should not be returning to school yet because it is totally unsafe. What's the difference between a school full of students as opposed to a sports stadium filled? Staff and students will be at risk. Teachers normally get sick from being around children so much. With this epidemic happening, we are asking to promote the spread of covid-19. From students at schools, to their afternoon/morning hangouts, on the school bus, A+, them on their weekends and finally meeting back up at school. It does NOT FEEL SAFE UNTIL THINGS CAN BE ANSWERED.

MAHALO

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Tiffanie Spencer-Yuen <tiffaniekspencer@icloud.com> on behalf of Tiffanie Spencer-Yuen  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:16 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Aloha,

My name is Tiffanie Spencer-Yuen and I am a teacher at Makaha Elementary and I also have children attending Ho'okele Elementary 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 do not believe schools are ready to be opened. First, we still have unanswered questions as to what will happen if a student, faculty member, or family members contract the virus. What happens? And I don't think we teachers have had enough of opportunity to be fully equipped with the tools we need to do distance learning. My school has agreed to go with Model C. So there will be some distance learning happening. But I feel I am not fully prepared to do so because of the lack of training. I know this is new for everyone. So if we could take some time for the schools teachers and staff to have more planning time to make this year run as smoothly as possible!

Mahalo,  
Tiffanie Spencer-Yuen  
Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Henry <wonghenry61@yahoo.com> on behalf of Henry  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:17 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 Henry Wong and I work at Alvah Scott Elementary school. I have been a Special Educations teacher for over twelve years. There are certain times and experiences when I do not feel safe working with special needs children due to their violent behaviors. I have been cursed at, spat at, thrown at, rushed at, kicked, hit, threatened, and bitten, but I was still able to overcome such experiences. However, covid 19 is something that I do NOT want to engage in with students. This is NOT safe and we are NOT prepared. This is a matter of life and death. Please postpone opening of schools.

Respectfully,  
Henry Wong

Sent from my iPhone



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** enosahulani@yahoo.com  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:17 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Do not cut differential pay

Aloha Board of Education,

My name is V. Ahulani Wright and I am a Hawaiian Language immersion teacher at Ke Kula Kaiapuni o Hau'ula. Since 2007, I have worked endless hours created curriculum in the Hawaiian language so that I students can be educated in the language of their ancestors and also in the official language of the state. When COVID-19 made it necessary for all of us to teach virtually, Hawaiian immersion teachers once again took it upon ourselves to create online curriculum for our students as there are NO ONLINE TOOLS in the Hawaiian language for our students to learn from. We do not complain. We take on the challenge of creating curriculum so that our students will have valuable learning tools and as much opportunity to learn as their English learning counterparts. Hawaiian language immersion teachers are extremely hard workers, curriculum developers, and very hard to come by! Every year we are looking for more Hawaiian language speakers who will take on such a daunting task.

The pay differential will help to attract more Hawaiian speakers to this profession, and ensure that they stay and become licensed! We need licensed Hawaiian language immersion teachers to join and to continue! More and more qualified Kaiapuni teachers are leaving the DOE for more pay and less unpaid working hours, as much if not all of the curriculum development is created during personal time.

Our Hawaiian immersion students deserve teachers who will stay and develop their craft. Please help this become a reality by NOT cutting shortage differentials for Kaiapuni teachers.

Me ka mana'olana,  
V. Ahulani Wright

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Maria Tejada <afatasi17@gmail.com> on behalf of Maria Tejada  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:18 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Push back start date of school

Aloha BOE of state of Hawaii,

As a teacher and mother of 5 children I have to demand that school's not open on August 4th for face to face classes. Health and safety is paramount in the school setting. The state of Hawaii is experiencing a surge in COVID19 cases and there is currently community spread in nearly every community on Oahu. Opening the schools will most definitely exacerbate the spread of the virus. The state of Hawaii is ranked almost last in hospital capacity and preparation for a pandemic. The plan to open schools is a plan that will fail as the virus is airborne and highly contagious. The effectiveness of masks is based on the proper use of masks which is impossible to control with each individual adult and student. The stress and enormity of the situation is unhealthy for teachers and students. The return to school will not restore normalcy or socialization under the circumstances. Schools should start with distance learning until the situation is safe or school's are truly prepared for welcoming staff and students back. This is a frightening situation for us all and there are no good answers as distance learning has its downside. However it is 2020 and technology is here as it has been utilized even before the pandemic in every classroom. Please delay until it is safe not just to try it out and see if it works and no one dies. Also, there is hope on the horizon in the form of treatments and vaccines- let's be patient so we can move forward without regrets.

My plan is to sign up for distance learning and if I am unable to work remotely I will request a leave of absence.

Mahalo,

Maria Tejada

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Eva Anderson <evasartnow@gmail.com> on behalf of Eva Anderson  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:19 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Please delay student return to school campuses!

Aloha,

Please delay the return of students to school campuses until we teachers have figured out how to handle it!

1. Four days of prep and training ARE NOT SUFFICIENT, especially considering new teachers, and teachers with new lines to teach. We need more time for administrations to come up with written procedures and guidelines for a safe reopening.
2. The schools have not had time to comply with the MOU by distributing written guidelines for daily health screening of everyone who comes on campus.
3. The concept of "ohana bubbles" doesn't match with community realities, as these bubbles intersect in and out of school.
4. There is not sufficient protection for teachers with health issues.
5. There is no procedure for dealing with teachers who become sick on campus, or dealing with any school member who tests positive for covid-19.
6. There are no guidelines for transitioning to 100% distance learning, should that become necessary.

Because of these and many more salient reasons, I urge you to delay the return of students to school campuses until schools can be better prepared to keep everyone as safe as possible under the circumstances. We teachers truly want to see our students in person, but not at the expense of anyone's health.

Mahalo for your time,

Eva K. Anderson

Keaau High School Teacher

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** dwoshiro@aol.com  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:19 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 Wynn Oshiro, and I am an English teacher at Waipahu Intermediate School. My son attends Kalani High School.

The challenge of this COVID-19 era is immense, but it is self-evident that the safety and well-being of our keiki and public school staff should be paramount. Behind each child and each staff member are their families, their neighbors and friends, and the community at large. While I recognize that government and its agencies are working hard, the imperative to return children to school should not open the door to cutting corners, projections of acceptable losses, or simply hoping for the best. I would ask decision-makers to imagine being at the ICU bedside of a child or adult on a ventilator and explaining why it was necessary to sacrifice his or her health or life. The next explanation should be to family and friends. Apologies should not include "We didn't think of that."

Comprehensive systems and procedures should be understood, practiced, and in place. If more time is needed, more time should be taken.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Wynn Oshiro

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** chrissy2277@hotmail.com  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:20 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony re. Coming back and differential payment

Aloha

I am a special education teacher who was very happy to hear about the differential. Special education is a hard field to teach. We often have meetings and other extra duties to fulfil. No one wants to teach it because every IEP needs to be tailored for each student. That means creating several different lesson plans each day to meet the needs of all students. It isn't easy. By taking away the differential, you will create a lot of vacant positions. To renig on your promise for the differential is a blatant atrocity and a slap in the face to all who filled these positions. What makes this so hard to swallow is that you folks approved a raise for yourselves back in April. If you take our raises will you also be taking yours away?

I also have concerns with going back to school so quickly. The vast increase of cases lately has got me extremely scared and concerned for the safety of my students and I. In my opinion, schools need to be delayed or a completely online model needs to be implemented to keep folks safe at home.

Will you folks be able to sleep at night of children die because you didn't take proper considerations when deciding to open schools? Will you folks be able to sleep at night knowing you kept your raises and took our well deserved ones? Things to ponder.....

Christine Roberts.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Jaclyn Wills <keakulina@icloud.com> on behalf of Jaclyn Wills  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:20 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Cc:** Jaclyn Wills  
**Subject:** Hold off on reopening schools

Hold off on opening schools until it is healthy and safe for all those involved in the classroom. What are a couple of months to stabilize the virus with a vaccine, than losing a life through school exposure? Where I work, there are parents who do not work, so why not have them assist with their child on campus...as I hear that I will not have the Staff to help me with 10 sped preschoolers to keep them 6ft Apart , and deal with bodily fluids, including trying to deliver appropriate lessons....Ppes.....I listened to the boe and department of health who reported that we will receive them from hiema.....because schools needed to buy their own , then no \$ for supplies and helper positions in the classroom. Where is the money for school level classroom needs? We as a state are not ready to safely reopen the school system with face to face contact.

Sent from my iPad

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** cindi shell <cshellhi@gmail.com> on behalf of cindi shell  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:20 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Aloha Board Members

Today I am submitting written 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.

My name is Cynthia K. Shell and I am a Student Services Coordinator at Waialua High & Intermediate School. I am a 12 month employee who has witnessed and taken part of planning for reopening our campus. Despite what is being shared at Senate Special Committee meetings, Press Conferences, and Board of Education meetings, I can **assure** you that we are woefully underprepared to reopen our campuses to our students.

We do not have the necessary supplies to ensure that the health and safety of every person who sets foot on our campus is safe. We need time to properly create and implement health strategies to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 amongst our community members or as Dr. Park refers to "bubbles."

In addition, we need time to properly prepare and train our teachers how to implement a hybrid learning platform as well as distance learning should the need arise to return to 100% online learning for ALL students. Along with this, we need time to properly communicate this learning plan to all of our community members.

To expect all of these things to occur over a few short weeks without much clear definitive guidance from our State DOE and State DOH offices is unacceptable and places all of us at potential risk. It seems to be a forgotten fact that most teachers are 10 month employees. These past 2 months of expected planning and professional development has taken place during a time when teachers are not expected to be actively engaged in "work." Would you expect this of any other professional, say a Doctor or Banker when their offices are closed?

Please understand, we are NOT saying we do not want to reopen our schools, we are merely asking for quality time to include ALL of our school community members to be part of this planning. We want to ensure we are prepared to maintain health and safety as well as maintain a quality education platform for continuous learning before we open our campuses to our students.

Mahalo for this time.

Cynthia K. Shell

Student Services Coordinator

Waialua High & Intermediate School



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** johnny bravoo <jhnnnybravoo@yahoo.com> on behalf of johnny bravoo  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:21 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** TESTIMONY

My name is Michelle Santos and I am a TEACHER at Leihoku Elementary School in Waianae. I am also a PARENT of a child who goes to Leihoku as well as a private school in the area.

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.](#)

Florida teachers are suing their departments of education for the timing of reopening their schools. Yes education is important and that's why we're all in this profession. There 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. They're 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 in the classroom. I'm scared! I haven't gotten any professional development training at all! I can't agree with Dr Kishimoto when she says our teachers got training. We were offered some optional/voluntary webinars that I or most of my colleagues have taken. I feel very unprepared due to the lack of training. Please hold back the reopening of school and push back until it is safer. Show the teachers and the students how much they are cared for because throwing us back into the classrooms in unprecedented times as are in right now is NOT showing that we are cared for. Mahalo

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Courtney Flower <ceflower7@gmail.com> on behalf of Courtney Flower  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:22 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**

I am Courtney Flower, a teacher at Pomaika'i Elementary School. Both of my children attend Pomaika'i as well. I urge you to push back the reopening date for schools. We cannot guarantee the safety of our students, staff and families and there are too many unanswered questions to move forward at this time. We need to plan adequately and meticulously so that we can ensure the best way to open our schools.

Thank you,  
Courtney Flower

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Damien Silva <burgers34@hotmail.com> on behalf of Damien Silva  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:23 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

To whom it may concern,

Aloha! My name is Damien and I have four children whom are in the public school system. I am initiating this testimony in hopes of postponing the date of school opening on August 4th. There are various reasons for this which I will explain further. Reasons such as the lack of proper training on COVID-19 protocols to be implemented on campus, the lack of training on Distance Learning on teachers, and the immense potential of COVID-19 exposure on campus.

Let's face it, there was very little training being utilized by teachers during the summer on COVID-19 protocols. I'm sure they will be just as anxious as parents when school is reopened. Give the teachers extra time to properly prepare for the upcoming school year.

Secondly, Distance Learning was highly underwhelming when it was implemented in the 2019-2020 School year. Many teachers struggled to appropriately juggle all the different classes and properly prepare for them via online. Student participation was at an all time low in terms of actually utilizing their opportunities to learn. However, I do believe reopening schools are an important part of our keiki development.

Third, there is absolutely no doubt that having in person school attendance will expose the chances of COVID-19 being spread. Let's educate our educators on how to properly protect themselves and the kids. Postpone the opening of schools so that we may ensure our kids will be alive and healthy for themselves and their kupuna.

In closing, please strongly consider delaying the opening of schools this year. It is very important that our teachers have enough time to properly be trained on COVID-19 protocols, properly trained on Distance Learning, and be very mindful that our keiki and their kupuna lives are at stake. Give our educators more time and postpone opening of classrooms. Let's do this right, the first time!

Mahalo,  
Damien S.  
(Concerned Parent)

Sent from my Samsung Galaxy smartphone.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Evette Tamos <evettetamos64@gmail.com> on behalf of Evette Tamos  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:24 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

Aloha Board of Education ,

My name is Evette Tamos, I am a school counselor at Pāhoa Elementary School on the Big Island of Hawai'i and have 27 years with the Hawaii Dept. of Education & HSTA. I am writing to request that you postpone the re-opening of SY 20-21. It is important that we plan properly to assure that we are able to bring back our students into a safe and secure environment that will allow them to get the most out of their instruction from our teachers. We, the faculty and staff, need at minimum of 3-4 weeks to get ourselves up and running WITHOUT students to get everything in order from setting up the learning environment into a safe space that is anti-COVID and preparing ourselves to receive our traumatized students and families into the learning environment. A delayed restart will allow us to make sure that we are not sending our students into a place that is unsafe as the amount of active COVID cases have been on the rise. Our students' families need clearer instructions from our state and school in order to make an informed decision about what instructional choice(s) they want to choose for their child(ren) & they time to plan for childcare. It would be most beneficial if we are able to let them know this with as much time in advance. We need to do this BEFORE we have the children on campus. Please postpone the re-opening of our schools.

Evette Tamos  
Pāhoa Elementary School Counselor

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Malia Holmes-Baker <mholmes@haaspcs.net> on behalf of Malia Holmes-Baker  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:25 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony: Differentials are important

Aloha,

I am a teacher at HAAS-PCS. I believe that it is extremely important to not cut teachers' pay or differentials. We are working hard to provide safe and fun learning to our keiki. We cannot afford to have pay cuts. This is a challenging time for all of us. PAY cuts would add stress and more suffering to our teachers.

Thank you for recording my testimony as NOT in favor of teacher pay cuts of any sort.

*Malia Holmes-Baker  
Hawaii Academy of Art and Science PCS  
PHH 3rd and 4th grade Teacher*

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Jonnell Kupihea <jkupihea@yahoo.com> on behalf of Jonnell Kupihea  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:25 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Differentials Testimony

Aloha members of the BOE,

You proposal for the discontinuance of the shortage differentials will have a negative impact in our already skeleton staffing in these crucial areas. Teachers in this state are already grossly under paid and under appreciated. Not having the differential will severely impede my families ability to survive here in Hawaii. I will have no choice but to seek better opportunities else where. Even with this global pandemic, there will be better options for myself and family. Not to mention the disservice you will be creating for the children of Hawaii that will be left without qualified teachers to fill these vacant spots that you created. Please do not discontinue the differentials. By doing so you will create more harm than good.

Sincerely,  
Jonnell Kupihea  
Aina Haina Elementary School  
Special Education Preschool  
16 year veteran

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Marianne Winfield <marianne\_winfield@lahaina.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Marianne Winfield  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:25 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Aloha,

Thank you for considering all aspects of this critically important situation. I am a veteran English teacher at hard-to-staff Lahainaluna High School, in excellent health but at higher risk of mortality because I am 66. My husband is 70 and is medically compromised. We both fear for our lives, especially if the reckless rush to “welcome” students prematurely proceeds. Inexperienced but well-intentioned administration, inadequate teacher training and lack of consistent custodial support are factors that compound the danger we are all facing. this combination will drive teachers like me into retirement. Risking my life isn’t worth it at this stage, no matter the level of compensation.

Mahalo,

Marianne Winfield

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Danyel Panui <danyelpanui@yahoo.com> on behalf of Danyel Panui  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:26 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Hard to fill/pay differentials

Aloha BOE,

I am currently a teacher on the Leeward coast I received the hard to staff pay. It has helped to pay for my bills along with numerous school supplies I buy for my class.

Teachers do not get well in Hawaii and the pay differential has helped tremendously. I believe that teachers should be paid more and this will help get us through the month. My husband and I are both teachers and we will suffer with a pay cut. Can you imagine losing 20% of your income times 2. That will be a 40% cut on our total budget. We will be \$3.88 away from receiving food stamps. That means my kids and I will get 40% cut and get no help from the state. This is outrageous.

Please rethink cutting the pay for teachers. Please rethink Funding the the differential pay because teachers need that to live on moments to month. Please think with your heart! If you can please rethink opening schools.

If you cut from anyone it should reflect the people at the top making these decisions. It's easy to say cut someone else's pay. Why not cut your pay as well and see how you feel when you can't pay your bills and or buy food for your own kids. Think about that!!!! To think most hold Master degrees and have experience in the classroom. Do you have experience in the classroom???? Do what is right pay the teacher's their differential.

Mahalo,  
Danyel Panui

Sent from my iPhone



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Gabriela Lo Coco <gabylococo@yahoo.com> on behalf of Gabriela Lo Coco  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:27 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

My name is Maria Hector. I am a Kindergarten teacher at Waikoloa Elementary and Middle, on the Big Island. I am also the parent of two children who attend Waikoloa school.

I am writing because I am doubly concerned about the lack of preparation to face this school year under the current pandemic situation.

I fear for my health and my safety. We have not had any guidance from the DOH. Many of our safety questions remain unanswered: What if I or a student test positive for COVID-19? What if someone at my students' or our staff's household tests positive? My students are very young and don't understand social distancing. What other PPE options will I have?

School starts in two weeks. As a professional, I feel woefully unprepared to deliver instruction online, since we still do not know what online instruction tool will be used for the 100-percent distance learning option. Will I have to provide that online instruction in addition to the model that I am currently expected to teach? Again, school is just two weeks away.

As a parent, I fear for my children's safety without clear guidelines from the DOH. I decided for the 100-percent distance learning option. It was not an easy decision to make, but their safety is paramount. I am concerned about their learning: What will that consist of? Who will be responsible for it?

The health and safety of both students and staff must be the priority in any decision made. We need time to be fully prepared for this, and August 4 looms near.

Sincerely,

Maria Hector

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPad](#)

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Ferdenan Damo <ferdenan@hawaii.rr.com> on behalf of Ferdenan Damo  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:28 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony: School opening.

Hello BOE,

I am a teacher who is in the high risk category and afraid for my health, the health of my family-especially for my elderly mother, and health of my students. I am in the process of filling out the paperwork: "Reasonable Accommodation"; and "Medical Release Form" from my primary care physician. I do not understand why we have to go through the "Civil Rights Office" to get the exemption; this pandemic is not an individual "civil rights" issue rather a health and safety issue which concerns everyone! Everyone in the schools need "exemptions"!

What of the DOH guidance on how to proceed safely opening the school? This is a health crisis, why aren't teachers, staff, students not provided the same PPE resources as health care institutions. This is the least the state can do to insure that the pandemic is contained. With cases spiking in the community I work in it would be irresponsible for teachers not to have N95 masks and personnel to constantly clean. Our schools will provide cleaning supplies, but it's up to teachers and students to clean surfaces, computers....

Also, what are specific ways the DOE will support (monetarily, psychologically, covid-19 health care?) teachers who are infected? Will new, out of state students be quarantined 14 days before enrolling? Will teachers and their families receive monetary, psychological, support from the DOE when a teacher dies?

With cases spiking on Oahu, physical schooling would be unwise; schools are not ready to open.

Ferdenan Damo  
Ilima Intermediate School  
Social Studies Teacher.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Jon Chung <jonchung808@gmail.com> on behalf of Jon Chung  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:28 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony on Action item H

Members of the Board of Education

I am a 7th grade teacher at Kawananakoa Middle School and I urge you to delay the reopening of the 2020-21 school year until there is a realistic, effective plan in place that will protect our students, their families and all of the adults on campus.

Proper social distancing guidelines will probably accommodate 8 or 10 students in my classroom and the plan calls for the other students to attend my class online. The problem is that there really is no effective way for me to monitor and help one group of students without neglecting the other group at the same time.

I am sure you all have had the experience of teleconferencing and understand that the attendees who are not in the room generally are at a disadvantage when it comes to giving their input or to even be heard. Combine that with the fact that the DOE, in my opinion, really doesn't have a consistent, uniform plan for addressing all of the students and they have done little to communicate with teachers, much less provide the proper training that distance learning requires and I believe that their hybrid educational plan is doomed to failure.

Rather than engage all students, such a plan will only show them that it's easy to avoid school altogether. I have successfully taught 7th graders for 30 years--I believe I am well qualified to gauge the effectiveness and efficiency of curricula. This mix of online and in-person attendance is one that is doomed to fail.

Furthermore, all it takes is one infected student to spread the Covid-19 virus and you will have an unmitigated health and safety disaster on YOUR hands. It is not worth it--delay the start of school for at least another month. It's common sense.

Thank you,

Jon Chung  
Kawananakoa Middle School

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** David Scarlino <deividscarlino@gmail.com> on behalf of David Scarlino  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:28 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimonial

I, David Scarlino, teacher at McKinley High testify 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](#). I received the extra compensation and used the money to lease a vehicle to work. Prior to this I had to ride the city bus to and from work. The compensation allowed me to afford a used, leased, car which provides me a more open schedule to be with family and other responsibilities. Prior to this I had to switch buses to and from my school and had to use ride share services when I had materials to bring home, or to work.

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 HDOE money if state lawmakers did not fund it for next school year. This new proposal breaks that pledge. The HDOE 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.

[According to the department's data](#), 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 department could not provide comparison data for Hawaiian language immersion positions.

“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.”

Keep your promises, and use the data collected, correctly.

Sincerely,

David Scarlino

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Lisa Silva <silva3r3l@gmail.com> on behalf of Lisa Silva  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:28 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Teacher differentials

Working as a sped teacher off and on for the past 13 years has been a challenge to say the least. I am dual certified in General Education and Sped. Being a sped teacher takes someone who is willing to go above and beyond for students and their families. I worked with deaf and hard of hearing students who needed language models and parents needed support to navigate with their children. The reason that we have a shortage of special education teachers is they are pulled and pushed to the brink... overwhelmed with paperwork, being a teacher for their students who are on different levels and have different needs along with trying to support parents and families along the way. Sometimes no amount of money is worth it but when the differentials were offered it seemed as though special education teachers were finally being valued for their specific skills. Sadly it looks as though they are once again being pushed aside.

Please keep these differentials in place and show special education teachers are valued, to take it away now when it was already promised to them is wrong.

Sincerely,  
Lisa Silva

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Bea Arendale <hanabay17@yahoo.com> on behalf of Bea Arendale  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:28 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Dear Board of Education members,

Please reconsider the reopening of schools until the CDC has declared it safe for students to be less than 6 feet away from each other. The students and teachers should be required to wear face masks because all Hawaii citizens need to wear protective gear when entering stores or any other types of offices. Hawaii can not afford to have a major COVID-19 outbreak because we do not have the medical facilities to care for individuals with COVID-19. Many of our ventilators have already been sent to outbreak areas on the mainland.

Furthermore, a large population of our students and teachers are medically fragile and will be likely to contract the virus. As individuals concerned with the general well-being of the citizens of Hawaii, we need to proceed with caution before reopening the public schools.

Respectfully,

Beate Arendale  
AP Literature teacher at King Kekaulike High School since 1998

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Nathaniel Tom <nathaniel.tom@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Nathaniel Tom  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:28 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Teacher Differentials

Hello BOE,

Please do not cut the funding for the differentials for teachers. I am a fifth grade SPED teacher who is currently teaching on the Waianae coast. This is going to be my second year teaching. I love working with kids and I want to be able to teach as many as I can. While I teach on the coast I live near town. The differentials greatly help with gas money. I currently still live at home at the age of 28 simply because I cannot yet afford a place of my own. I would like to think that after saving up enough money the idea of owning a home will not only be a dream. I did not enter this profession for the money, I did it to help the kids. Although this is the case if I cannot make a livable wage I will have to seek employment in another career or worse another state. I love Hawaii and I would love to be able to live and teach here for the rest of my life. Taking away this differential would only be another reason to consider leaving the profession or leaving the state. That would break my heart if I had to leave the profession or home I love just because I cannot make a decent wage.

Sincerely,  
Nathaniel Tom

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Odin Hill <odinhill@gmail.com> on behalf of Odin Hill  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:28 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Hi I am a public high school teacher my name is Odin Hill I work for Windward Kahuku High  
I am also immunocompromised and am very apprehensive about what has been put forth as guidance for reopening and related protocols  
I have filed for Americans with disabilities accommodations for workplace just because my school site the district and the state seem woefully unprepared to deal with the scope and consequence of the roiling virus  
I feel it would be much much safer for teachers students and all related staff to opt for a 100% distance learning option until things have settled down and proper, data proven protocols are in place  
the previous data that the state collected related to student engagement during the end-of-year distance learning is irrelevant because teachers and students alike were told that the learning environment was entirely enrichment based and didn't count against grades, so obviously many students opted not to engage  
Please for the safety of everyone and also to reduce the liability that the state is sure to encounter opt for 100% distance learning for a minimum of one semester

Sincerely  
Odin Hill



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Yvette Rapozo <yrapozo0@twc.com> on behalf of Yvette Rapozo  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:29 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Dear BOE,

I am writing in with regards to Action Item H. Board Action of 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 modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees. My name is Yvette Rapozo and I am a 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teachers at Kapa'a Elementary School on the island of Kauai. I think the start date student need to be pushed back for several reasons.

- We have no written guidance from the DOH on the reopening of school that was part of the MOU agreement that was recently reached
- We have not been given any training on the opening of schools. Supposedly the training will come on the first 9 days which is AFTER the kids have already been on campus. THAT MAKES NO SENSE!! It NEEDS to be prior to them coming to school.
- Although the state has said there is a distance learning option for parents who do not want to send their children to school, details have not been released. Also, we do not know how this will impact teachers since we do not know if we will be the people conducting the learning for these students.
- Exact procedures have not been given on if a school shuts down, how will distance learning will take place. NO training has been given to teachers and we do not know when 100% distance learning could happen. We hope it will not happen, but truthfully it will happen sooner than later.

There are many others concerns that need to be spelled out before students return. We need that extra time to get the school prepared as best we can and as safely as we can before we let students return back to the classrooms. We owe it to them and to ourselves to keep us all safe.

Sincerely,  
Yvette Rapozo  
2<sup>nd</sup> grade  
Kapa'a Elementary School  
Kauai

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Angelene Henry <ahenry@hawaii.edu> on behalf of Angelene Henry  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:29 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Concerns for school reopening

Aloha. I'm very concerned about school reopening in 9 days. I believe we should postpone face to face school at this time. I had a family member DIE from COVID 19 on the mainland & I am scared for all children. I currently work as a site coordinator for the after school program on Maui. My children go to 2 different schools on Maui. My workers go to another school on Maui. And I volunteer at a preschool on Maui. If I get infected, I may spread the virus to 5 different schools on Maui. This is unacceptable.

My recommendation is to delay school reopening until the mainland opens. Let them do the trial & error before our Hawai'i children. Many parents are not working until the state opens back up in September, so why can't our kids wait until then. Are tourist more important than our children. Please reconsider your decision.

Mahalo

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Mark Alsbergas <alsbergas@hotmail.com> on behalf of Mark Alsbergas  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:30 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Hi. I'm a special ed teacher who has been working for over 20 years. I love my job. I love the Department of Education. I want to return to work.

However, I am over the age of 60. If I were to get the virus there's a good chance would suffer irreparable harm, perhaps death

Do you really think it's worth it to put me in that position?

Please make a plan that will protect the teachers and the students before we have the students return to school.

Thank you.

Mark alsbergas

Get [Outlook for Android](#)

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Tammy Hornbeck <tammy.hornbeck@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Tammy Hornbeck  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:31 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimonial about Re-opening schools

Aloha, My name is Tammy Hornbeck. I am a special education teacher (teaching FSC K-2) working for Kapunahala Elementary School in Kaneohe, HI. The 2020-2021 school year will be my second year with this school and here on the island.

I am against re-opening schools for in-person learning for several reasons. 1. When COVID-19 hit during Spring Break there were relatively few cases and yet the Hawaii DOE made the decision to finish the year doing Distance Learning. Few of us were prepared to teach this way; but we learned. Now, there are three times if not more cases of COVID-19 on the island and yet here we are talking about returning to schools--an unsafe environment for teachers, staff, and students. 2. I was informed by my principal that we could not require students to wear a mask if they chose not too. This makes no sense to me since you are required to wear a mask by the state when you go to a public place. You cannot enter a store or public place without a mask. I was also told that they would not be doing temperature checks because it would make the students feel uncomfortable. This is the first safety check for COVID screening--bypassing this would almost ensure an outbreak on campus. 3. I feel there is a gross misconception on what "opening" means. I have read in many emails and posts both on the DOE website and HSTA's website that Distance Learning is not opening schools. THIS IS FALSE! Teachers worked twice as hard and many many more hours working during Distance Learning than we would have on campus. Add to this that the new "plan" for reopening schools with the hybrid structure would mean that teachers would be teaching in person and preparing and delivering instruction via Distance Learning--this is highly unfair and double the work for teachers. Distance Learning from the safety of our homes would be more feasible. We are still working, students would still be getting instruction just in a new way. 4. The emotional health of teachers, staff, and students is in severe danger should we return. Speaking for myself; I am terrified to return to campus. So much so that I have actually written a will and wrote my daughter a six page goodbye letter. I am scared to death of dying on this island and never seeing my children and grandchildren again. I have not gotten out of my apartment for anything other than grocery shopping. While living like this is not the best of choices; dying is worse. Fear that I may get and give COVID to my students haunts me. My sleeping habits are horrid. I already have nightmares and I cry often. It's too soon! It will not be the end of the world if students do six months or a year of Distance Learning---better that then families organizing funerals. PLEASE DO NOT OPEN SCHOOLS.

Sincerely,

Tammy Hornbeck

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Dave Parish <dpkona174@gmail.com> on behalf of Dave Parish  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:31 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** In class instruction

Please start in class instruction on August 10th. that will allow principles and instructors to have a better understanding of the necessary precautions to put in place

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Bernard Santos <affordableautoglass808@gmail.com> on behalf of Bernard Santos  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:31 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

### **Bernard Santos (Parent of a student attending Leihoku 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 a parent of a child attending Leihoku Elementary. I understand that it is important for my child to socialize and that education is really important. However, NOT right now. I can not live with the fact that my child will be exposed to the virus at school and bring it home to my elderly parents whom reside with us. If my parents die due to contracting covid that was brought home from my child what kind of social and emotional damage do you think this will create? I think being safe is by far more beneficial than rushing back to school and infecting our poor teachers who will be on the front line, their families, our children and our children's families. I STRONGLY support the DELAY of the start of school. Mahalo

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Luke Mason <sirluke1978@gmail.com> on behalf of Luke Mason  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:32 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

I have two kids at home and I find it very difficult to teach while maintaining their distance learning. Also going back to school during the pandemic puts her whole family at risk. More safeguards need to be put in place.

Sincerely,

Patricia D. Mason

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Jenny M L <migitaj@gmail.com> on behalf of Jenny M L  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:32 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Jenny Leung. I am a teacher at Roosevelt High School, 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 understand that reopening of schools is an important part of reopening our economy. However, it needs to be done safely and prudently in order to ensure the health and wellness of the teachers and the community at large. The BOE selected the start date for the 2020-21 school year years ago. Clearly the situation has changed, and the BOE should adapt to this new reality.

The reality is, the DOE did NOT consistently train teachers on distance learning practices. They gave us four days before fourth quarter to prepare for delivering several weeks of online enrichment. As a result, during the fourth quarter, many teachers were busy caring for their own children at home, while creating brand new instructional activities and or materials at the same time. I know that I myself, as a first-time mother of a now one-year-old, certainly did not have the free time to attend trainings while creating activities and giving feedback to 180 enrolled students in my full-time teaching line. Also, I think you should know, while we're being transparent about what kind of training the superintendent claims has been going on since March, that training for the DOE-vetted Learner Management System Black Board only commenced in July, was restricted to five teachers per school, and is ending tomorrow, merely one week before teachers return to school. Now, with the current schedule, teachers will have the equivalent of at most 4.5 days of training and then expected to hit the ground running - use the training to make new instructional materials and plan new instructional methods while simultaneously teaching full-time. Research shows it takes 3 hours for a teacher to prep for 1 hour of new instruction. With this schedule, teachers are being set up to fail.

I would also like to say that the survey that the superintendent uses to cite reasons why schools should reopen - that students had difficulty with distance learning, low student completion of enrichment work as reported by teachers, that most parents want their children to attend in-person classes - is extremely misleading. The reason enrichment work was disastrous in fourth quarter was because teachers were not allowed to teach anything new and were not allowed to grade any enrichment work. We were not even allowed to give credit for those who did the work faithfully and excuse those who didn't or couldn't. This statistic is not reflective of what teachers and students can do via distance learning. The only thing this survey statistic shows is how many students have access to the technology and are intrinsically motivated to learn.

I would also be willing to bet that parents who want their students to return to in-person classes don't know the truth. My classes, even split into groups with my school's hybrid bell schedule, will have up to 21 students physically present in each of seven periods in an enclosed classroom space. This is over twice the number of people allowed in a room, according to the Department of Health's own "Guidance for All" workplaces, available online. Is the classroom not my workplace? Are students not people? The summer school guidance actually also mentioned, "of course," no more than 10



students should be physically present in each class. Why is it that now, when students will be additionally rotating to seven other classes, it's acceptable to have twice that number of students in an enclosed space? To fit this number of students, I have been instructed to remove all other classroom furniture other than one teacher desk. That means students may be in classes without a TV cart, without a table to place a projector on, and teachers will basically be stranded teaching at the front of the room, because to move anywhere else would bring them within 6 feet of a student. There will be no pair work, no team games, no singing.

I just thought you should know what teachers and students are currently scheduled to be returning to in August with this plan. Thank you for your consideration.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Jade Bowman <jade\_bowman@wmpccs.org> on behalf of Jade Bowman  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:34 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

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 Jade Bowman I work at Waimea middle school and then we got enough away we are at conversion charter school who are also planning on opening school July 29 and students on the fourth. I agree with the HSTA that schools are not really ready to be opened everything is so up in the air on how to handle things and although our school has been working diligently and so hard to come up with a plan, I think there's still too many unanswered questions on how to safely proceed. We as a school work hard on ways to best serve our students so they can learn and stay safe at the same time. We are trying to make sure that in this planning that we keep our faculty safe as well. Again, I believe that the BOE needs to get those questions answered that we set forth and follow through with the MOU they have with HSTA.

Outbreaks have been popping up all over the state and I don't think we are actually ready to deal with the chance of someone coming to school who is infected (maybe not showing symptoms) and infect others. The state has not made clear procedures on dealing with this scenario. There are no definite answers. Playing it by ear is not a safe way to proceed. I understand parents have to go back to work, we need the economy to be booming which means that that we need these kids to be in school but only if it's safe. Clear protocols are not in place. We can disinfect the school make sure they wash their hands and so forth but once they leave our school who knows who they were exposed to or who their parents have been exposed to then the kids come back to school. People are out and about and they are not following protocols. We live in a small town we live on an island when you lift restrictions people forget that they still need to do their part with the social distancing, washing hands, etc. We are at risk. What's the clear answer to wearing a mask in school? Teachers will be in close contact with dozens, and potentially hundreds, of children for multiple hours in a given day and yet 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?

Procedures and/or definite plans on what to do and how to handle these cases need to be in place. I don't think it's fair to just always think the teachers and the school figure it out. Will classroom teachers have to provide that 100-percent distance learning instruction in addition to the model they're currently expected to teach?

The state says teachers had training. We did voluntarily PD when we could not everyone. Teachers should have training before kids come back. A unified PD on how to deal with our situation. I have to say on behalf of my school and colleagues that everyone has tried to do their best and picking up webinars professional development readings and then share with each other but it's still not your hands on training and I don't know if anybody can see that they're ready to just dive in and teach these kids with so many unanswered questions on how to be safe and still teach them we as teachers are at risk on the front line. I love teaching and want to get back to teaching my students but I want to make sure that it's safe for everyone to come back and that the conditions are those that the students can actually learn in and not be stressed about sitting with these masks and can't be close to each other outside we just need to maybe wait a little longer and squash this so we all can have a wonderful learning environment that is safe for everyone involved.

Please reconsider Opening school so soon even if it's postponed two weeks could make all the difference if all the protocols are in place and everybody knows what to do no second-guessing we can't go by the seat of our pants on this one when school starts Mahalo for taking the time to read this

Jade Bowman

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Camille Woods <camille732000@gmail.com> on behalf of Camille Woods  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:34 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Delay school openings

Aloha,

I'm a teacher and parent that is very concerned about the reopening of schools. I literally woke up THIS morning concerned about my will and contacted my sister(a physician) and asked her to take my children; should I die. My concern is for my child, their peers, my peers and, my safety. Please, if it is not safe enough for the Ivy Leagues to open their campuses and LAUSD..and NUMEROUS school districts...please reconsider opening our schools. We simply do not have enough information. Our students and teachers deserve so much more.

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Ainise Potauaine <ampotauaine@gmail.com> on behalf of Ainise Potauaine  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:34 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am a fifth year special education teacher in a resource room. I am worried that the start date of this school year is coming too quickly. The number of cases has been rising and I dont think starting school with such short notice on new protocols and regulations is the best idea. We stopped school when we had only a few documented cases and now we are asked to return when there are 20+ cases a day. It doesnt make sense.

Me personally, I've had students who invade personal space, want hugs and affection all the time. Others who spit in their hands, stick hands in their pants, ear, mouth. And this is all before I've even turned back around from facing the board.

I'm worried for my students, my coworkers and my elderly parents of which I am the primary caretaker.

Please reconsider delaying the opening day for school or creating a full distance learning protocol without repercussions to funding or personnel.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Ainise Potauaine

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Meghan Tracey <meghan.tracey@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Meghan Tracey  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:35 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.](#)

I am asking the state of Hawaii and the Board of Education to 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 environment.

While I believe in the importance of ensuring students are provided instructional services, it should not be at the cost of a safe educational environment. It should not be at the cost of the lives of our keiki, teachers, administrators, staff members... who may potentially bring home the disease to their families.

Delaying the opening of school buildings keeps our community safe. This should be our absolute number one priority!

We are not prepared to safely or effectively provide quality education to our keiki. Please give us the time to prepare so we can develop a plan that keeps the community safe and allows our students to receive the maximum benefit of learning. Delaying the opening of school may be difficult, but the sacrifice now will be worth it in the future.

"If I had six hours to chop down a tree, I would spend the first 4 sharpening my axe." -Abraham Lincoln

Meghan Tracey  
Waimea Canyon Middle School  
Kauai, HI

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Debra Shirai <educ8hi@gmail.com> on behalf of Debra Shirai  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:35 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Aloha Board of Education members,

I am testifying 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.

I am asking to please delay the reopening of public schools. We have more active cases of COVID-19 in the state now than we had when the decision was made to shut schools down in March.

I am a teacher at Keonepoko Elementary on the Big Island, my husband teaches at Waiakea High School and my daughter is teaching at Hilo Union Elementary School, we all live in the same house with my granddaughter who will be starting Kindergarten at the same time. We have many questions and concerns that have not yet been answered because school administration is still trying to figure out all of the details. One of the major concerns is that the bus policy is not following the six feet distance and requiring face masks. That puts a significant population of students and their teachers and families at risk.

What happens if a student or teacher/staff member tests positive? What if someone in their family tests positive? How many people have to test positive in order for schools to shut down? What about teachers who have existing health issues? There are many moving pieces and too many unanswered questions at this point. Schools need to reopen, but it needs to be done in a safe way that does not put the lives of our students, staff or their families in danger.

Who will be responsible for the first school-related death?

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** owenroj@gmail.com  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:35 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** School Opening

My name is Richard Johnson, I am a tenured teacher CKMS middle school. I am very concerned about our schools being prepared to open to students on 8/4. I asked our admin about classrooms being provided sanitizing wipes in order to wipe down desks between classes- answer was no. If a student sanitizes hands upon entry to the classroom and then touches their mouth or nose they can spread Covid 19 to the desk, chairs, and these need to be wiped down at the start of each class. Each classroom should be provided a adequate supply of sanitizing wipes. Also I asked our admin about temperature screening- answer was no - that teachers would observe students for signs of illness. This is unacceptable- each teacher should be issued a no touch thermometer or better yet students screened before entering campus. Also classrooms need to be configured for social distancing by placing desks 6 feet apart which requires removing excess desks and chairs from the classrooms. This is not being done- which means we will lose valuable instruction time enforcing social distancing. Finally we have received no training for distance learning and have been provided no on line curriculum to implement. We are trained as classroom teachers- if we are expected to teach on line training and tools required to implement this are essential. Lastly the DOE is expecting an increase in Covid 19 cases when school starts which means students and teachers will be getting sick and some teachers will die. The DOE must take every possible safeguard to ensure teacher safety and this is not being done. Students are being sent back without adequate safeguards. I am ready to go back if these safeguards are in place- Sent from my iPhone



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Rob Green <rob1208@gmail.com> on behalf of Rob Green  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:36 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

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 Robert Green and I am a Social Studies teacher at Kaua'i High School. I urge you to continue funding for teacher shortage differentials/extra compensation and that you do not discontinue it. I believe in these differentials and see that they have value not only to the teachers that receive them, but also to the students and community that are impacted by those teachers and the education they are delivering. They are also a way to attract teachers to those areas of need that are difficult to fill. If these differentials go away, I believe that our state and our children will be the ones to suffer and it will put us back into the same problematic place we were in that this initiative was put forth to solve. Even if it is only a temporary discontinuance, that action would make teachers and the community we serve lose faith in your organization's ability to develop, roll out, and maintain your initiatives/promises. Please do not go back on the good work you have done.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Robert Green  
[Rob1208@gmail.com](mailto:Rob1208@gmail.com)

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Lia Witeck Baltero <liathepia@gmail.com> on behalf of Lia Witeck Baltero  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:36 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony Regarding Delaying Re-Opening of Schools

My name is Lia Baltero, a parent and a public school 7th grade teacher.

Please delay the implementation of face to face instruction until positive COVID19 tests/cases decrease or are at zero for a number of days and the DOE/DOH has a safer and clearer protocol for opening up the schools. These are the main reasons for my concerns:

- My class size will be an average of 30 students in an enclosed classroom with poor air circulation and I will rotate through five such classes on face to face teaching days.
- I am directed to report to an on campus classroom on my virtual teaching days, putting me at risk from the other 150 students in the building as well as my co-workers who will share the same work classroom.
- Governor Ige pleaded with businesses and employers to allow flexibility for their employees who are parents but doesn't provide a way for teachers, his OWN employees, to have flexibility to take care of their children.
- I belong to a multigenerational household with a 74- and 75-year old and children. Opening without a strong safety plan puts my vulnerable household at unnecessary risk.

I am in a position where I feel I will be in an unsafe working environment and my only options are to 'suck it up' or quit the teaching profession. I am willing to put myself in potentially unsafe situations for the sake of my students, such as the possibility of a shooter coming on my school campus. But I take this chance because I know the risk is minimal and the benefits of face to face instruction heavily outweigh these risks.

I cannot say the same for this pandemic. The benefits are negligible. Parents who can't work from home still won't have guaranteed child care (which is not the role of public education), students' ability to connect socially/emotionally will be limited and even impeded by the necessary social distancing and face masks and could even traumatize them more, and the hands on, collaborative learning that is one of the premiere benefits of face to face instruction will be non-existent.

These supposed benefits are in exchange for - not 'risk' - but practically a guarantee, according to DOH Bruce Anderson, who acknowledged he expects an increase of cases with the opening of face to face instruction in our schools. BOE Chairperson Catherine Payne seems to be hesitant to even believe our schools can remain open once tourism opens up more. What's the point in putting teachers, students, whole communities at increased risk only to shut down face to face instruction again?

If the point of August's seeming experiment to open the schools is to allow teachers to bond with students before being thrust once again to full distance learning platforms, then surely we can come up with a better way to accomplish this than to put hundreds of thousands of children and families and teachers at such high risk?

Please delay face to face instruction until our case numbers are zero, or until we know more about the long term effects of this virus in children and there are more successful treatment therapies and/or an effective vaccine. As a teacher and a parent I know we can't shelter at home indefinitely but surely

it would be better to delay at least one semester. The stakes are way too high and I know even one child's (or teacher's) life lost because we re-opened too early is not worth it.

Thank you for your consideration of my point of view. Please stay healthy and be safe.

Sincerely,  
Lia Baltero  
[liathepia@gmail.com](mailto:liathepia@gmail.com)  
(808) 226-2587

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Chris Bothmer <bothmerc@gmail.com> on behalf of Chris Bothmer  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:37 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** testimony: we're not ready for August 4th

RE: Board action on COVID-19 response MOU between HIDOE and HSTA

Aloha,

As August 4th approaches, I am increasingly uneasy about opening our schools. Amazingly, it's not the virus I'm worried about at this moment since the Big Island has a very low number of positive cases of COVID-19.

What I am worried about is a chaotic and stressful experience for everybody at the school. So far, I know our bell schedule and that is all I know. Here are some of my unanswered questions:

1. Exactly which classes am I teaching and in which classroom?
2. What will my classroom's physical distancing look like?
3. What will my classroom's hygienic protocols look like?
4. How will I interact with both in-class and online students in the hybrid setting?
5. How can all the desks possibly be cleaned in a five-minute passing and who is responsible for that?

Sure, I can speculate and come up with probable answers to the above questions, but why am I even in a position to be guessing?

Another point, our children live in an economically disadvantaged area, and the usual disadvantages they face are compounded by the social and economic disruptions caused by the coronavirus. As a registered nurse, I witnessed on a regular basis how stress interferes with an individual's ability to learn in several ways: a) decreases mental focus, b) provokes exaggerated emotional responses, c) increases somatic complaints (headaches, stomach aches). Imagine how much worse all this will be in the middle of a pandemic.

We need to delay the start of school for students to allow time for conversations at the school level to address all of these questions and issues so we will have a calm and organized environment in which to welcome the children back. Please.

Mahalo,  
Christine Bothmer-Stinson  
Life Sciences Teacher  
Ka'u High & Pahala Elementary

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Ben Macklin <gb.macklin@gmail.com> on behalf of Ben Macklin  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:36 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Differentials for Teachers

Aloha Board Members,

My wife (also a teacher) and I barely keep our financial heads above the medical, dental, school loan, children in need, parents in need, grandchildren in need, auto repair, high food cost, high rent, high tax water. Please do everything possible to keep our differentials. We are trying so hard to deliver on our promises to help teach, model, and raise the next generation of Hawaiians.

Mahalo,

George Macklin,  
Kealakehe High School

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Kalehuamakanoe DeLeon <n.deleon26@icloud.com> on behalf of Kalehuamakanoe DeLeon  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:37 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

If our teachers themselves are not confident that schools are ready, willing and able to move forward with reopening, how am I as a parent supposed to be confident? Where is a complete mach-up of what we are getting ready to expose our kids to? I want a computer generated layout and execution of a daily routine! I want a complete enactment of how the teachers will be running the classrooms. I haven't even seen a step-by-step list of procedures yet, let alone a virtual tour of a COVID-19 Prevention Classroom or School looks like. I can take a virtual tour of a strangers home, all staged for sale and yet no one has created one of a staged classroom?

Am I willing to use my children as guinea pigs? That's what this seems like. A test group. A test group for the Nation because we have the lowest cases. And the statements and banter downplaying the virus in children if they are exposed is appalling! Perhaps, there are indications in studies showing that children are more resilient to COVID-19. I hope so! But, let's not forget that SOME children who may have underlying conditions they aren't even aware of yet, like diabetes, asthma and have suffered with pneumonia or the Flu Virus could potentially DIE same as an adult. Perhaps some folks have forgotten that children live with parents, siblings, grandparents, guardians, extended multigenerational households and would be carriers of the virus to higher risk individuals. The economy needs saving! Agreed! Children need education! Agreed! Can they be taught and retain the lessons under these pressures?! Will my child with a severe learning disability get the attention he needs?! And if The Educators are not sure, I'm not sure!

Kalehuamakanoe DeLeon  
Mother of two, 11th and 3rd Grade  
& Pregnant, Full-Time Employee

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** David Scarlino <deividscarlino@gmail.com> on behalf of David Scarlino  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:38 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony, 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.

I, David Scarlino, teacher at McKinley High ask the BOE and DOE to delay the opening of school campuses on August 4. Teachers will be most at risk when schools reopen. They will be in close contact with dozens, and potentially hundreds, of children for multiple hours in a given day. Yet they seem to be more of an afterthought in the health director's overall concern for health and safety. In testimony before lawmakers last week, Anderson admitted, The disease is far more serious for older people. That doesn't necessarily help the teachers, of course, or the faculty who are worried. But for the kids themselves the risk is relatively low for serious disease.

I ask the schools to remain closed until the following questions have answers, solutions, and plans:

- 1. When will the State of Hawaii's Department of Health provide written guidance on the reopening of school buildings, which the HDOE agreed to in our MOU?
- 
- 2. 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?
- 
- 3. 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.
- 
- 4. 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?
- 
- 5. 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?
- 
- 6. 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?
- 
- "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," Corey Rosenlee.

Sincerely,

David Scarlino



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Marada Decker <dmarada@yahoo.com> on behalf of Marada Decker  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:38 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** RE: Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education

WHAT'S THE RUSH! WE HAVE AN EPIDEMIC...COVID 19!-

I am writing on behalf of the teachers and students of Hawaii. I feel the DOE is not ready to reopen schools. Until we have a definite solution to treating Covid 19, we are just subjecting our teachers and students to the disease. The DOE is in a "dream world" to believe that students K-12 will follow your protocol of hand washing, wearing of mask, and social distancing. Who will monitor the students?

Covid 19 does not pick or choose who it infects. All age groups are susceptible to contracting the disease. Will the DOE take responsibility while school is in session for any teacher or student contracting Covid 19? Will the DOE be responsible for any deaths that may occur?

Please do not rush our children and teachers back to school. AstraZeneca and Moderna are working on a vaccine and if we're lucky it could be available by the end of the year.

Thank you.

Linda Decker

Family member of two teachers and students.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Greg Wines <gknwines@gmail.com> on behalf of Greg Wines  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:39 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

My name is Kathleen Wines, and I am an elementary teacher at Connections Public Charter School in Hilo, Hawaii. 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.**

This is my 15th year teaching, and I strongly believe that the health and safety of our students and staff of our public schools should come first in any decision making. Every precaution should be taken before students and staff are brought back on campuses. This is not a situation that can be rushed into. There is no written guidance from the DOH on the reopening of school buildings. This was agreed to in the MOU. There are no options available to families who want 100% distance learning options. As a classroom teacher, I should not have to supply 100% distance learning instruction in addition to the model my school is following--that is like working two full-time jobs. For the safety of everyone, but especially teachers and staff who will be at the most risk, there should be clear protocols on the wearing of masks for everyone in the school building. 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? 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?

I do not feel that the health and safety of students, teachers, and all school employees are being taken into consideration in the rush to open up schools. **Please do not open schools until all the above questions are answered and there are clear protocols in place for the handling of COVID-19.** Let's reduce the risk of anyone getting COVID-19 by taking the necessary time to answer all the questions and make schools a safe place for all. Teaching in this environment where there is so much unknown will not produce the desired learning outcomes. Take time, answer the questions, create clear protocols, then open up schools to an environment where everyone will feel safer. Do not open up schools without fully thinking this through. As a teacher, I feel unprepared to go into a school building without the necessary safety protocols in place. As a parent, I would feel scared to send my child to a school without every question answered.

**Thank you for delaying the start of school until all the questions are addressed and every safety consideration is in place.**

Sincerely,  
Kathleen Wines, M.Ed.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Misha Kassel <mishakassel@icloud.com> on behalf of Misha Kassel  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:40 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

To whom it may concern,

I am writing about potential removal of teachers subsidy for hard to fill subjects, and locations. It seems to be working as turnover in those have gone down. I have a brother, sister and brother in law who are all teachers in Hawaii. It is hard enough for them to get by financially and to cut this is both unwise and not right. I hope you do not do this. Thanks for your consideration, Misha Kassel Emergency Medicine Physician here in Hawaii

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Clinenne Teague <clinenneteague@gmail.com> on behalf of Clinenne Teague  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:41 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Disappointed

Teachers shouldn't be sacrificial lambs; early childhood educators need an advocate too.

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Carole Sakamoto-Hughes <cjethughes@msn.com> on behalf of Carole Sakamoto-Hughes  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:42 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** School openings

I have been struggling over the idea of teaching this year. I have been a classroom teacher for 30 years. This past school year I have been doing distance learning with only a half of my students. It was not the ideal way to teach but it was a way of keeping students and their families safe. Luckily parents can choose to opt out. Unfortunately, teachers are unable to without taking a leave without pay. In a regular school year, students get sick. It only takes one student to spread the sickness around the room. If a child is sick, or the teacher, they will probably get tested. In the meantime they will wait for the test results. I am afraid we do not have enough subs to take our place. As it is, we've had instances of admin filling in. Also, many teachers are still deciding whether to take leave or retire, myself included. This should be taken into account. I think we also need to pay attention to history. The Flu pandemic of 1918-20 killed over 2000 people in Hawaii. Hawaii was hit in 1920 after most of US were hit first. Schools were opened and shut inconsistently (See Star Advertiser article). Now this was before airline flights arrived to Hawaii. Imagine how hard it will be to control when air travel is less restrictive in September. We are not ready to open up yet. Our children and their families' health comes first.

Carole Sakamoto-Hughes

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Thomas Bruce <tqbruce@kamaile.org> on behalf of Thomas Bruce  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:42 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

My name is Thomas Bruce, math special education teacher at Kamaile PCS. I oppose 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..**

We cannot open school campuses to students on Aug. 4, the HDOE has failed to answer important questions. Personally I am scared of getting sick or getting my family sick. Student learning will be negatively impacted and reflect poorly on teachers, schools, communities. It is not fair to act with such haste as a possible resurgence is around the corner. Please reconsider.  
Mahalo, Thomas Bruce, Kamaile teacher.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Debra Shirai <educ8hi@gmail.com> on behalf of Debra Shirai  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:43 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Aloha Board of Education members,

I am testifying 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.

I am asking to please delay the reopening of public schools. We have more active cases of COVID-19 in the state now than we had when the decision was made to shut schools down in March.

I am a teacher (age 57) at Keonepoko Elementary on the Big Island, my husband (age 67) teaches at Waiakea High School and my daughter is teaching at Hilo Union Elementary School, we all live in the same house with my granddaughter who will be starting Kindergarten at the same time. We have many questions and concerns that have not yet been answered because school administration is still trying to figure out all of the details. One of the major concerns is that the bus policy is not following the six feet distance and requiring face masks. That puts a significant population of students and their teachers and families at risk.

What happens if a student or teacher/staff member tests positive? What if someone in their family tests positive? How many people have to test positive in order for schools to shut down? What about teachers who have existing health issues? There are many moving pieces and too many unanswered questions at this point. Schools need to reopen, but it needs to be done in a safe way that does not put the lives of our students, staff or their families in danger.

Who will be responsible for the first school-related death? This is a decision that needs to be made and I respect the pressure you are under, but I feel in my heart that this is a decision where erring on the side of caution is preferable to the alternative. Safety over convenience and safety over political pressure is needed.

Mahalo,  
Debra Shirai

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Michael Long <milong4@gmail.com> on behalf of Michael Long  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:43 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Starting school

I am extremely concerned about the start up school on Aug 4. As I am diabetic and my wife has kidney disease, we have both been very careful during this time. Now I am being asked to face 180 students in any given week. How can I do my job effectively with this situation in the back of my mind?

Mahalo,

Michael Long  
James Campbell High School



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Randi Cabral <dnbcabral@hotmail.com> on behalf of Randi Cabral  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:44 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

My name is Randi Cabral, 3rd-grade teacher at Holomua Elementary. I want to let the BOE know that we teachers do not feel safe returning to school with so many unknowns. Most of the things that are being said on the news are just not true. We have had no formal training in distance learning from the state. Our own tech teachers have been trying to help all of us as the need arises but I feel like they are overwhelmed. The state should put some days aside (as right now we're working on preparing during our vacation) to formally train the teachers and try and get some sort of consistency going between schools. I feel like it's just been left up to schools but no one is really overseeing the whole system.

Also, masks are not mandatory is what we teachers have heard. If a parent refuses to have their child wear a mask, we can't do anything about it. In the media, I feel like the public is being misled. The way their wording their reports makes parents and others think that EVERYONE will be wearing masks. The same goes for temperature checks. The news report I watched made it seem that temperature checks will be done each day. Not true.

As far as any PPE or protection....we have not heard anything about what will be provided to us besides hand sanitizer. I've been scrambling to order a face shield online and other things to protect myself.

For families wanting 100% distance learning for their child, we have no idea what that will be. Shouldn't the teachers already know this?

School ohana bubbles? How is this a bubble if students go see their neighborhood friends, bus friends, families on their way home every day? When they come back to school, it is no bubble anymore. Just because no other staff and students come in during the school day, doesn't make each class a bubble. I feel like the DOH just trying to give everyone a false sense of security. Everyone in the class is being exposed to whoever each student has contact with each day inside and outside of school. It's not safe at this time when covid numbers are as high as they've ever been in our state.

It seems like all the attention is being put on the students and there is NO consideration given to the health and safety of the teachers and our families. Our school admin is working very hard to prepare but I don't think they're getting timely information. It seems like the government just wants the schools to open no matter what, painting a picture of how prepared we are, but we're not. I feel very disrespected as an educator and if schools reopen on 8/4 with this current plan in place, parents and students will feel the same.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Julia Fernandez <juliamin10@icloud.com> on behalf of Julia Fernandez  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:45 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 Julia Fernandez. I work as a preschool special education teacher at Mokulele Elementary on Hickam AFB. My son will start kindergarten at Pearl Ridge Elementary.

This is nerve racking for me as a mom and as a teacher. I have to keep myself, my son and my students safe.

When we start on July 29 we have 2 days to prepare for the opening of school. One teacher put it like this “we are building the plane as we’re flying in it.” That is our scary reality.

I personally need more time to plan 100% distance learning if my students choose that route.

I need more time to set up my centers to show social distancing of 6 feet.

I need proper PPE because I’m dealing with the general public and my health is important.

My school needs more time to develop strategic protocols for daily bus rider pick-ups and drop-offs, breakfast and lunch seating, recess sections, drop off and pick up protocol.

You need to help provide sneeze guards in preschool and kindergarten classrooms.

I say take the 9 half days and on the 10th day make that the start for students.

My principal said that we still have to open up the school year like every other year with our handbook and videos. Then I went on to think well we don’t have any extra time to talk about and decide upon the best course of action regarding COVID.

Please delay the start of school for our keiki by 9 days. And, give me options for childcare for my kindergarten son. If his school gets delayed then I need a safe place for him to go.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Julia Fernandez  
808-753-7695

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Laura Shaler <laura.shaler@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Laura Shaler  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:45 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Delay School Start Date to Aug 11

Aloha respected Board of Education members,

I teach Kindergarten on our beautiful island of Maui and I have some strong thoughts and feelings to share with you...

**WE ARE NOT YET READY FOR OUR KEIKI TO RETURN.**

I know you know that your teachers love and will do everything we can to be ready, but we need your support. We need more time, and here are a few of the activities we need time to do.

### **Classroom Preparations - 4 days minimum**

- In May we cooperated and packed our classrooms into our cabinets as fast as possible. We did not have to organize, clean, take stock of supplies, or the myriad other activities we generally do at the end of the year. To return to this new model of schooling, I need several days uninterrupted in my classroom.
- Every student needs his/her own pencil box with supplies (pencils, crayons, scissors, glue, math tiles, alphabet flash cards, etc). I have no pencil boxes and I don't know what supplies of which I have 20 sets. I need to go assess this and make a Walmart trip.
- Once that is done, I'll need to give each child books from my classroom collection to read and create a space and a system for safely returning and obtaining new books each week.
- My kindergarteners will need to wiggle and move and dance every 10 minutes (literally!). I need to make a square on the floor by each desk where they'll need to stay. I also need to make spaced out line up squares both inside and outside the classroom.

**These things all take time. And they're just the tip of the iceberg.**

### **Logistical Planning - 2 days minimum**

- How will we teach kiddos at home while we have kiddos in front of us. THESE ARE 5 YEAR OLDS, FRIENDS! The first weeks of kindergarten we say things like, "We keep our clothes on all day!" and "Tongues are for eating, not licking friends." How can we manage our in person group and our at home group simultaneously?
- How will we take kiddos to the bathroom when a 6' apart line would be 60-120' long and we can only fit 2 kiddos in the bathroom at once?
- What do we do when a kiddo shows up sick, it always happens, and it will continue to happen. I used to borrow a 4th grader from next door who would hold my kinder's hand and take her to the nurse. We need a new system.
- My team and I have already had meetings on our own time to try to work out some details. But we are faced with forgoing the last week we have for oil changes, and doctor visits, not to mention self care, or sitting on zoom meetings with part of our team.

**These and a hundred other logistical considerations need time to plan for.**

## **Curriculum & Pacing Planning - 2 days minimum**

- In all grades but kinder, students lost the better part of quarter of last year's learning. Teachers need time to look at the prior grade's curriculum and create a pacing plan to catch kiddos up.

## **Contingency Planning - 2 days minimum**

- Experts are predicting another wave and the mainland has already announced distance learning in many places. If we can plan for this, our student's learning outcomes will be far better than if we must scramble again and piece together what we can.

A five day delay in sending students will not solve all of our problems, but it will give educators the best chance to create a safe environment.

And while we're at it, LET'S NOT DISCONTINUE SPED DIFFERENTIALS! They are working and they protect our most vulnerable keiki (and educators!!).

**This is not about money. This is about equity and excellence. Our students and educators work hard for the learning gains we make. We deserve a safe, well thought out environment in which to practice our craft.**

THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU DO! We appreciate you and respect you and we know you will put our keiki first.

Mahalo,  
Laura Shaler

--

Laura Shaler  
Kindergarten Teacher  
Kihei Elementary School

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Dean Nakamaru <dnakamaru@gmail.com> on behalf of Dean Nakamaru  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:45 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** School Opening

Hi BOE,

I'm a concerned parent who wants more details about the opening of schools.  
Please provide guidance to how you will handle students or staff testing positive for Covid-19.  
We parents want to know what we can expect.

I understand the importance of opening schools but we need to be concerned for the health of students and staff.  
Please consider offering online-only to middle and high schools.

If the HSTA is not confident, how can you expect us parents to have confidence?

Dean Nakamaru

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Vincent Noguchi <vinceshanel@yahoo.com> on behalf of Vincent Noguchi  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:46 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha.

I am a teacher at Kapaa Elementary School. I urge you to support teachers by not starting school on August 4. We have received no training and have literally no idea what to expect. Our school is one of the largest schools in Hawaii and will be doing the blended learning model. However, group A and group B are based on geographic location. The A/B schedule will not be ready until next week. Furthermore, each individual teacher is responsible for balancing and unbalanced class list. Basically we are responsible for contacting parents and deciding which parents are willing to switch days providing they do not ride the bus nor have siblings. This is just one task in itself that will take a lot of time and convincing. There is no protocol in place in the event someone comes into contact with COVID-19. There is no clear protocol/procedures in place for students that come to school ill. There are so many unknowns that have not been answered or addressed. How are these procedures and concerns going to be addressed in a few days without students? Our work days before school begins are days we have in a normal school year situation, however this is not a normal school year. There are much more to be discussed than just curriculum.

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Marnie Cabral <cabrals3@hotmail.com> on behalf of Marnie Cabral  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:46 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 Bargaining Unit 5 employees

If no agreements/policies are in place by now, I think that shows that we are NOT ready to reopen schools at this time. With the opening date of August 4 only two weeks away and decision making that is constantly changing, how can schools be ready to open? My niece will be an incoming 6th grader at Kalama Intermediate School and we still haven't any idea when registration will be, what the school bus schedule is, or how we go about setting up a lunch account for her. Going to a new school is already stressful, this just compounds the issue.

My daughter is a teacher at Baldwin High School. She has two young children at home. I can only imagine the anxiety on her part to have to do her job then hope she's not putting her family at risk when she comes home. Teachers have now earned the first responder status if they need to return to unsafe work environments to do their jobs and try to stay positive and healthy.

Yes, I know the kids need to go back to school, but you cannot rush this situation. You are unnecessarily putting at risk the entire student body, faculty and staff at all schools. Should a student, teacher or staff member come down with the virus, what steps will be in place to ensure the safety of others? What kind of containment measures will be implemented? Will the whole classroom or administrative office be forced to quarantine at home?

There are still so many unanswered questions. I think that should be enough proof that schools are just not ready to open yet.

Thank you,  
Marnie Cabral

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Alanna Souza <alanna.souza@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Alanna Souza  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:46 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

To whom it may concern,

I am testifying on action item H.Board Actin 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 a 6th grade teacher, I don't feel we will be ready to effectively open our schools anytime soon, let alone in 2 weeks. To say this summer has been a "break" is laughable. I have never been so apprehensive and anxious about returning to work in my life. Not just because of this virus, but because of the lack of directives, plans, and time to develop and learn new resources so we can effectively implement our lessons during these unprecedented times.

We have not received any instructions, training, or been given any time to learn safety protocols, new learning management systems/platforms, and resources to be able to teach our keiki during this pandemic, while still being able to physically distance ourselves. We haven't been asked for our input and our thoughts. If anything, educators are dismissed and left unheard.

We have not received any PPE, or instructions on how to set-up our classrooms safely. We still have classrooms at my school that anticipate 30 kids in them, which we all know *cannot* occur while still properly maintaining the 6 feet distance rule. There are SO MANY unknowns. I haven't been able to plan anything concrete because things are changing daily. I have chronic asthma, so I would consider myself to be high risk as well.

I don't know how to reach these kids and build relationships with them, let alone *teach*, without the necessary tools and TIME to figure out how to do so. How do I effectively teach my keiki with little to no guidelines and vague and confusing directives, all while constantly fearing for the safety and well-being of my own life? Right now I feel like all teachers and school personnel are being forced to be this nation's sacrificial lambs, and although the teaching profession has always lacked the respect and appreciation we so deserve, I have never felt the utter disrespect and lack of empathy so deeply before now. So PLEASE, I beg of you. DO NOT let our kids return yet. As much as we all want to be in our classrooms, please give us time to plan and prepare so we can teach and be there for our students the way they deserve. And give us time to implement this as *SAFELY* as possible. It should not take a child, a parent, a kupuna, or a teacher dying to open everyone's eyes that schools should not be opened yet.

Sincerely,  
Ms. Alanna L.K. Souza  
Pearl Ridge Elementary

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Jayne Heinze <jaynehsta@gmail.com> on behalf of Jayne Heinze  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:46 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Item G testimony opposition

Dear Members of the BOARD OF EDUCATION:

My name is Jayne Heinze and I am a 20.5 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 continues to value hardworking teachers. Even temporarily discontinuing this compensation for this next school year will impact our profession and communities in a negative way. We were just starting to make progress in eliminating the teacher shortage crisis.

The differential received in the second half of school year 2019-20 made a tremendous difference in many of my colleagues life plans. Some chose to not retire, others to stay in the profession at our hard to staff school. Some even chose to go back to school to get certification for special education.

I am a genetically engineer teacher. Both of my parents were educators. I am the teacher every parent wants for their child because I am highly effective with years of experience. This summer I met with a retirement specialist because I am now 50 years old. To get my full pension, I should wait to retire at 62 but my plan is to retire at 55 because I can get an entry job in another professional field that will pay me more than I am currently making as a 20 year experienced professional. The differentials could change my decision and let me finish my career where I belong, in the classroom.

Mahalo for your time and understanding,

Jayne Heinze, Hamakua District, Hawaii Island

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Jannalyn-Marie Barsatan <jbarsatan13@gmail.com> on behalf of Jannalyn-Marie Barsatan  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:48 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Delay the Re-Opening of Schools

It is very difficult for teachers to come up with lessons during their summer vacation. After a sudden closure in all schools at the end of last year, we all know teachers need this well deserved break. During these unpaid months of summer vacation, most teachers use this time to spend more time with family/loved ones, take on other jobs, schedule appointments, or doing leisurely activities that help them unwind and mentally prepare for the next school year.

With this pandemic and things happening/changing day by day, we can't expect teachers to just pick up where they left off and go back to teaching as normal. With many families not sending their child back to school and asking teachers to participate in 100% distance learning, teachers need time to prepare/change their lessons and learn in preparation for what's best for their students.

The DOE has done an amazing job by offering Professional Development (PD) classes/trainings for teachers to advance their styles in preparation for distance learning. However, we now need this extra time to take our learnings and apply it to our curriculum. How can you ask a teacher to change a whole year's worth of strategies and curriculum to distance learning in just a matter of days! The students will be starting in two weeks and at that point teachers are too stressed and overwhelmed with what's going right then that all their knowledge and ideas that came from the offered PD trainings/classes will be pushed back to a lower priority. How is that fair to our students?

You cannot offer "optional" or "paid" trainings over summer vacation, and expect EVERY teacher to understand and be on board right when school starts. Especially when these PD's are scheduled within just weeks notice. I, personally, use my summer vacation to schedule all of my medical appointments over the summer, when finding an appropriate time to go in and take care of my health is much more flexible. You're telling me that I will not be able to attend a training of COVID distance learning because of a dentist appointment that I had scheduled months in advance? Paid or not, that's not fair to ask of me.

Delaying the start of re-opening and the school year can make sure all teachers and school staff have proper training and protocol knowledge of distance learning. It's in all fairness for all teachers AND our students to be prepared for what's possible to come.

Thank you for your time.

-Jannalyn Igarashi

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Madison Kauahi <maddiekauahi@gmail.com> on behalf of Madison Kauahi  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:48 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Shortage Differentials Testimony

Aloha,

My name is Maddie Kauahi, I am a 10th-grade Algebra 2 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 at 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 a teaching license but was expected to develop lesson plans and implement individualized education plans for my students without very much 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 by going back to teach in the fall. This temporary suspension amounts to a pay cut and a slap in the face to those risking their lives to support our keiki. This is 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,

Maddie Kauahi

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Monica Wilfong <turtle6857@hotmail.com> on behalf of Monica Wilfong  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:48 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Please delay the opening of school buildings to students

Please delay the opening of school buildings to students. As a middle school science teacher, we need time. We need time to unpack the opening procedures, COVID procedures, and training for hybrid teaching. Opening on August 4th is a rush, which has consequences no wants to fathom.

As it stands now, teachers will only get two days out of the four beginning days. This is not enough time to set up our classrooms, articulate with department and house members on how to work together on hybrid teaching, and be trained on how and where to begin. Teachers are on summer break. We do not get paid over the summer and so teachers who were trained over the summer did so without pay.

We are the first school district in our nation returning for the new school year. We don't want to be the first to fail our students, schools, or communities.

If or when schools return to 100% virtual learning, a clear, prepared model should not be expected then. We want schools to open, but more importantly safely. Please delay the opening. Please prioritize the safety of our students and staff.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Arlyn Sagadraca <arlyns@hawaii.edu> on behalf of Arlyn Sagadraca  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:50 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

My name is Arlyn Sagadraca and I am speaking as a teacher and a parent, I teach at Salt Lake Elementary School and my child also attends where I teach. As a teacher, I am not comfortable with the reopening of school on August 4th. I do not feel comfortable or confident due to the lack of distance learning training that was not given to me and many other teachers. I also feel that due to the number of cases that continues to rise, we are putting out teachers, parents, children and community at risk. That is why I am here to say that I don't agree and feel safe to work in an unsafe environment for me and for my child to attend.

Sincerely, Arlyn Sagadraca

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Philip Eugenio <philip.eugenio@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Philip Eugenio  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:50 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**

I work in Washington Middle School as a 7th grade science teacher and as the days get closer to opening, I am getting more anxious and losing sleep. I am a veteran teacher for many years from out of state and this has been my 4th year teaching in Hawaii. I am not young and I have a preexisting condition on top of it. I am not ready to retire. My salary could barely make ends meet but most importantly, teaching is life.

I missed my being in the classroom and being with my students gives me the sense of life's fulfillment.

This year is different. My personal health and my students' health are more important than anything else.  
**Our school is not ready for the opening.**

There are not enough and clear directives on how to follow the CDC rules. We teach the younger cohorts and it would be impossible to mitigate infection unless there are clear rules. Each school has different dynamics and we are not trained for anything that might happen. Additionally, teachers are ill prepared for online teaching if shutdown happens. We need more time and training.

Thank you for listening to me.

Philip Eugenio

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Crowe, Jamie <jamie.crowe@kalakauamiddle.org> on behalf of Crowe, Jamie  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:51 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Differential

Aloha BOE,

It is very disappointing that after teachers took positions that provided differentials the BOE changed their mind. A DOE memo was posted a month ago stating that differentials would continue for 20-21 SY. That should be honored. The memo should have never been posted if the State was uncertain about being able to provide the differential payments. Special Ed requires highly qualified teachers. SPED teachers also have to do IEP's, testing, data collection as well as deal with demanding parents that expect an exemplar model of services. The school I work at has always been short of SPED teachers. That means you have substitutes or non qualified teachers in the line who cannot write IEP's. Those extra legal duties are then placed on a qualified SPED teacher for no extra pay or compensation. I personally plan to retire as soon as eligible. This job is not worth the stress and endless work load that comes with it. If you do not pay teachers comparable salaries that factor cost of living in Hawaii, the future for the children of Hawaii will get worse not better.

Thank you for your time,  
Jamie Crowe

*This email is property of the of the Hawaii Department of Education and is not for personal use. Emails may be monitored for Acceptable Use Guideline compliance and security.*

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Kev <kabumpo@earthlink.net> on behalf of Kev  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:51 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Failure to Inform and Failure to Prepare and Train are Huge Safety and Liability Issues

We have failed to inform our ohana of their rights, and we have failed to prepare our parents, teachers, and administrators to deliver distance education to those who choose to exercise this right. These are huge safety and liability issues.

The existence of petitions by Hawaii parents demanding distance learning alternatives indicates the Hawaii BOE, and HIDOE have yet to adequately inform parents that "The Department must meet the BOE directive 'to provide instructional models and clear guidance to families that allow parents or guardians who do not feel comfortable sending their children to a school campus to keep their children at home.' " ( HSTA/HIDOE memorandum of understanding dated 6/26/2020, lines 173-175)

Castle High School is the only school I've found thus far that has this important information on their website. However, by setting a deadline to apply, they may have put themselves in violation of the BOE directive.  
<http://www.castlehs.k12.hi.us/distancelearningexpectations>

With the return of teachers on 7/29, and the return of students set for 8/4, we are rapidly running out of time to inform the public of their rights to protect their children, and the obligation of HIDOE to provide a distance alternative.

I have seen many media stories about concerns about returning to the classroom, but none so far that contain the very important facts above. Our failure to inform, prepare, and train are huge safety and liability issues.

Here is a link to one of the petitions from concerned parents who do not know about the BOE directive:  
[https://www.change.org/p/departement-of-education-board-of-education-parents-should-have-an-option-for-our-keiki-s-education?recruiter=753086074&utm\\_source=share\\_petition&utm\\_medium=facebook\\_messenger\\_web&utm\\_campaign=psf\\_combo\\_share\\_abi&recruited\\_by\\_id=d46fc140-7939-11e7-8cee-d13b8b48cfef&fbclid=IwAR0jM32f\\_HxFNVTFOLr196wApDbVMtBtBI45vytKPy8gmiJMmljjdoVk-gk](https://www.change.org/p/departement-of-education-board-of-education-parents-should-have-an-option-for-our-keiki-s-education?recruiter=753086074&utm_source=share_petition&utm_medium=facebook_messenger_web&utm_campaign=psf_combo_share_abi&recruited_by_id=d46fc140-7939-11e7-8cee-d13b8b48cfef&fbclid=IwAR0jM32f_HxFNVTFOLr196wApDbVMtBtBI45vytKPy8gmiJMmljjdoVk-gk)

Thank you for your time and consideration of this issue.



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Ryan Granger <ryan.granger@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Ryan Granger  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:51 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Half measures aren't good enough

I'm writing this with the hope that either the DOE completely adopts CDC guidelines or that we move to fully online instruction. DOE has taken the stance that half measures (not requiring masks in public places) are good enough to prevent the spread of COVID19 in my community despite evidence to the contrary. I am considering leave without pay this year if we move forward with the current plan. I like teaching and my students seem to like me, but maybe now is a good time to explore other options.

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Cara Fukuda <ctfukuda46@gmail.com> on behalf of Cara Fukuda  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:51 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 HSTA (SY 2020-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID 19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

I feel that it is important for children to continue learning, despite these hard times. I am fully committed to teaching this coming school year. However, I feel that teachers need more time to plan meaningful lessons for students who will be learning in school, at home, or a combination of both. Lesson planning will look different depending on where they are and what each student has access to. Teachers will need to create a variety of in school and virtual plans daily, and will need time to plan in order for those lessons to be meaningful and engaging for students.

Health and safety is most critical. Many lower grade teachers use physical or close contact to teach fine motor skills, such as learning how to hold a pencil, form letters, use math manipulatives, etc. Those teachers will not be able to use these strategies while social distancing. Teaching social skills will also be a challenge as students will need distance to remain safe. How will students make friends or learn how to be a good friend? How will students learn how to work together on a project, share supplies and tools, solve natural social issues, etc? Most children naturally have a desire to socialize, and to not give them that opportunity will not only be challenging for the teacher and may cause behavioral issues, but will delay the students social skills.

I am not necessarily saying that it is too early to go back to school, as I do think that it is important for students to go to school and am eager to see my students, as well. However, I'd like these issues to be addressed so that students still have access to a meaningful education while keeping students and staff safe.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Darren <dskonno@hotmail.com> on behalf of Darren  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:52 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Delay opening of schools

I am a parent of 2 children in public middle and high school. Please consider delaying the opening of schools until proper training for teachers and staff is done. Please also provide teachers and staff with upfront cleaning supplies and PPE.

Sincerely,  
Darren Konno  
Maui

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** jkkubota@hawaiiintel.net  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:52 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Aloha,

My name is Joy Kubota and I'm a 1st grade teacher at Princess Nahi'ena'ena Elementary School in Lahaina, Maui. I am submitting this 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.](#)

I am extremely concerned about the readiness of our schools to reopen our campuses to students on August 4. Being that we are on Summer Break, we have not had the opportunity to view or meet to discuss health and safety guidelines provided for reopening the schools.

Adequate time is needed for training, planning, and ensuring all the necessary supplies/equipment are in place before students arrive on campus to effectively help minimize the risk of COVID-19.

As a veteran teacher with health issues and being a caregiver to my elderly/disabled mother, we fall into the high risk category. I do not feel we have all the necessary things in place to be prepared to safely reopen our schools.

Please reconsider and delay the reopening of school campuses to students.

Mahalo,

Joy K. Kubota

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Mahala Quintana <mahala.quintana@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Mahala Quintana  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:52 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony of delay of School reopenings

To whom it may concern,

I emphatically plead with you to properly adhere to implementing safety of school reopenings in Hawaii for teachers and students by providing schools more precautionary time to create a safe and effective rollout of school reopenings. The health and safety of teachers, staff and students is in the hands of the BOE and to reopen in a rush without the necessary safety precautions and guards against spread of covid would be careless and against data driven science proving fatalities will be the result of careless disregard of crucial safety precautions, barriers and trainings. Teachers should not have to be looking to create their will due to being placed in the hostile work environment without masks, plexi glass barriers, proper cleaning supplies and protocols to interfere with spread of Covid 19 illness, and decline of mental health due to the stress of not having their health and safety valued and protected as they serve students. Please be PONO and honor the value of local human lives in our community by providing schools the necessary time needed to prepare their staff and classrooms with necessary precautions for successful and healthy reopening of school sites. It is in the best interest of all to prevent the spread of Covid 19.

Mahala Quintana  
EL Teacher  
Kihei Elementary  
875-6818 ext 4434

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Iria- Carmen <iriacarmen808@gmail.com> on behalf of Iria- Carmen  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:53 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

To whom it may concern:

I'm 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 Carmen Calderon and I work at HTA. I've been a public school teacher in Hawai'i for over 10 years. Currently I do not feel that the state is ready to have students come back to campus. There are too many risk factors and unknowns at this time. It is not in the students' best interest to rush back to school only to close due to a COVID scare. We have the ability to set up a purely virtual learning experience for students and have this be the set curriculum for the immediate future. Why try to force something else that would endanger everyone involved? It is not in the best interest of our students, teachers, families, or our community.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Katie Hearl <katie.hearl@gmail.com> on behalf of Katie Hearl  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:53 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between the State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID19 Resonse): 2017-2020 contractual modification and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

Aloha and thank you for allowing my testimony. I am a middle school teacher on the island of Maui. I am writing to urge you to push back the start date of school for students. We are working in unprecedented times. None of this is normal. Under normal circumstances, teachers have four days at the beginning of the year to prepare for the arrival of students. We are in extraordinary circumstances and yet still only have four days to prepare in ways that none of us have experienced before. We need time. Time to ensure that social distancing is clearly set up for when students arrive. Time to make sure that all procedures and times throughout the day are accounted for. Time to practice a walk through of what a student can expect coming to school. Time to set up digital platforms for online learning. Time to plan with our grade and department levels on exactly how we are going to implement live in-person and online instruction at the same time. Time to become familiar with the technology that we will be using, especially when (not if) we have to close schools again due to Covid increases. If time isn't given, we will be woefully unprepared for the arrival of students.

As I have stated in previous testimony emails, there has been a lack of transparency for all stakeholders involved. The information that was shared at Monday's press conference is inaccurate. These "ohana bubbles" that Dr. Kishimoto continues to speak of are not how intermediate and high schools are planning on functioning. Students will still be rotating from class to class. If a student is in my class and gets sick, in two days, that student has interacted with the majority of the students on the same interdisciplinary team as well as many other students in their grade level through elective classes, lunch, and recess. Our school is still planning on having recess and before and after school time as usual. How are students in "ohana bubbles" then? Dr. Park mentioned that "we can't shelter in place forever". No one is asking for forever. We are asking until there is a solid plan in place. There are still many, many questions that remain unanswered: what are the protocols when a student/teacher/staff member becomes sick? What is the protocol for substitute teachers? How are we ensuring equity for all in regards to Internet and technology? What PPE was ordered and has it arrived for July 29th? The fact that the DOH has not come up with reopening guidelines/plan/committee is alarming. Until all questions can be answered sufficiently beyond "there is a plan", we should be doing quarter 1 online distance learning with the intent of revisiting the issue going into quarter 2. If it's safe to do so, hybrid approach for quarter 2.

We are in a unique position here in Hawaii. We are among the lowest Covid rate in the nation because we have acted cautiously. We need to keep going down that road. We can either be a state that is reactive or proactive. Let's take our time and be proactive during a global pandemic that is far from the norm. You are our leaders. We are looking to you to do the right thing and act for the best of ALL stakeholders. Please stop only saying "what's best for our keiki". Yes, we always will have the best interest of our keiki at the forefront. But that's not where the conversation ends. The lives of the adults who work in our schools are just as precious and matter just as much as the lives of our students.

Thank you,  
Katie Hearl

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Rick Yamashiro <coachyamashiro@aol.com> on behalf of Rick Yamashiro  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:53 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Testifying on Board Action agreement between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association SY 2020-21 contractual modifications and conditions of work in related to COVID 19 in response for bargaining unit 5 employees.

I am extremely worried that we are rushing opening our schools and will be putting vulnerable students, teachers, faculty, staff, and their families at risk. While Hawai'i is in a better position than the mainland, based on what we know, everything can suddenly change. Our school system is currently not equipped to ensure our safety. The rewards of saying: "we're open" does not out weigh the risks of innocent lives. I beg you to help our students, their families, my colleagues, me, and my family. We just want to feel safe. Thank you for your consideration. Stay safe and healthy.

Sincerely,

Rick Yamashiro  
School Counselor  
James Campbell High School



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Harley Mewha <harleymewha@gmail.com> on behalf of Harley Mewha  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:54 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** testimony

Good afternoon, 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 Harley Mewha, and I am a teacher at Alvah Scott Elementary. I am imploring you to delay the reopening of schools until a clearer plan is made. This is a matter of life and death as infections will rise without an appropriate plan in place. There is more time needed to properly create and implement health strategies to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Thank you.

-Harley Mewha

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Alexis Ziegler <alexizie@yahoo.com> on behalf of Alexis Ziegler  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:47 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

With Aloha and Respect,

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 request that we delay the opening of our schools until we have developed solid plans that are safe for our children, teachers/staff, and the community of our children. We need to give ourselves the time needed to take every step possible to keep our schools safe and effective.

I ask you to please remember this before you make your decisions:

Don't forget to be true to our children, to plan safely, to give abundantly, to imbibe well being, and to impart knowledge and wisdom. This is what our children deserve.

Mahalo for your time,  
Alexis Ziegler  
Teacher  
Wailuku Elementary School

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Aaron Kubo <tgmoeh@hotmail.com> on behalf of Aaron Kubo  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:55 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** re: testimony  
**Attachments:** Testimony on BOE safely reopening of schools -- 7-21-2020.pdf

Hawaii Board of Education:

My name is Aaron Kubo I am an eighth-grade social studies teacher at Hilo Intermediate School in the Hilo-Waiakea Complex area on Hawai'i Island. I am testifying on 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 of writing this testimony on July 21, 2020 there are about 1,371 cases in the state of Hawai'i and two weeks ago it was at 1,030. Two weeks prior to that it was at 819 cases. There has been a clear and steady rise in COVID-19 positive cases, 552 to be exact, in the last month alone. Which equates to about 40% of the state of Hawai'i's positive COVID cases occurring in the last month.

I live in a household with a medically vulnerable person. I, myself, am considered medically vulnerable as well. Dr. Bruce Anderson said during the Senate briefing on June 16, 2020 that once students return to schools, they will start testing positive for COVID-19. What procedures and safety precautions are in place to handle this? Other diseases and pre-existing conditions like heart attacks, strokes, cancer among many other diseases still are going on and affecting our communities. I live on the Big Island with limited medical facilities and if people start getting more and more positive COVID-19 cases there may not be enough ICU beds available to handle the workload. What is the rush for students to return?

It is understandable that many people in the state of Hawai'i want schools to reopen...but why is there a rush to open schools for students? Many educators want to be back in the classrooms with their students too but done in the safest possible way based on the most up to date science available, in an organized manner, with a well thought out plan with clear guidance and expectations, with actual training, with all necessary safety precautions met, including all safety materials provided at all schools, for the sake of all parties involved.

There is no set distance learning platform set by the DOE. Many schools are choosing to pay for distance learning programs, on their own, out of their schools' budget, but little to no guidance from the DOE. The superintendent said during the Senate hearing on June 16, 2020 that they are taking a pre-existing platform and making it fit for this situation, however, what platform is she referring to? E-school? Training, what

training? For elementary schools they have not found any digital learning platform yet. School starts soon and without a platform how can the DOE advertise distance learning without it? What type of training can be done to prepare elementary and secondary educators when the platforms are not even set yet? Many teachers are on summer break and not getting paid. What is the rush?

There is no question about teachers wanting to be back in the classroom and I am advocating for teachers to be there starting next week. What I am asking for is adequate time and to delay students returning to campus until all parties are ready. If teachers, janitors, staff, administrators are sick and cannot come to school...who takes over? There are not a lot of substitutes for teachers, janitors, staff, and administrators out there. Who will teach the students when teachers cannot work? Who will feed the students when cafeteria workers cannot work? Who will take care of the school/disinfectant it when the janitors/custodians cannot work? Who will operate the school/run the office/take care of ill students if the staff/administrators cannot work? Again, what is the rush?

Every student deserves a free and public education, but schools need to reopen in a safe way otherwise the system fails when students, teachers, faculty, and staff become ill. When that happens, everyone loses. What is the rush? Is this really in the best interest of students, teachers, administrators, and staff in Hawai'i? When people rush mistakes happen and things get missed. When people within the school system become infected with COVID-19 and start dying...is it worth it? What is the rush?

Respectfully,

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

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Anjelica Ayers <aiayers@yahoo.com> on behalf of Anjelica Ayers  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:49 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** TESTIMONY

To whom it may concern:

I am a concerned teacher and resident of Hawai'i. 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 work as a 4th grade teacher at Queen Ka'ahumanu Elementary School. I am appalled at the state's lack of action in creating a safe plan to reopen schools. I am outraged that the state, Superintendent Kishimoto, and the Board of Education adamantly pushed to reopen schools with no clear plan to keep individuals safe. They have lied to the public to create a false sense of security and safety in order to rush the opening of schools. Moreover, they disregarded the science and guidelines put forth by medical experts. Teachers have not been trained. Teachers should not be asked to work for free in the summer to accommodate the state's failure to act. Teachers are not being provided with PPE to keep themselves and others safe. Ohana bubbles are not grounded in science. Teachers are not medical experts. It is impossible to visually check for COVID-19! The current plan is full of pukas that endanger the lives on people in our community.

The health and safety of our keiki and 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. I testify that the Board should delay opening up campuses to students until teachers, students, and families feel that their safety is your top priority.

Sincerely,  
Anjelica Ayers

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Tyler Okamura-Tagupa <tagupa@gmail.com> on behalf of Tyler Okamura-Tagupa  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:55 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

To Whom It May Concern,

I, Tyler Okamura-Tagupa, submit testimony 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 responses for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

I feel Hawaii is not ready to return to school and a start date should be postponed for another month, similar to the travel ban, to allow for more planning and safer conditions. Start date after labor day should be considered.

I feel that the teacher differential pay should remain for those schools that service at-risk students and hard to fill positions. Teachers worked hard to earn the compensation and it should not be taken away.

v/r,  
Tyler Okamura-Tagupa

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** anthony benigno <anthonybenigno@yahoo.com> on behalf of anthony benigno  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:55 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

RE: 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 Members,

My name is Anthony Benigno and I am a general education teacher at Maui High School. I started my teaching career in special education in 2005. Three years ago, I left special education because I found myself doing more than the general education teachers while getting paid the same. I was making more calls, attending more meetings, doing more paperwork and calling more homes. A special education teacher has far more responsibilities and hardships than any other teacher on campus. After going remote, I found the same problem exists.

My wife is a special education teacher and her experiences during the last 3 months of school made me feel sorry for teachers who continue to improve the direction of special education. When schools closed, special education teachers still had to do all the paperwork, meetings, phone calls and service minutes. They used their own resources to make this happen. After learning that the BOE is to consider discontinuing the extra compensation, I was sickened.

As we look at returning to schools, the teachers who will have the most burden- once again- will be special education teachers. The only students who will be allowed to return to campus full-time are those with the highest risk, students with special needs. During this pandemic, special education teachers will be face-to-face with their caseload on day 1 and continue to be there everyday after that, until day 180. They are your most loyal and compliant teachers who are on the frontline of this educational crisis.

The DOE, BOE and HSTA have an agreement in place. Breaking this agreement will result in a lack of trust moving forward. Discontinuing this extra compensation will be many steps in the wrong direction. It will result in more teachers leaving "hard to fill" positions. The state will find itself hiring long-term subs to fill the void and expose itself to more lawsuits. Before the pandemic, I spoke with my principal about returning to special education. That's off the table until I see the BOE make a concerted effort to maintain the extra compensation.

Thank you for reading my testimony.

Anthony Benigno  
Educator  
Maui High School

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Elizabeth Haley Williams <Haley.williams@mililanihs.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Elizabeth Haley Williams  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:56 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

I am testifying: 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.**

Haley Williams  
Mililani High School

--

**Haley Williams, MEdT, NBCT**  
**9th Grade English**  
**Mililani High School**

E-Mail sent from Mililani High School e-mail accounts (@[mililanihs.k12.hi.us](mailto:mililanihs.k12.hi.us)) and any attachments are intended only for the individual to which it is addressed and may contain information which is privileged, confidential and prohibited from disclosure or unauthorized use under applicable law. If you are not the intended recipient of an e-mail from the [mililanihs.k12.hi.us](mailto:mililanihs.k12.hi.us) domain, you are hereby notified, that any use, dissemination, or copying of a [mililanihs.k12.hi.us](mailto:mililanihs.k12.hi.us) e-mail or the information contained in this e-mail is strictly prohibited by the sender without authorization. If you have received an e-mail from a [mililanihs.k12.hi.us](mailto:mililanihs.k12.hi.us) address in error, please notify the sender and delete the original material and remove all copies from your system.



I have been a public school teacher in the state of Hawaii for almost 10 years and for the first time I am terrified of going into my classroom. As we are clearly in unprecedented times, I'm extremely concerned that teachers and students are being rushed to return to school before it's safe. There are so many unknowns and unanswered questions with less than one week until the school year begins. Why are you willing to risk and sacrifice the health and safety of teachers, students, their families, and entire communities?! Why am I being forced to make a choice between my health and my job?

There doesn't seem to be any cohesive plan from Superintendent Kishimoto- her explanations are vague and unrealistic at best- and her description of teachers' experiences with summer school are NOT what I have heard from my colleagues. Our HSTA Memorandum of Understanding is not being honored. What she's presenting to the public & media is not an honest or accurate account of our reality. Everyone is worried. No one feels prepared. Why would this be a good way to begin a new school year in the midst of an already stressful pandemic? Here's an example of just a few important questions that have yet to be clearly addressed:

1. How is the DOE planning to stay on top of Covid outbreaks in schools when there is currently a shortage of Covid tests available? What if someone in my class or building gets sick? Will the whole class or building be quarantined and for how long? Will the sick individual's whole family receive a Covid test too before the child is allowed to return to school?
2. What is the protocol for students refusing to wear masks, wear them properly, or adhere to social distancing in a classroom? What rights or limitations does a teacher have in these situations considering the public is so torn on best practices?
3. What will the protocol be with subs? Will subs be moving between schools and between different groups of students? If so, this completely defeats the purpose of the "bubble concept", cohorts, and not mixing groups.
4. What will the sub protocol be for co-teaching? If my co-teacher is absent, does this mean I will have to work in a classroom/close proximity with another adult(s) who has been in numerous classrooms and schools? This is specific to teachers who are working with SpEd.
5. How will schools adequately plan/prepare for an active shooter situation if everyone is walking around campus in a mask?

The list of questions goes on. These are not questions that can be figured out as we go! These are literally life or death questions that affect people forever. The Hawaii DOE and DOH are treating teachers like guinea pigs who are expendable. With lives at stake, now is not the time to learn from our mistakes.

Mahalo,  
Haley Williams, MEdT, NBCT  
9th Grade English

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Erin Kowalick <erin.kowalick@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Erin Kowalick  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:57 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Fwd: Testimony for Delay of School Start

*Erin Kowalick  
Kihei Elementary School  
EL Coordinator/Coach*

----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** Erin Kowalick <[erin.kowalick@k12.hi.us](mailto:erin.kowalick@k12.hi.us)>  
**Date:** Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 2:51 PM  
**Subject:** Testimony for Delay of School Start  
**To:** <[testimony.boe@boehawaii.gov](mailto:testimony.boe@boehawaii.gov)>

*To whom it may concern:*

*I am writing in testimony to delay the start of SY 2020-2021. **We need more time.** You are asking teachers to deliver both online instruction and in person instruction on top of having the put in place the new protocols without the proper training. To not supply additional days for training and planning, you are setting the system up for failure. We want to come back as soon as possible, but it is unfair and downright irresponsible to not provide the protection, training and time for planning that this new normal is going to take. We have been given no guidance, no training, and many questions are still unanswered that would make both teachers and families feel safe about returning. Teachers should not be bearing the burden of the lack of early planning and training implementation on the part of the DOE. This process should have begun months ago when HSTA asked to come to the table back in April, and not weeks ago. As part of the agreement signed by the state and teachers, we were told that written guidance would be released on the health and safety protocols. None of this has happened. In fact the department of health even noted that the committee had not even been set up! In addition, although PPE has been ordered, most schools have not received their shipments because of back ups and delays in the system. K-5 families who are opting for 100% virtual learning have not even been given the information on how this is going to work because a program has yet to be determined by the DOE. I could go on and on as there are so many other issues with opening up on the 4th, but I am currently working on updating my will because I am NOT feeling safe to return under these circumstances.. Please, let us not make the mistake of being the hare instead of the tortoise....slow and steady wins the race. We are only asking for appropriate training and safety measures to be put in place and that takes TIME.*

*Sincerely,*

*Erin Kowalick  
Kihei Elementary School  
EL Coordinator/Coach*

transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Erin Henderson <erinhenderson73@gmail.com> on behalf of Erin Henderson  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:58 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Funding differentials

Aloha! I want to provide testimony in favor of NOT cutting salary differentials for hard to staff areas. Both me and my husband work at a rural school that receive the differential for hard to staff areas. Every year we have open positions as the school year starts. The positions either remain empty or are filled by unqualified teachers. Our students deserve better. Please continue to fund these differentials and give our Keiki the education they deserve. Mahalo for your attention to this matter.

--

*Aloha,  
Erin*

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Amber Duarte <amsielynn11@gmail.com> on behalf of Amber Duarte  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:58 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I personally think if it comes down to cuts to all teachers pay or cuts to differentials I think they should start there before touching all teachers pay.

As for delayed reopening, I do not think the DOE provided enough guidance for schools to prepare for reopening. Personally on Maui I know of many schools that are only this week voting on models. Now teachers and parents will have to scramble to get school open in time. There will be no solid plan in place and since they have not yet provided staff with distance learning PD I think it will be an inequity in what students receive from people who are tech savvy versus those who aren't. It's better to push it back a week or more giving staff time to prepare and successfully set the tone for the year.

Amber Olson  
Grade 3  
Kula Elementary

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Kathleen Booth <kathleenbooth4@gmail.com> on behalf of Kathleen Booth  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:58 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

My name is Kathleen Booth and I am a first grade teacher at Connections Public Charter School. I am writing to testify 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 and foremost, why has the funding of charter schools been decreased by ten percent this year?

Our school is scheduled to begin teaching students on August 10th. Teachers report back on August 4th. Administrators, and most of our teachers, have been working around the clock this summer to figure out a schedule for reopening our school safely and hopefully beneficial to our parents. It has not been easy. We present the plan to our Governing Board tomorrow. I know it has not been easy because we are expected, or have been asked, to do something that is just not possible. I want to teach, I do, but I do not want to get anyone sick doing so. I can safely fit 10 students in my classroom, but the second I begin walking around the room the whole 6 foot distancing expectation goes right out the window. Oh, wait, my room doesn't have any windows!!!

I am able and willing to teach online. I have gained enough experience during the fourth quarter and summer school and I have taught myself. I watched many youtube videos. The use of Schoology as a platform has made this possible.

Please do not rush the opening of schools. It is just not worth the risk.

Mahalo,  
Kathleen Booth



Virus-free. [www.avg.com](http://www.avg.com)

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Lilinoe Yong <lyong@nahonu.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Lilinoe Yong  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:58 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** SUPPORT HAWAIIAN IMMERSION differential pay

My name is Dr. Lilinoe Yong, a 30+ year veteran of DOE, Hawaiian Immersion Program. HAWAIIAN and English are the OFFICIAL LANGUAGES of Hawaii. While English and Special Education teachers are able to access lessons in English from Teachers Pay Teachers, SEESAW, iReady, IXL, Wonders, and various other Math, Language arts, Science, and Social Studies Programs, the Hawaiian Immersion teachers still have to TRANSLATE EVERY CURRICULUM INTO HAWAIIAN. Every informational video from BRAINPOP or MYSTERY SCIENCE is all in English. I have to (1) get permission from the videographer and the speaker on video; and upload to Screencastify and TRANSLATE every video or news broadcast my students watch. Any other department English, Special Education, Hard-to-Staff that is instructed through English have access to thousands of lessons, curriculum, and assessment in English. Only the Hawaiian Immersion teachers have to translate or create. Please support the DIFFERENTIAL 4 HAWAIIAN IMMERSION. It has been documented by Helen Slaughter from 1st assessment that there was a DIRGE of curriculum (Slaughter, 1989). Throughout the years we continue to lack materials in Hawaiian because they change standards so previous curriculum assessing old HCPS standards are outdated. We still have the Addison Wesley Math book from when I started teaching the first class in history (Yong, 2012). Yet Hawaiian Immersion is the first program to successfully PASS NATIONAL ASSESSMENT in an indigenous language!!!! Please support the portion of the bill differential payment increase for Hawaiian Immersion educators.

‘A’ohe Hana Nui ke Alu ‘ia

No Task is too Great with Cooperation,

Lilinoe Darlene Yong, Ph.D. Of Educational Technology, UH Mānoa

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** michelle heaviside <michellemybell3333@yahoo.com> on behalf of michelle heaviside  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:59 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Against pay cuts

Special education teachers pay should not be cut. Sped teachers were under so much pressure and had to do many many extra hours of work to make sure they were engaging students and Parents. Sped teachers were plagued with an unreal amount of extra Work and documentation. Thank feel my child's sped teachers deserve to keep their pay.

Sincerely

M Murphy

Sent from my iPhone



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Caleigh Testa <caleigh.testa@gmail.com> on behalf of Caleigh Testa  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:59 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Aloha,

I am writing to testify 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 Caleigh Moats and I am the only counselor at Nimitz Elementary. This past school year, we approached 700 students. I am overwhelmed at being the sole counselor for the entire campus under the circumstances that are laid out thus far.

Until we receive guidance for all staff, including non-classroom teachers such as counselors, I do not believe we are prepared to resume in person instruction. These "Ohana bubbles" are not possible when you factor in staff other than teachers who will be exposed to students. If I am to be available to every student, I will be exposed to hundreds every week. The social and emotional health of our keiki is a huge priority right now, but yet there isn't any guidance for carrying that out, specifically for school counselors and other student support staff. The emotional state of our teachers is also extremely important. Exposing them to high levels of stress as they try to meet in person, distance, and hybrid student needs will be detrimental.

Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,

Caleigh Moats

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Jessica Kauhi <kanoekauhi@gmail.com> on behalf of Jessica Kauhi  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:59 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 Kanoë Crivello and I am a 5th Grade teacher at Pā'ia School where my 8 year old son also attends. I urge the BOE to consider pushing back the start date of school for the 20-21 school year due to the uncertainties surrounding both teacher and student safety. There are simply too many unanswered questions and concerns including but not limited to the following:

- When will the State of Hawaii's Department of Health provide written guidance on the reopening of school buildings, which the HDOE 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?

Teachers need more time to get these answers and to plan on how to keep our students and ourselves safe.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Nicole McElfresh <nicole7786646@gmail.com> on behalf of Nicole McElfresh  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:59 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Aloha,

I am an elementary teacher in Lahaina and I am writing to address two major concerns. Every summer, I spend the last few weeks of summer excited to plan for the opening of school. I go to Target and use my own money to buy welcoming little trinkets for the keiki, name tags, pencils, and extra school supplies to help the ones who cannot afford to bring pencils or crayons. This summer, we are almost one week out from returning to school. I am not excited. I am fearful. I am not living in fear of COVID but living in fear of knowing that the DOE never comes through with their promises. My back to school purchases looked much different this year. The only school supplies I bought have been a facemask, a face shield, and box of gloves for myself because I know that supplies are very hard to come by in the school system. We are lucky to have the hand soap replenished when needed. How do I have faith that we will have proper PPE for ALL staff and students? We have so many questions that simply cannot be answered. We return to school next week and when I watched Dr. Kishimoto and the Senate meet, I was hoping to have some answers. I left that meeting with even more questions. Dr. Kishimoto still had no answers for questions being asked. We are supposed to return and be forced into a health situation and hopefully figure it out as we go? As an educator for the past 10 years, I am tired of figuring it out as we go, spending my own money for resources, and not having confidence in our leadership. I am tired of answering for our officials when the parents ask questions about the why of this all. We have had weeks to make a decision about returning in person to school. We have no answers. We have no plan. Just today, I have seen many parents extremely concerned because their child is supposed to start school in two weeks yet they have no idea what plan or if they have a choice to distant learn. Teachers have had zero training on distant learning, how to handle a possible COVID student, proper protocols, and how to properly handle a child who has emotional/behavioral needs from 6 feet away. I want to be back in school teaching as that is what I am passionate about and know that is best, however I want to know a clear plan. I want to know all of us will be safe and when a problem arises, I want to feel confident we have an answer and not wait on an email to be answered from someone who may or may not know that answer. We are usually left to figure out things on our own and this time, we should not be doing that. This is life and death for some people. We have no answers to proper PPE. Grocery stores have plexi glass yet when I asked if we could have it, I was answered that we need to fill out a PO and use our classroom budget money for that. By the way, our budget was cut from \$900 to \$450 and one plexi glass partition is \$36. So now I must choose between ink and paper or the safety of my classroom? We are not allowed to hand in a PO until the first day of school yet we expect these purchases to be approved, ordered and arrive 4 days after I return so the students can use them on August 4?

Ohana bubbles are a divorced reality as our HSTA President, Corey has mentioned. Sports, band practice, choir, and rec sports are to open August 19 according to DOE. How does this fit into our bubbles? We usually have a hard time finding a sub when sick and now we have even less of a choice due to them not wanting to risk it.

This is hard for our families as they need to figure out their work situation, many have to figure out childcare, and many need to figure out if they are unenrolling their child. We have no answers. No clear and truthful answers are being given to families regarding online learning. When the senate asked Dr. Kishimoto if the K-5 online platform was done yet, she said that they were "still working on it" but couldn't tell a date when it would be done. Teachers have had zero training although she said some have had training for online learning. Where was this training? We must help the most vulnerable students yet those students start in two weeks and we still have no plan to who is vulnerable.

We have no direction how to help the SPED students if we do have to do distant learning again and were left to figure it out in the last quarter. We now have had time to figure this out over summer break and still do not have a plan? What do we tell the parents who are angry their child's IEP minutes are not being fulfilled?

My second concern is not is the DOE ready to feed us to the sharks but now they want to cut our differential pay? The pay that is being used to fill the gap in our already sad salary. The pay that is some families' livelihood right now as spouses lost their jobs. We cannot work our second jobs as usual due to COVID closing the majority of businesses. This was a promise made for hard to fill areas and having this pay meant I was able to see more doctors for my illness to cover medical expenses and put food on the table. Cutting this pay is a huge slap in the face. We are now encountering cuts and furloughs. How much before we say enough is enough? We truly switched over in the matter of a day or two in the crisis learning in March as an expectation, using our electricity and paying for our internet. Many did not even have the internet but paid for it to teach their students. Have we seen any money being given for that? Not only are you now asking us to use our money to buy proper PPE, figure out by "looking visually to see if a kid is sick" and do this while getting pay taken away is just absurd.

We love our students and want to do what is right for them and their families. Please delay the start of school for at least a month and do not cut our pay. Please help us do that.

Mahalo

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Bea Arendale <hanabay17@yahoo.com> on behalf of Bea Arendale  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:00 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Dear Board of Education members,

I want to urge you not to cut the pay differentials for Special Education and hard to fill positions. I have been working as an English at King Kekaulike High School for over 22 years after working at Pearl City High School for a year. Last year, I did not have a Special Education Inclusion teacher. I had various substitute teachers who had the best of intentions, however they did not have the knowledge or skills to help students who were struggling with writing and reading comprehension. Our high school requires all students to write a 6 page argumentative research paper for their senior project in order to graduate. Without the help of Special Education teachers, writing this type of paper would be an impossible task for the majority of the Special Education and 504 students.

Please reconsider cutting the pay differential.

Respectfully,

Beate Arendale  
King Kekaulike Senior English teacher

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Lori Nelson <lorinelson53@gmail.com> on behalf of Lori Nelson  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:00 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** testimony re: differentials

Dear Board chair and members;

I am writing to beg you, plead with you, entreat and urge you to maintain the shortage (and hardship) differentials at promised levels.

I very much love my job teaching special education PreK at Makaha Elementary on the Wild West Side. I have 8 students so far, in a classroom of Headstart and DOE inclusion students, with 2 in the eligibility pipeline. I cannot imagine a school year for which I no longer spend the summers preparing, along with my co-teacher in Headstart and my PPT assistants. We review the past year, share new ideas, do a little PD with the PPTs, and share interesting pieces of webinars and conferences that we have attended separately.

I also spend anywhere from \$200 to several thousand dollars each year acquiring materials and supplies (on sale if I can get them) for the coming year. In past years, I have sometimes resented the amount of money I spent being a teacher. I call it my luxury tax--the money I pay for the luxury of doing work that I love doing.

This summer has been especially expensive, as I have purchased the PPE that my principal has not been able to guarantee he will have on hand at the start of the year. I should be angry, right? Spending my own money is not different, but spending it on stuff to keep alive rather than stuff to enhance learning for my students? Not fun, but not resented *because* we are finally getting paid that extra bit that makes it possible without eating ramen noodles for weeks and weeks to make up the budget.

However, with the threat that we won't continue to have that money available, I see no point in sticking it out any more in Hawaii. I am close enough to retirement that if you are going to return me and my husband to living on credit cards to make up for the, frankly, lousy teacher pay here in paradise (I was offered \$95K/year sixteen years ago to stay in Pennsylvania!), I will resign after this calendar year. I'd hoped to spend the next three school years, my final three (I will be 67 in September), teaching and loving my students, and continuing to create paced curricular materials that will support whomever follows after me. I need to keep working somewhere with health insurance for the next three years while I wait for my younger husband to reach medicare age. I want to keep teaching, since many of our students are returning for a second PreK year, and I don't want to drop a new teacher (or a long-term sub) on my already stressed little ones. Bad enough that going back to in-person teaching may kill me (I am high risk, and I am prepared to stay in PPE from stepping out of my house until I step back in). But you are talking about breaking your promise to teachers who could have made a far more graceful exit earlier on if we hadn't been lied to about the continued provision of the differentials! I am not alone in my distress about this.

You will lose teachers, and you will have teachers who stay and hate you all year, resent their jobs all year, and likely some of them will hate their positions and their students, if you do this.

Please don't do this.

Sadly sincere,

Lori Jane Nelson, M. Ed. Special Education

PA certified special ed K-12

Hawaii licensed PreK - 3; Special Ed.

Taught pre-service teachers for a few years, prefer elementary

23 years of teaching experience

Love teaching my precious students

Can't do it to end up broke on retirement



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Natalia Kotula <nataliaannakotula@gmail.com> on behalf of Natalia Kotula  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:00 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony: Delay of school opening

Hello,

Today I write to you as a teacher of the DOE and hope that my personal story helps in making a good decision for the well-being of our teachers and students.

We are just two weeks away from opening up our campuses to students. While my school has decided on a 2-day face-to-face schedule and assured us we will have enough PPE to keep ourselves safe and that deep sanitization will be conducted, we have received absolutely no information regarding any of these assurances. Additionally, we have not received information regarding the expectations for online learning.

The one sure thing I have heard is that teachers will be expected to be on campus during our scheduled online days. The need for this, apparently, is to house students whose parents would like/need them to physically be on campus all 5 days. I completely sympathize with working parents who rely on school hours and meals, however, for teachers, this means that we will be expected to monitor or essentially “babysit” students in our rooms while conducting online lessons. This expectation is preposterous beyond belief.

The lack of proactiveness regarding the safe reopening of schools has caused much anxiety for teachers who face an unsafe workplace in the coming days. I am not speaking for only myself when I say that we feel we are being placed in front of the battle lines with little consideration not only by the decisions being made but the lackadaisical “speed” at which they are made.

A friend recently made an interesting point regarding school openings:

“If we have to conduct virtual meetings to discuss the safe reopening of schools because it is too dangerous to do so in-person, why are we even discussing reopening schools?”

As a last point, I’d like to bring up this image:

Prior to moving to a Hawai’i, I taught in Chicago at an alternative school where “unwanted” students were sent after being removed from their public schools. To say this was an at-risk population is an understatement. I can tell you from personal experience, there is nothing in the world that can prepare you for the emotion and pain upon hearing a student, fellow classmate has passed, regardless if the situation unfolded by their own making.. ie gangs, drugs, violence, etc. Consoling coworkers and students was nearly impossible, even during the days when it was safe to hug, pat each other on the back, hand one another a tissue to blow into..

Unlike the situations that befell my students in Chicago, who, most of the time, succumbed to violence as a result of poor decisions, our students will face environments and a virus they cannot control. This all being done with some sort of level of comfort in low fatality rates for children who become ill, but somehow completely neglecting the in-plain-sight facts that some children DO die and all children DO go back home.. to vulnerable adults.. every day..

Imagine the mental toll on our students when (not if, because it will happen) their fellow classmates, their families, their teachers, become sick with an uncertain future, or, God forbid, pass away.. because we did not do enough to keep them safe.. we will helplessly watch them suffer, cry from 6 feet away.

Please consider this image.

For the safety of my family and my newborn child, the decisions that you make in the next few days are tantamount. I am not alone in this. I am certain you will hear more voices like mine.

Natalia Kotula

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Joanne Tamashiro <jtamashiro123@gmail.com> on behalf of Joanne Tamashiro  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:01 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

To whom it may concern,

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 believe that we need to delay the opening of school for many important reasons. Our union HSTA has reached an agreement with HIDOE a couple of weeks ago, and yet HIDOE has still not fulfilled their side of the agreement. We are still waiting for written guidance and clear protocols from DOH and HIDOE.

Most of the teachers have not been provided professional development regarding virtual learning. Dr. Kishimoto claims that we have been trained throughout the summer. No training was provided or even a choice for me. I would like to be properly trained so I can provide my students the best learning opportunity that they deserve, especially when we are required to give them a grade.

We are two weeks away from reopening our school to students, yet critical questions remain unanswered. I am still confused and unclear on the necessary measures and steps needed to reduce the risk of COVID-19 spread. I would not be able to provide answers and be able to assure my students and parents regarding our covid situation in school.

I have been teaching for over 20 years and would love to return to my classroom to teach. However with so many unanswered questions and uncertainty, I would prefer that we delay the opening of school to prepare for everyone's safety.

Thank you,  
Joanne Tamashiro  
August Ahrens Elem.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** ms buck <msmbuck29@yahoo.com> on behalf of ms buck  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:02 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Delaying student start date

*We are NOT ready to open schools. Please delay the student start date.*

*"The Employer has the responsibility to provide a healthy workplace for all employees. Employees shall not be required to work in unsafe or hazardous conditions or be required to work in unsafe or hazardous conditions or be required to perform tasks that could endanger their health or well-being."*

*Thank you for your consideration,  
Michelle Buck  
Na`alehu Elementary School*

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** James Atkins <mayotuohy@aol.com> on behalf of James Atkins  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:03 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Please do not end the hard to staff differentials. Our school, Honoka'a High and Intermediate has significant staff turnover, which is not good for students' stability and growth. I believe the differentials will help address this problem.

Sincerely James Atkins

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Maria Vanessa Huth <havenjobysmommy@gmail.com> on behalf of Maria Vanessa Huth  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:03 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Too soon to open the schools

To Whom It May Concern,

Hello. My son is an incoming sophomore this coming SY2029-2021. I want to point out my concerns out there.

I want to say that I don't think schools are even ready to reopen for school year 2020-2021. Let's just say the first semester of school year. With number of cases are still in 2 digits every single day. I am also afraid for the safety of teachers and staff.

Just this month alone I've emailed class advisor and the class advisor can't even direct me to the right direction for virtual online. Not just the class advisor even high school counselor and principal they can't even direct me to the right direction where and how to sign for virtual online. I don't think school even where to begin upon asking them a simple question.

As a parent I am so frustrated with the school can't even answer my question and can't even acknowledge it.

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Elizabeth Haley Williams <Haley.williams@mililanihs.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Elizabeth Haley Williams  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:03 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony  
**Attachments:** Testimony-School Reopening .pdf

I am testifying: 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.**

Haley Williams  
Mililani High School

E-Mail sent from Mililani High School e-mail accounts (@[mililanihs.k12.hi.us](mailto:Haley.williams@mililanihs.k12.hi.us)) and any attachments are intended only for the individual to which it is addressed and may contain information which is privileged, confidential and prohibited from disclosure or unauthorized use under applicable law. If you are not the intended recipient of an e-mail from the [mililanihs.k12.hi.us](mailto:Haley.williams@mililanihs.k12.hi.us) domain, you are hereby notified, that any use, dissemination, or copying of a [mililanihs.k12.hi.us](mailto:Haley.williams@mililanihs.k12.hi.us) e-mail or the information contained in this e-mail is strictly prohibited by the sender without authorization. If you have received an e-mail from a [mililanihs.k12.hi.us](mailto:Haley.williams@mililanihs.k12.hi.us) address in error, please notify the sender and delete the original material and remove all copies from your system.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Becca Smith <beccasurfs@hotmail.com> on behalf of Becca Smith  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:04 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** I urge you to delay the return of students to campus

Share your story. Has the HDOE failed to answer important questions dealing with the reopening of schools? How does this impact your ability to teach and students' ability to learn?

We are rushing into this unprepared and if it feels scary to me as an adult, it will be even more scary for the students. We need to be extremely confident about everyone's safety before we welcome children to school again.

I am high risk for covid-19 with chronic lung disease and severe asthma. I want to go back to school. I want to help my students learn. I am obviously not in this for the money, I am in this because I love this children, I love this planet and this community and I want to create a better society by educating this world. By going to back to school during a pandemic, I am putting basically putting my life into the hands of my administration and trusting that they will ensure my safety. In order to feel more at ease going back to school full time in August, I agreed to teach a small number of students in a summer school program. I teach middle school and if you know this age level, you know how social they are. With a group of 8 students, it was impossible to keep them 6ft apart at all times. And that was only 8 students! Even with having half the students come on one day and the other half the next day, there will be about 500 students on our campus at one time 2 weeks from now. Our program was 3 weeks long, and I could not train them to social distance in those 3 weeks. With the hot weather it was extremely difficult for students to keep their masks on, and it only gets hotter in August! I love my admin team and I feel blessed to have such a positive environment in which to work, however, I am not confident about their ability to monitor 500 tweens and keep them all 6 feet apart. It is just not going to happen and covid will spread like wildfire on our campus. I am scared for my safety and for the safety of all the people on the campus. How does this impact my ability to teach and students' ability to learn? If I am exposed to covid I will probably die. That will certainly impact my ability to teach and no students will be able to learn anything from me then.

I urge you to delay the opening of school until we are 100% confident that we can ensure a safe learning environment for all.

Thank you for your time,  
Becca Smith



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Lori Towata <lori.towata@gmail.com> on behalf of Lori Towata  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:04 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

My name is Lori Towata, third-grade teacher from Lunalilo Elementary School in Honolulu, Hawaii and I am submitting written testimony regarding the July 23, 2020 General Business Meeting 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 my school, we recently had a long-time Special Education teacher retire and in the past three years have had a rotating slate of an additional three teachers cycle in and out of our school. I think it is absolutely critical that these overworked, dedicated special education teachers are compensated for their time and qualifications should still receive compensation that was approved earlier this year.

During the closure of school this past spring, I was invited to participate in an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meeting for a child that we had just discussed three months previously. I came to discover that all SpEd teachers were required to hold IEPs for ALL of their students. The particular teacher who initiated the meeting is a probationary teacher hailing from Arizona. Giving her a differential made her challenging transition year to Hawaii a bit sweeter--it offered her an incentive to stay. This past school year was especially challenging with her enrollment of more than fifteen students in her class.

The differentials for SpEd teachers, Hawaiian Immersion teachers, and for teachers who work in hard-to-staff regions was intended to attract and retain teachers. If you are removing that incentive, I fear for the schools who will find themselves losing teachers who will return to the mainland or quit the profession altogether.

I may not be a speaker of Olelo Hawaii, but I know and acknowledge that it is one of two official languages for our state. Hawaiian language immersion teachers are hard to find and we may not have as many of them if they opt for other employment options in the future.

Please consider the impact that discontinuing these differentials will have on the profession as a whole. Yes, I do understand that there may be a pay cut on the horizon for all public employees. Counting on this differential might make the difference for some teachers to continue to teach in Hawaii.

Thank you,  
Lori Towata

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Lauren Stein <lauren.stein@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Lauren Stein  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:05 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony for Action Items G & H

Dear Hawaii Board of Education,

My name is Lauren Stein. I am a 2nd grade Special Education Teacher at Waipahu Elementary. I would like to submit written testimony on both Action Items G & H.

### **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.**

As a beneficiary of the pay differential, I can attest to the positive impact that it has had on me and my students. Oftentimes, teachers need to pay out of pocket for resources not provided by the schools. We do this because we love our students and want to do what's best for them. Special education teachers spend countless hours in addition to regular collaboration meetings & times to prepare specifically for special education meetings, such as IEP meetings, reevaluations etc. This will only increase during the 20-21 school year as we plan for compensatory education as well. The pay differential not only alleviates some of the financial burden of living in Hawaii and/or purchasing our own supplies, but it was also a recognition and affirmation of our dedication to an underserved population. With many teachers considering early retirement or leaving the profession due to concerns about reopening during the pandemic, I think the Board of Education and Department of Education should make every effort to incentivise teacher retention by continuing the pay differentials.

If the pay differential is discontinued, I fear that many of my experienced colleagues/coworkers will leave the classrooms and areas that desperately need their expertise. New teachers in their first 5 years of teaching, like myself, and student teachers need strong and knowledgeable mentors to encourage them to pursue a life-long career in education. To not make every effort to retain these veteran teachers would be a great disservice to our community and our children. Hawai'i deserves to have great teachers, and these pay differentials can make that a reality.

### **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 and foremost, I want to thank you for creating and preparing this MOU as early as you did, I was pleasantly surprised that we got it so early. However as the new school year approaches, I have increased concerns about reopening on Tuesday August 4. I understand that it was the hope to train teachers and open schools concurrently, but I don't think that the 4 days before opening are enough. Traditionally, many teachers will need at least 2 of those days to set up their classrooms (as many work 2nd jobs in the summer and can't come in beforehand). The other two days will be needed for the basics for opening the school year, such as watching the mandatory videos.

As a teacher, I would prefer to delay the start of school by 4-5 days so that they can be used as an additional 4-5 days of training on new health procedures and distance learning. I understand that there were optional training provided over the summer, but most teachers didn't attend and consistency is key and we need to be on the same page as a school.

With regards to health procedures, I would want 1-2 days of training to know the exact protocols to follow and timelines that I can anticipate when reporting potential COVID-19 cases. I would also want to discuss with coworkers about ideas to establish distancing, masks, and not sharing materials as a new normal. I would want time to review changes to health room policies and have questions/concerns addressed. I would want clarification on the type of PPEs required in different scenarios, as colleagues in self-contained or preschool or kindergarten may need different PPEs as they come in contact with more bodily fluid.

With regards to distance learning, I would want 2-3 days of training to learn the best strategies and collaborate with coworkers. I would want to learn the best practices and strategies to increase engagement and participation for lessons/activities. I would want to learn about the different platforms and have time to explore them before jumping into the school year. I would also like time to engage in collaborative conversations with coworkers on ideas on how to adapt curriculum and make the most of those in-person days.

One of my favorite aspects of the teaching profession is that we work collaboratively. These conversations would be best had without students and could happen more quickly. We need to open the schools because education is important, but we also need to ensure that our teachers feel safe and empowered to do the best job possible.

Thank you for your time,

Lauren Stein

*Waipahu Elementary School, 2nd grade SPED*

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Tina Myers <btmyers25@hotmail.com> on behalf of Tina Myers  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:05 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Aloha,

My name is Tina Marie Myers, and I am a special education teacher at Manana Elementary School. My children attend Manana Elementary School and Pearl City High School. I am submitting 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. I am asking the board to please delay the opening of school campuses to students. Please wait until proper protocols are in place.

The health and safety of students and staff is of utmost importance and there are just way too many unanswered questions at this time. Among the many unanswered questions, there are two of particular concern to me. A major question that has yet to be addressed within the DOE and news coverage is what will happen when someone on campus, or a household member, tests positive. Plans need to be set before a situation arises. Another major concern is the lack of standard practices and protocols to be followed within the classroom when working with students with special needs. My classroom is a fully self-contained classroom with high needs students. Close proximity between students and staff is often required to support the students with their learning and to and meet their health and safety needs.

Many teachers are awaiting written guidance and clear protocols to be developed and shared. Many teachers have high-risk members of their household. This is not the time to be sending students, teachers, and staff into potentially dangerous situations without specific guidance and support.

Respectfully,  
Tina Marie Myers

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Julie Tanigawa <julietanigawa@waikikischool.org> on behalf of Julie Tanigawa  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:05 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** T E S T I M O N Y

Aloha,

I am a K-5 teacher at Waikiki EI. 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.](#)

As many cases continue to rise with phases of reopening, I am requesting a delay for the start of the 2020-2021 school year. DOE Procedures and guidelines are still unclear as many school decisions are being made without clear protocols. Until testing is available, with a clear plan, it is unsafe for teachers to return this fall.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Best,

Julie

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Billie Vieira <billie.vieira@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Billie Vieira  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:06 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Differential cuts/School start date

Aloha, my name is Billie Vieira and I would first like to state that I have been with the DOE system for over 20 years and there have been few and far between pay increases for teachers. As a Special Education Teacher I have spent a good share of my paycheck for things that I've needed for the classroom and the students. When I received the pay initiative raise I was more than pleased. Now not more than 6 months, this too will be taken away from us. Being a Special Education Teacher is not easy having to deal with many types of disorders and yet we still have the same pay as General Education teachers. Special Ed. teachers need more training to qualify so I don't understand it. I have the compassion to work with these individuals and have enjoyed it, that's why I have stayed in this profession for so long. My thoughts are that there will be shortages for teachers more than ever.

Especially with the COVID 19 pandemic. Many teachers are afraid and are not willing to risk their lives and their families lives. Many who have other health issues will have a difficult time. Teachers will be looking to retire early. In fact, I am checking on it at this time.

Another thing, substitutes will not be willing to work for that same COVID 19 reasons. It will take just 1 COVID 19 positive person and this will have a snowball effect. Teachers or students who contract COVID 19 will then spread it to others. Who will be responsible when it becomes like other states with thousands positive and hundreds dying. There is still the fact that there will be no substitutes, Administration will start filling in, classes will be left with no teachers, no Administration for other duties and it will continue. Then we will just go in a vicious circle and out of control. Schools will have to be shut down. We will have many deaths. Then the question will arise again, WHO will be responsible? I understand that Hawaii is not at high risk, but you have to admit that there is a risk. The other islands do have more than we do, it can change in no time.

Yes, there are a lot of teachers that do not have a choice, they need their paycheck to survive and support their families. Put yourselves in our shoes and ask this question, "Am I willing to risk my life and my family's lives because I have no other choice?" Please reconsider these decisions.

Mahalo for your time,

Billie Vieira

English SPED Teacher  
Hilo High School

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE: This email message, including any attachments, is for the sole use of the intended recipient(s) and may contain confidential and privileged information. Any unauthorized review, use, disclosure or distribution is prohibited. If you are not the intended recipient, please contact the sender by reply email and destroy all copies of the original message.

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Laura Chong <lauraa0411@gmail.com> on behalf of Laura Chong  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:08 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Personal Testimony Re: School Reopening

Aloha,

I am a Special Education Teacher who lives and works in Waimanalo. I love my community and I love my students. The main drive of my career as a teacher has always been to do the best for my students, often working long hours and even weekends. During the school shut down in April and May, I witnessed first hand the difficulties that my special education students faced with online and distance learning, which reinforced my belief that my students (and all students for that matter) need face-to-face instruction in order to learn best. Having said this, I am extremely concerned with the DOE's plan to open school for face-to-face instruction starting August 4. As much as the schools are trying to plan now, we are terribly ill prepared to face this pandemic. Teachers and school personnel lack knowledge and training about safety procedures and in the best of cases the schools' reopening plans are vague and unrealistic. The bottom line is that our students won't be able to learn if they, or their family members, are sick, or if their teachers, or our family members are sick. As much as I consider education to be of vital importance for our students, I think that staying healthy and well is a clear priority and should take precedence over everything else.

My concern is not only for each and every one of my students and their families, but also for myself and my family. I live with my mother in law who is 89 years old. My brother in law is also part of my household and he and my husband are in their early 60s which puts them square in the middle of the population most at risk for serious complications and even death from COVID-19. I am also concerned about my teenage daughter and how I will be putting her at risk everyday.

As much as I appreciate all the time and effort that schools are putting into trying to come up with a safe school reopening plan, it only takes a short interaction with a group of children to clearly see that they don't understand the concept of social distancing and that they are not very good at wearing masks. I think it is also important to consider the toll that face to face daily interaction with students will put on teachers and school staff in terms of stress and mental health. Whether it is true or not, as a teacher I feel that I will be made responsible for keeping my students safe, and this responsibility is already having a very negative effect on my daily life and overall health.

I understand the idea of "Ohana Bubbles," but relying on keeping teacher-student interaction limited to a small group sounds good but it is very much impossible to implement because once the students leave the school, we have no idea, and not control, about his/her interactions and the interactions of his/her family members are having on a daily basis.

I love my students and nothing would make me happier than been able to teach them face-to-face, but it is precisely because I love my students that I pray for a delay in starting the school year and for the DOE to adopt a distance/online learning instructional model until it is safer for our children, teachers, and school staff to go back to school face to face.

Sincerely,

Laura Chong

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Jannalyn-Marie Barsatan <jbarsatan13@gmail.com> on behalf of Jannalyn-Marie Barsatan  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:09 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Delay the Re-Opening of Schools

Please delay the Re-Opening of Schools until the safety issues and health protocols are answered.

- Will we tests teachers and students BEFORE the start of the school year? Who pays for that?
- 
- If a teacher tests positive for COVID-19 are they required to quarantine for 2-3 weeks? Is their sick leave covered, paid?
- 
- If that teacher has 5 classes a day within 30 students each, do all 150 of those students need to then stay home and quarantine for 14 days?
- 
- Do all 150 of those students now have to get tested? Who pays for those tests? Are they happening at school? How are the parents being notified? Does everyone in each of those kids' families need to get tested? Who pays for that?
- 
- Each student has 7 periods, if the student has been exposed, do all 7 teachers and their families have to be quarantined too? Same within all those students that were in the same class as that student? Will they all be tested? Who pays for that?
- 
- What if someone who lives in the same house as a teacher tests positive? Does that teacher now need to take 14 days off of work to quarantine? Is that time off covered? Paid?
- 
- Where is the district going to find a substitute teacher who will work in a classroom full of exposed, possibly infected students for substitute pay?
- 
- 
- Substitutes teach in multiple schools. What if they are diagnosed with COVID-19? Do all the kids in each of those schools now have to quarantine and get tested? Who is going to pay for that?
- 
- What if a students your kids's class tests positive? What if your kid tests positive? Does every other student and teacher they have been around quarantine? Do we all get notified who is infected and when? Or because of HIPAA regulations are parents and teachers just going to get mysterious "may have bee in contact" emails all year long?
- 
- What is this stress going to do to our teachers? How will this affect our teacher shortages issue? How does it affect their health and well-being? How does it affecter ability to teach? How does it affect the quality of education they are able to provide? What is it going to do to our kids? What are the long-term effects of consistently being stressed out?
- 
- How will it affect students and faculty when the first teacher dies from this? The first parent of a student who brought it home? The first kid?
-



- How many more people are going to die, that otherwise would NOT have if we stayed home longer?

We are choosing to put our teachers AND students and each of their families in danger.

- Jannalyn Igarashi

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Zellie Kamahele <zelliek@icloud.com> on behalf of Zellie Kamahele  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:09 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

To whom it may concern I am testifying on 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.**

My name is Zellie Kamahele, I work at Kailua Intermediate School as a special education teacher. My daughter, who has complex care needs, attends a public school near by. I urge you folks to take a look at the community spread that is currently happening and our numbers for Covid going up on a daily basis- more than when the initial school shutdown occurred, mainly because now it is a community spread. For the safety and livelihood of our students, our families and us as teachers that the BOE delays the reopening of schools, whether students are coming for a day or twice a week, larger schools are not prepared or staffed enough to be able to handle all of the students and implement the six foot requirements with face masks. By reopening schools too early you are putting students, children, and teachers in danger and worry for their lives. I am scared for my family, my daughter especially who has severe complex care needs, to be exposed because we reopen too early. Yet teaching is my job and my husband is laid off due to Covid, so I don't really get a choice. Teaching from a distance until the numbers go down is the safest and most effective plan for the safety of our community and our state. By reopening school, you are putting the entire state endanger and the possibility of community spread is a guarantee rather than a possibility, which our state is not equipped nor prepared for.

Thank you for your consideration,

Zellie Kamahele

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Kelly Tanimura <kelly.tanimura@gmail.com> on behalf of Kelly Tanimura  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:09 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

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 Kelly Tanimura and I work at Holomua Elementary School as a special education teacher for kindergarten and 1st graders. I feel that the special education differential has helped to obtain and retain qualified special education teachers in the schools. Many of our special education teachers have dual certifications which means they could teach either general education or special education. Having the differential has kept our teachers in special education classrooms providing individualized and specialized instruction that our students require to be successful in school. If the differential is retracted, our students may not have teachers that are able to differentiate and provide these specialized supports.

Bottom line I feel that taking away the differential, especially now will negatively impact our students with special needs and their families. I feel at a time like this, we need to support our teachers and support our families. Taking away this differential will cause teachers to leave the special education classrooms and the students will be the ones affected most by this change.

Please reconsider taking away the special education differential!!! Thank you!

Kelly

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** DanaLei Koomoa <danalei\_fishy@yahoo.com> on behalf of DanaLei Koomoa  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:10 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Action Item H

Aloha,

I am speaking as an educator as well as a parent. I teach the 4th grade while my two keiki will be in the 2nd and 8th grade.

During this uncertain time, I have chosen to keep both my children home to do complete distance learning. The DOE has not been able to provide safe and health protocols which leaves a lot of unanswered questions. As a teacher, I have been spending my summer learning about how I can provide a safe and engaging environment whether it be through face to face, blended, or distance learning. I have spent my own money becoming much more knowledgeable so that I can be better prepared as a teacher. Honestly, I still feel like I have a lot of learn and that the DOE has not provided me with the opportunity to do so.

My main concern is safety. Safety of students, teachers, staff, and community members. Teachers will be given training when school starts. That is too late. I do not feel comfortable caring for 18 children without the proper training! As a parent, I also do not feel comfortable with putting my child at risk. Tell students to social distance and stay in their 'Ohana bubbles is not enough. By not having safety protocols and to paint a picture to the public that is not the truth, the DOE is telling me that my life doesn't matter. The life of my students do not matter.

I am not a doctor or nurse. I only know how to do so much. As a teacher, I will do my best! That's what teachers do. Knowing that is a trait of a teacher that should not be used against me. Asking me to risk my life so "we can see what happens" is unacceptable.

Mahalo for your time!

DanaLei Ko'omoa  
Pā'ia School

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Kelcie Luke <kelcieama@gmail.com> on behalf of Kelcie Luke  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:10 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Hello!

My name is Kelcie and I am a Counselor at Wahiawa Elementary School. I greatly support HSTA's proposal to delay the start of the 2020-2021 school year. I do not feel comfortable or safe returning for the school year with so many unanswered questions. It is also irresponsible and inconsiderate for DOH to disregard the safety of teachers and other staff members of schools simply because the students' risks are low. The idea of minimal risk in an "ohana bubble" for each class is ridiculous and impossible due to class schedules in secondary grades, transportation to and from school, extra curricular activities, and possible activities and or gatherings outside of school. I work at a school that students from military families attend. These students possibly may not have completed a full 14 quarantine due to their military exemption. Teachers need more time to prepare for a possibility of 100% distance learning. Until more training is available and completed, it is unfair to the students who may not be getting a standard quality of education. It is also unfair to teachers to be expected to create their own distance learning curriculum in addition to teaching students face to face. Currently there are no protocols in place in the event a student and or staff member tests positive for Covid-19. I hope that the HSTA and HDOE can come to an agreement for this delayed start of the school year to ensure a safe and efficient school year for all students, staff, and families.

Mahalo,  
Kelcie

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Charlotte Godfrey-Romo <charlotte.romo30@gmail.com> on behalf of Charlotte Godfrey-Romo  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:11 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 Charlotte Godfrey-Romo,

I teach science at Kea'au High and live in Hilo. I believe the opening of the school year should be postponed to give schools time to plan protocol for opening calmly and safely. There are still too many unanswered questions, we should not rush this opening and risk lives.

Everyone wants to go back to school, but we need to do this safely and mindfully. I have been teaching for 10 years and I have been lucky enough to take some PD about online learning this summer but I am still not ready to go online if needed. Since we will be doing hybrid, give teachers training and time to plan before starting.

We need extra time since this was not done during the summer. I also would like to hear answers for many pending questions about protocol for what happens if even one person gets sick. Will there be more virus testing available? Can we make masks in class a rule or not? I am grateful Hawaii has listened to science and our numbers have been low but they are rising. We need to learn from what has been successful in other places and have plans in place to keep everyone safe before opening and after.

Mahalo,  
Charlotte Godfrey-Romo

.

--

Charlotte Godfrey-Romo  
1445 Waianuenue Ave.  
Hilo, HI 96720  
(520) 907-4553

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** mary Bonnetty <missionready09@yahoo.com> on behalf of mary Bonnetty  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:11 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Dear Esteemed Members of The Hawaii Board of Education,

I, Mary E. Bonnetty, a member of the Hawaii State Teachers Association and Special Educator within the Hawaii Department of Education (HDOE) am testifying on 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 testifying today as a loving and nurturing teacher and parent. I implore you to reconsider reopening our public schools for in-person curriculum instructions deliverance on August 4, 2020 due to unsafe and liability issues for our keiki and school staff. Schools are not equipped with the adequate personal protective equipment (PPE) nor have the necessary social distancing consensus determined. The 3ft. distances between students and teachers are substandard according to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention. Our students and teachers would be safer by online curriculum instructions deliverance.

Teachers are asked to plan 30-day lesson plans with the intent that these such plans are used when the teacher is absent from work due to contacting the COVID-19 Virus. This idealism of the future of curriculum planning is socially and emotionally disturbing to say the least. I do not want to pre plan for my early demise because of the need for rushing bureaucratic policies and procedures. Please do not jeopardize the lives of our students, families, and educators by reopening the public schools for in-person curriculum instructions on August 4, 2020.

Mahalo nui loa,

Mary E. Bonnetty

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Brian Goldstein <brian.goldstein@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Brian Goldstein  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:12 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

I am testifying on Action Item G on the discontinuance of differentials. My name is Brian and I am a Special Education teacher who works in the Kauai Complex.

Last year I started to receive a Sped Differential that has helped me and my family greatly.

I believe the Sped Differential is crucial and needs to remain in place. I am currently supporting my fiancée who is out of work due to Covid closures and with the loss of the differential will cause more hardships on our financial situation. I am going to again have to work 2 jobs just to survive which will take away from my focus on classroom teaching and planning. As a SPED Teacher the differential has allowed me to remain in my position, I turned down a higher paying SPED job on the mainland with the promise that the differentials would continue here.

I believe telling teachers this late that differentials may not continue when decisions have already been made about teaching placements for next year is in my opinion unfair, unjust and a lack of respect for teachers. I need this differential to help me survive in an expensive location, i work long extra hours writing IEPs and planning. Please make the right decision and not cut or remove the differentials thank you.

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Trina Verdadero <snt706@yahoo.com> on behalf of Trina Verdadero  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:10 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** RE: testimony towards reopening of schools

Hi,

I am writing to you regarding the reopening of schools. I am not saying to cancel school but what I am saying is that I feel that it is too soon to be reopening and putting the lives of our keiki, teachers including the educational assistants, office staff and admin and our custodians. I know it is a difficult situation but EVERYONE's health is what is of importance at this time. Me, myself am not only the caregiver of my own children but also my elderly mom and a DOE employee. So yes, the possibility of contracting Covid and bringing it home to my family is not an option. I love what I do and working with the kids but sometimes listening to what people have to say can help us shed light to our current situation. Here is an example of how my son who will be going to the 6th grade felt when he went to the Summer Bridge Program for his new school last week which he did not complete and I will explain why. The program was only for 1 week from 7:50am-10:30 am and after the first day when I picked him up he had tears in his eyes and he was asking me "Do I have to go back tomorrow?" I asked him "why what happened?" He told me, "I don't feel safe, I don't feel like there's enough social distancing, I'm scared to bring home Covid". That came from my son who loves to go to school and was excited to be going to this program because he would "be with his friends again". This is also coming from a child who doesn't look at school as a place to be with his friends but he also excels in his school work and strives for perfection. So when he's crying and telling me how unsafe he feels and the trauma I see that I could put on my child by sending him back to an environment where 1) there is no familiar face speaking of adults being he's moving from elementary to Middle school, 2) he went from an open campus to a fully enclosed campus and 3) our current pandemic- COVID-19. Yes, I will be returning to work on July 30th, like I said I work for DOE. Do I feel safe of returning to the job site? Definitely not at this time. With the rise in Covid -19 cases, my elderly mom and my children one of which is asthmatic the risk is too high for me to be a transmitter of this virus to my family. What is going to happen if a child comes to school sick and the parents don't pick them up? What's going to happen when the parents bring their child back to school the very next day after being sent home the day before? Who's going to care for my family if I can't do it because I got sick? I also have animals, who's going to care for them? All of these scenario's are being overlooked and I feel like your mostly concerned about "kids returning to school" what about the people who's in contact with them and caring for them when they are at school? Where's the concern for those people? I don't see none. With no teachers, no aides, no staff available the kids can't return to school anyways. How is this FAIR AND EQUAL to students, teachers and staff? It's not. Yes, the risk is out there when we go to the store but I can "run" away from people who come to close to me but at school how will it look if I "run" away from a child who sneezes or coughs? Lastly, It seems like you are all concerned about kids social emotionally not being in school, Here's something to think about. What kind of damage will you be doing to a child(ren) by "forcing" them back to school when they don't feel "SAFE" and the teachers and staff? Even as adults traumatic damage can still be done to them/us if we contract this virus and just the anxiety of the "what ifs". This is why my children are doing fully distance learning. I listened to them and their concerns because their voice matters to me. I think you should start listening to everyone's voice too instead of what you want to hear and see. Step in to the classroom for the first 2 weeks and teach the classes see how safe you feel then.

Thank you for taking the time to read or not read my testimony.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Jonnell Kupihea <jkupihea@yahoo.com> on behalf of Jonnell Kupihea  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:12 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Reopening of schools

Aloha BOE,

As a teacher and parent in the DOE, I feel that we are not prepared to go back to face to face learning on August 4 . After watching the recent news conferences and interviews from Gov. Ige, Dr. Kishimoto, and the other so-called experts speak on the "plan" and about how "prepared" the schools and department in general is to open for face to face learning on August 4th, I can only shake my head and wonder how on earth you all came to that conclusion! First of all, we received zero training on the new protocols, safety measures or distance learning platforms, etc. and to expect teachers to go through training during the first few weeks of the schools opening while simultaneously planning and delivering instruction to our students is ludicrous! I honestly don't see the harm in delaying face to face learning until we have all our ducks in a row. You are essentially throwing our children, teachers and school staff out into the middle of the pandemic and telling us, "Good Luck. Try not to get sick and die.". You ask us to help each other and do our part in controlling this pandemic ( wear our masks, social distance, stay home when can), Well, now we're asking you to help us control this pandemic by developing strong plans and protocols and seriously considering the safety of our island communities!

Mahalo,  
Jonnell Kupihea  
Aina Haina Elementary School  
Special Education Preschool  
16 year veteran

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Cherry Kuheana <cherrysabug@hotmail.com> on behalf of Cherry Kuheana  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:13 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Please don't cut teachers pay

To whom it may concern,

Covid 19 gave a much different perspective on how much I appreciate teachers. Staying home and homeschooling my children has been challenging. Honestly, if I had a choice, they would get paid a million dollars a year. I understand the State is in a financial crisis but cutting teachers pay only raises concern to keeping them here and then we'll have a teacher crisis. Hawaii is such an expensive place to live and teachers don't get paid enough as it is. I can only imagine what their living situation would be like with their pay getting cut. Usually I'd send solutions but I can't see what financial difficulty the State is in. However, as an option, maybe the state can push back projects that aren't in a hurry to be accomplished. If the school date needs to be pushed back to keep their pay, please do so. I have no problem keeping my children at home.

Mahalo,

*Cherry Kuheana*

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** mary wood <mwood6523@gmail.com> on behalf of mary wood  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:13 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony to Continue Differentials

Dear Members of the BOARD OF EDUCATION:

My name is Mary Wood. I am a 20 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 to 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, student loans, a mortgage, and am caring for elderly disabled parents. It is even harder now with the COVID-19 pandemic where the price of goods are astronomically higher in our rural communities.

Year after year, our family struggles like any other in Hawaii. My husband's work has diminished significantly. We struggle to make ends meet and to get ahead. The teaching profession has to be respected and this includes with a paycheck that is respectable. We're critical to the infrastructure of Hawaii, our keiki, and our community. Our work hasn't diminished with the pandemic, but, rather, has increased dramatically throughout this pandemic as we creatively design, administer, and follow through with online distance learning alternatives for all our keiki. With the shortages of highly qualified teachers in the state of Hawaii, a cut would not make a positive impact in this huge dilemma. Let's think critically and creatively to restore the economy without disrespecting the essential workers who are working day in and day out for the benefit of our future, our citizens, our keiki.

Mahalo for your time and understanding,

Mary Wood - Hamakua District, Hawaii Island

--

Mary S. Wood  
P.O. Box 325  
Kamuela, HI 96743

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Mary Matsukawa <mkberger@hawaii.edu> on behalf of Mary Matsukawa  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:14 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Pay Differentials

Aloha,

I am a special education teacher at a high school on the windward side of O'ahu. Please do not choose to temporarily discontinue the pay differentials for positions that are difficult to fill. I have been at the same school for 12 years and have had to watch countless special education teachers leave for various reasons including job demands, low pay, and stress, among other things. It is difficult as a department to have such a high turn over rate and the differential is helping to stop this from happening.

I understand that the DOE is in unprecedented times, however these differentials help provide consistency and ensure there are teachers who care about their students at school.

Mahalo for your time,

Katie

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Paul Schwartz <p.schwartz@seeqs.org> on behalf of Paul Schwartz  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:14 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony- For Meeting 7/23

To whom it may concern:

I am a Special Education teacher, who teaches in the Kaimuki area. I moved to Oahu two years ago, having been recruited through the HIDOE. I am currently receiving the SPED pay differential.

Before the differential, my family and I had a tough time, financially. We needed to have a roommate to help us afford rent. We also had a few months of literally eating rice and beans every day, when we first moved here.

The cost of living on-island is significant, especially for those who are new to it, and are trying to become established. Adding to these financial difficulties, trying to go in and do a great job teaching; left me, many days, considering whether or not it was worth trying to stick it out.

The shortage differential has had a HUGE impact on my family. For the first time in a while we feel like a heavy strain has been lifted, and we are actually able to live somewhat comfortably. I feel that the differential is a stop-gap, and that ultimately teacher salaries should be raised across the board, to match the cost of living here. Until that occurs, the differential is more than just extra money, it is that little push that got my family out of an economic hole.

With the challenges the DOE is facing, trying to encourage more teachers to move here, I can definitely attest to the value of having the pay differential. Especially, when many teachers are coming from areas on the mainland where the starting pay for first year teachers is 50K! The differential is just enough to encourage new hires from other states, and retain them.

I am not the only person who has experienced this. Another teacher, that I carpool with, who was born and raised on Oahu, but had been teaching in another state, told me how much the differential has made it for her family. She said that its crazy, when she compares how much she was making on the mainland, compared to what she is making here, and that the differential makes up some of that difference.

As I said before, teacher pay, in general, is not enough, compared to the cost of living; however, the pay differentials make teaching for less money, at least, not feel like quite as much of a sacrifice.

Sincerely,  
Paul Schwartz  
Special Education Teacher  
Honolulu District

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE: This e-mail message, including any attachments, is for the sole use of the intended recipient(s) and may contain confidential and privileged information. Any unauthorized review, use, disclosure or distribution is prohibited. If you are not the intended recipient, please contact the sender by reply e-mail and destroy all copies of the original message.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Paulina Felcher <paulinafelcher@gmail.com> on behalf of Paulina Felcher  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:15 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Teacher testimony re delaying student start date

Aloha,  
My name is Paulina Felcher and I teach 1st grade at Kapaa elem on Kaua'i.

Our school is NOT prepared to start school safely and it is a safety hazard to let students back under these conditions. I am not ok with a student contracting Covid under my care due to our MOU not being followed on the DOE's part.

Please delay reopening of schools in person and do what's best for our Keiki.

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Eric <flp95.edb@gmail.com> on behalf of Eric  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:14 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony in regards to "Cuts to shortage differentials" hearing.

Aloha,

My name is Eric Berger. I am a special education teacher at Keaau High School. I have 20 years in the school system between Hilo High, Pahoa High, and Keaau High.

Back at the beginning, working next to Columbus Group teachers- receiving 2 to 3 times more than what we were paid, I endured tremendous insult as a result of your Felix Consent Decree (FDC) predicament.

Now, after nearly 18 years, you are contemplating adding to that insult by withdrawing the sorely needed differential my colleagues and I were granted just this year. What you did when that was instated was a proactive decision to prevent another predicament similar to the FCD, and honor our special education population.

I present that even in these so difficult times, to retract that shortage differential would be a detriment to our public education system, and ultimately bite you in the butt.

We are facing the most difficult years of our career, and many, including myself, are seriously considering just how much we can take.

I beseech you, aid us, don't hinder us, as we face the upcoming school year- which portends to be very very difficult and stressful for all.

Find your funds elsewhere, do not add more insult to past injury.

You presented the differentials in good faith to keep Special Education positions filled.  
Please honor that, as we honor and give Mahalos to you.

Do not retract the shortage differentials.

With many many thanks,  
Eric D Berger  
Special Educator- Social Studies  
Keaau High School



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Sherri Redou <sherriedou@gmail.com> on behalf of Sherri Redou  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:15 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** School Delay and Pay Differential

Dear Board Members,

Please delay the student's return to school until September to allow sufficient time for schools to be fully prepared with safety systems in place, adequate training of all staff including custodians, teachers (new, existing and reassigned), EAs, substitute teachers, on proper protocols, sanitation, technology and curriculum delivery procedures. We will need to plan and prepare materials (manipulatives, packets, etc.) for students to utilize in the classroom and /or at home for distance learning. Are subs going to be expected to do distance learning when most are elderly and may not even return?

No real guidelines have been set forth on car pickup and bus safety systems for distancing. Bathroom monitoring and meals also need adequate supervision distancing.

There has been no instructions on how to handle students with asthma or compromised immune systems. There are so many factors to consider.

Concerning the pay differential for hard to staff positions or schools, please do not cut this pay. Many teachers are making less than people on unemployment right now who are making 1300 a week! We will lose teachers if we can no longer afford to live here as the cost of living (rent, food, etc.) continues to rise due to the shutdown of the economy and shortage of goods. Please do not allow this to happen as this will worsen our situation as many will retire, take a leave or move. There are not enough subs as it is to fill all these positions. Teachers with children will have to pay for childcare on days they are not physically in school.

Please do what is best for all in this situation for our safety and security, especially for our keiki. Let's do things right the first time by having all systems fully in place before the children return and securing the positions of our teachers for them to return to.

Mahalo Nui Loa,

Sherri Redou  
Kahakai Elementary  
2nd grade

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** k chong <jkchong43@gmail.com> on behalf of k chong  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:15 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.](#)

As a preschool special educator and a mother to 5 school-aged children, I feel a set plan needs to be in place before our students return to school. We cannot go into this blindly. We cannot expect our admin to figure out HOW they'll provide us teachers with the necessary PPE, cleaning products, etc when our school funding has decreased by \$500,000. We are improvising, what happens when our improvisations don't work? That's when lawsuits happen. Have the necessary equipment and supplies readily available BEFORE putting educators back into the classroom.

In addition, there needs to be options or a plan for teachers who are also parents of school-aged students. How can I go back to work and teach my students when I have nowhere for my own children to go? I'm supposed to go back to school while I neglect my own children? Am I expected to leave them at home? My husband was only approved to telework for 2 days, what happens for the rest of the week? His employer is providing him with an option yet mine is expecting me to go to work. I absolutely LOVE what I do as a preschool special educator but I'm a mother first. I am their provider. How can I provide safety for my students yet I can't even ensure the safety of my own children who have nowhere to go while I'm at work. My husband and I do not have the luxuries of a family member helping us out, we do not have the luxury of being able to quit a job. We own a home, we have a family to take care of, we live in a state that is so overpriced that we already live paycheck to paycheck. We pulled our two oldest boys out of private school because I was already concerned about the possibility of a paycut.

PLEASE reconsider opening schools until all of these challenges that we face are resolved. There needs to be plans created and in place before our schools reopen. I understand the importance of our keiki getting back into their schools and learning face to face with their teachers, trust me, my own students need it! But I refuse to have to cry every day not knowing where my own keiki will be while I have to go to school and teach my students.

Mahalo for your time,

Kau'i Chong  
Preschool FSC Teacher  
Holomua Elementary  
Mother to 5 school-aged students (2 at Dream House 'Ewa Beach, and 3 at Holomua Elementary)

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Sarah Waite <sarah@friedlotus.com> on behalf of Sarah Waite  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:17 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony for action item G

July 21, 2020

To the honorable 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 locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 20/21 school year.

My name is Sarah Waite and I currently teach Pre-K SPED at Royal School in the Honolulu district. I will be directly impacted and put into some financial distress over losing this differential. This differential is what retained me and what prevents me from considering leaving SPED.

Teaching special education comes with hours of extra work and pressure due to the legally binding nature of working under IDEA and the IEP. I see and have seen totally unqualified persons with a BA in something like anthropology teaching as long term subs or emergency hires in SPED all over the state, as I have taught 2 years in Kauai and going into my 3rd year on Oahu.

Especially with Covid 19 and still having federally mandated expectations, with a daughter who will not be on campus every day and my need to find some supervision for her while I teach, I was and am counting on this differential. You will lose myself and other qualified teachers to General Ed or we will leave the profession or the island if we aren't fairly compensated.

I know I teach in one of the least desirable positions in education. I know that to retain teachers who are experts and who truly care about teaching these vulnerable children who need the most specialized teachers, you have to fairly compensate them for the exceptionally hard work that they do.

Please do not cut our differentials! For the kids of Hawaii's sake!

Thank you for your consideration,

Sarah Waite  
Pre-K SPED teacher  
Royal School  
Honolulu District

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Rich N <richardnn1@yahoo.com> on behalf of Rich N  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:18 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Dear BOE

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 urge you to follow HRS CHAPTER 89 - 13 to answer the following in writing for all stakeholders

- When will the State of Hawaii's Department of Health provide written guidance on the reopening of school buildings, which the HDOE 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?

Teachers can report to work in their individual classrooms but WITHOUT STUDENTS.

The issue is not IF but WHEN any of the 13,500 Teachers or any of the 170k students get infected and/or DIE by the COVID-19 Virus. The older you are with a compromised immune system and/or the more underlying pre-existing health conditions teachers have, the more likelihood of DEATH.

Is ONE teacher or student INFECTION or DEATH acceptable. ABSOLUTELY NOT.

The Centers for Disease control has literature to indicate large gatherings such as public schools as HIGH RISK. Wearing Masks all day everyday if the mask is on a teacher or students face is insufficient protection due to any material used. In addition, the custodian staff of any school are NOT professional cleaners to disinfect the school facilities.

Being the ONLY school district in the nation to open for face-to-face school instruction is something not to be proud of and reckless

In conclusion, the unsafe or hazardous condition in any of the 280 public schools or so present a clear and imminent danger to the health, safety, life, and DEATH of any teacher or student in the Hawaii Public Schools as community spread continues in the Hawaiian communities.

Thank you for your time

Richard Nakatsu, Ed.D.  
Teacher  
28 years

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Brett Uchima <brett.uchima@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Brett Uchima  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:20 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Hello my name is Brett Uchima and I work at Kaimuki middle school.

I am writing this email as my testimony to delay the reopening of schools.

I personally do not feel that it is safe enough for teachers to teach in the environment that is provided and because of the COVID 19 cases rising. I live at home with my family and I do not want to put them at risk. Both my parents are working from home and my brother is taking online classes. I do not want to put them at risk.

Thank you for taking the time to read this email and I look forward to hearing a decision soon.

- Brett

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Jonathan Yabiku <jonyabiku@gmail.com> on behalf of Jonathan Yabiku  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:20 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** TESTIMONY: Expressing Concern for my Child's Safety  
**Attachments:** TESTIMONY REGARDING AGENDA ITEM VI-D.pdf

Hello,

Please see attached testimony in opposition of agenda item VI-D.

Thank you.

Jonathan Yabiku

#### TESTIMONY REGARDING AGENDA ITEM VI-D

In reference to agenda item VI-D, we feel that the school start date should be postponed until there is a clearer preventative plan in place to ensure that students and teachers can be kept safe from exposure.

My son is scheduled to begin 1st grade and we do not feel that it is safe to send him back to campus when there is little to no plan to keep our children and teachers safe. "*A sick child coming to school with symptoms and subsequent isolation of that class*" is not a preventative plan whatsoever. If the HSTA does not feel their teachers are safe, then how can the BOE, Superintendent Kishimoto, Governor Ige, and the State Health leaders, claim our children will be safe. We feel that the teachers are not trained to test or recognize symptoms in children. And what about asymptomatic children? And quite frankly, if a teacher does see the symptoms it is probably face to face so doesn't that mean it is too late? The teacher is now potentially exposed and so are the other kids in the child's ohana bubble. The school has no way of controlling what other kids do, what their parents do, and what kind of potential exposure they could bring to school, likewise, the same for us. To claim that you feel it is safe for kids to go back to school on August 4<sup>th</sup> is too soon and outrageous. The claim that kids are shown to be less susceptible to be carrying and transmitting the virus is also outrageous. Please provide a distance learning option for all children, across all grades, and across all campuses, until there is clearer understanding on how we can control the spread of this virus to keep our children and teachers safe.



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Doris Boushey <deenbee@me.com> on behalf of Doris Boushey  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:22 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Delay opening

Dear BOE,

We want schools to open safely and we also know how important it is for the kids! Back in March when all this went down, we didn't even come back from spring break with much lower cases of COVID 19. We the teachers and staff in schools are not ready and we really need to delay the opening of schools. We all knew August 4 would have been the first day students return for a "normal SY." This is an unprecedented time and we need to roll back the opening of schools for at the very least, a month. We all want to return back everything to normal but unfortunately it's not going to happen.

Personally, I want tourism back too but with everything going on that too will be delayed. I have a second job in the tourism field and I feel for all the people who are unemployed.

Please, please, please! You have to delay the opening of this year's school start date for the sake of everyone!

Much Mahalo for your consideration!

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Bailey Raines <baileyraines@gmail.com> on behalf of Bailey Raines  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:22 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 Bailey Raines and I am an educator at Alakai O Kauai where my son also attends school. I am concerned that we are not prepared to open schools as there are many questions that have yet to be answered and at this point we are only two weeks away from the start of school.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Gerianne Fujihara <gerianne.fujihara@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Gerianne Fujihara  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:23 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

I am a special education teacher in our public schools. I am certified in special education and in the subject area that I teach in. Special education teachers were promised a differential if they remained in the special education program. As a result, many special education positions were filled during the teacher transfer period.

Taking the differential pay away after teachers signed up to teach in the special education field is dishonest and heartbreaking to think that the Board of Education does not value the extra time and work special educators have in our schools. In addition to teaching our own classes, we modify curriculum/materials/assessment; collaborate and co-teach other teacher's students; schedule, gather data, prepare documents (writing out IEP's, which is time consuming), meet, and send home IEPs/Eligibility/Re-eval documents; take data and evaluate quarterly progress reports; take data for behavioral specialists; create data sheets for skill trainers; deal with behavioral challenged students; go to special training sessions to learn how to restrain children if they become violent (some have even threatened to harm us, but go unpunished given their disability); go on home visits/court visits if parents/guardians are unable to get in touch with; and deal with many other stress knowing that we may have to go to court or get sued if our paperwork is being scrutinized by an advocate.

During the COVID period, special education teachers also went above and beyond to make sure students had access to their services and education. We did virtual meetings and set up our own virtual classroom to give assignments and feedback. We used our own personal cell phones, printers, and resources to teach from home because we were told not to go on campus. We also provided students with work packets and continued to collect data, met virtually with colleagues, and send out progress reports during the COVID period. We also did all of our IEP/RE-Eval meetings virtually and submitted our documents on time.

In the 2020-21 school year, special education teachers are being told that they will have to teach everyday and provide special COVID supplementary services as needed. Special education teachers are putting their health at risk just so their students can get the extra help the students may need. From my experience, special education students come to school with open cuts, fevers, and some have even vomited in class because the health aid sends them back to class as long as they don't have a fever. Parents are impossible to contact, especially among the special education population. Special education teachers are also being told to co-teach and have to share classrooms with other teachers, skill trainers, and a number of adults without any consideration for our own health and well being.

Special education teachers matter. We do not get recognized for our time and efforts. Many of us just quit because it is sometimes a thankless job. Help us continue to make a difference in the lives of many special education students. Keep highly qualified teachers in this position and do not take away pay differentials to teachers, who go above and beyond.

Thank you,  
Gerianne Fujihara

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Eman Al-Misky <eman110@hotmail.com> on behalf of Eman Al-Misky  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:23 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Do not reopen schools

Schools should not reopen schools! Please use next week to prepare teachers to do distant learning. Do not resume face to face learning it is too dangerous!

Eman Al-Misky  
808-223-4489

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Eman Al-Misky <eman110@hotmail.com> on behalf of Eman Al-Misky  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:24 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Do not re-open schools

Teachers are not prepared to go back to the classroom I do not want to risk our lives! Please prepare teachers for distant learning like the rest of the country is doing for their teachers!

Thank you

Eman Al-Misky

8082234489

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Keri Nakamura <10135051@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Keri Nakamura  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:25 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Concerned about returning Aug 4th

To whom it concerns,

Please consider pushing back the start date of students returning. I feel that it is not safe to return on Aug 4th, and the state is not prepared. I'm worried about the safety and health of myself, coworkers and family that I go home to. As a special education preschool teacher social distancing and wearing masks is not going to happen. Majority of My students cannot cover their mouths, wash their hands, toilet independently, etc.  
I understand the importance of students returning, but I feel our health is more important. If we get sick, who's going to teach as there's already a shortage.

Secondly, please do not take away our shortage differentials. As all teachers are underpaid, the differential pay helped keep me around this year. That helped with my family financial concerns. If this is taken, I feel it'll be harder to find special education teachers, and some may leave because they can't make ends meet.

Please reconsider both of my concerns.

Mahalo,  
Keri

Sent from my iPhone

--

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Evan Igarashi <escotti13@yahoo.com> on behalf of Evan Igarashi  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:25 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Delay the Re-Opening of Schools

Please consider the families of the students and teachers you are now putting at risk when re-opening schools without proper training and safety management protocols in place.

My wife and I just got married in November of 2019. We thought our first year of newlyweds would be filled with happiness/memories and we could not wait to start our lives together as husband and wife. Unfortunately, with COVID hitting our plans for our new life together is put on paused. Now that everything is slowly re-opening, I urge you to please consider the lives of the families you are now putting at risk by re-opening schools too early.

My wife is a middle school teacher, she is asked to work in a classroom with a hand full of kids each day, her chances of exposure to COVID are now a lot higher then it has than the past few months. If she has to go back to work without any proper medical safety protocols in place, she can be exposed and be quarantined home and then exposing it to me. In sickness and in health is what I said "I Do" to her for. However, if her chances and my chances of being exposed can be prevented then I would like it to be consider as the #1 option for distance learning.

I understand it is just me and my wife, but their are thousands of families that are in the same situation or even worse, who have elderly parents to take care of to come home to and/or children of their own to protect.

Thank you for your time and consideration!  
- Evan Igarashi

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** VizionthaElohim <jamaal.fogle@gmail.com> on behalf of VizionthaElohim  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:25 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony for action item G

> July 21, 2020

>

> To the honorable 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 locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 20/21 school year.

>

> My name is Jamaal Fogle and I currently teach Preschool at Wahiawa Baptist Preschool in Wahiawa. My girlfriend is a SPED teacher and she will be directly impacted and put into some financial distress over losing this differential.

>

> Teaching special education is very difficult. My girlfriend works a lot of extra hours compared to general education teachers. She is actually qualified to teach students with special needs, not long term subs.

>

> To retain SPED teachers who are experts and who truly care, you must fairly compensate them for the extra hard work that they do.

>

> Please do not cut differentials for the hard working SPED teachers and even more - the children with special needs all over Hawaii!

>

> Thank you for your consideration,

>

> Jamaal Fogle

> Preschool Teacher

> Wahiawa Baptist Preschool

> Oahu



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Eman Al-Misky <eman110@hotmail.com> on behalf of Eman Al-Misky  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:25 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Do not re-open schools

Do not re-open schools instead prepare teachers to teach distance-learning so that they remain safe and so the students remain safe as well! The rest of the country is not returning to the classroom either should we! care about our students and their safety as well as her education but now is not the time to return!

Thank you for your time,

Eman Al-Misky

8082234489

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** G R <gramirez123@hotmail.com> on behalf of G R  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:26 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimonial

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! My name is Gil Ramirez and I'm a teacher at Waipahu Elementary school. This will be my 16th year as a dedicated public school teacher. I am writing to you today to humbly request that the BOE postpones the opening of public schools.

Why? As a public school teacher, we have not been formally trained on how to open and properly teach during this time of the pandemic. We officially return to work on July 29, which gives us 3 days to learn new safety protocols and prepare our classrooms. That doesn't give us ample time to prepare for teaching our students on August 4. Also it is said we will be trained for the first 9 days of when our students are present. Half day teaching then half day training for 9 days. How is that professionally responsible to train teachers about protocols when students are already in the classroom? Shouldn't we be properly trained BEFORE the kids are learning in our classroom?

It is like opening a restaurant full of customers and the staff is expected to deliver a great meal without knowledge of the menu but they are still expected to properly create it. Then when the customers leave the restaurant, the staff then has training on how to support the customers and build the menu. Does that make sense? No. It does not but that is the current plan for DOE. We will be trained after the kids are present each day for 9 days.....In those 9 days a student or staff could get sick but what will we do? Wait until we get trained after teaching half days?

It does not make sense at all.

Also please consider that teachers like myself were in different lines of teaching but required to teach in a new position this upcoming year because of the covid 19 pandemic. I planned and prepared to teach in my Fine Arts position but was notified last month that my position is temporarily cut for a year so I need to teach as a homeroom teacher. I will do whatever it takes to support my students in any position, but I was given only 3 days of voluntary training last week to understand the expectations of my new position that included an overview of 6 different programs like iReady, Wonders, Stepping Stones, Kidbiz 3000, RTI, Running Records, and more. All in 3 days? That is a lot to comprehend and learn. Aside from learning a new curriculum we still have not been trained yet on safety protocols for the pandemic and not trained for distance learning if the pandemic changes.

Lastly, I have to care for my family members that are elderly like my mother and father. My mother is undergoing cancer treatments and I definitely would be heartbroken if I get covid and spread it to my loved ones when it could have been preventable with proper training at work. I will do my best to be safe but what about others in our school community? Also it would be devastating if I cannot continue to support my loved ones and students if I contract the virus and have complications. This is not based on fear but reality that anyone could contract it.

What will the BOE and DOE say if anyone in our school community contracts the pandemic? Will the BOE and DOE take responsibility when a student, teacher, or staff possibly contracts the virus? Are they willing to visit every school classroom confidently to observe the "bubbles" in place? Will you physically be there to comfort the families who might get the virus? As a part of the department of education, I believe that we can't just be reactive to serious pandemics like covid but be proactive to prevent sickness, casualties and clusters of the virus within our school communities.

In closing, are we 100% ready and confident that we will have a safe opening of schools for students, staff, and teachers? My heart and dedication will always be there to support Hawaii's public schools; but I need to share my voice and feel confident that the BOE has students, families, staff, and teacher's best interest in mind so we are working in a safe workplace with proper protocols shared with teachers before having students in the classroom.

We need to be trained, educated, safe, and ready before we could even consider educating our students.

Thank you for your time, your leadership, and consideration.

-Gil Ramirez

General Education Teacher

Waipahu Elementary School

Dedicated public school teacher for over 15 years.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Mailyn Domingo <mdomingo29@hawaii.rr.com> on behalf of Mailyn Domingo  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:26 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Hope all is well during this time of our new norm. I am an elementary school teacher on Maui. I understand that schools will be opening very soon, but I have some concerns. As a two-time cancer survivor I am worried about the safety of my health, our students, including my colleagues, admin and the rest of the staff in school. I ask that the opening be pushed back so that all of the teachers can be fully trained in what will happen and how school will proceed once our students start 2020-2021. I am also worried that we (teachers) will not have enough time to organize our rooms with 6 feet of social distancing amongst ourselves and our students. I sincerely implore that you take into consideration my request and of others who have similar concerns.

Thank you,  
Mailyn Domingo  
Lihikai Elementary  
Grade 2

Sent from my iPad

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Michelle Molina <michelle.d.molina@gmail.com> on behalf of Michelle Molina  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:26 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** pay cuts and reopening

Aloha,

I am a teacher at Waimea High School on Kauai. Although I feel my principal has done an exceptional job of preparing and training us for online instruction and the schools plan to adhere to agreements between DOE and HSTA, I have concerns about the reopening of schools.

First, I feel the group of students I teach have a high likelihood of being asymptomatic carriers of COVID, and coming into contact with so many students on a regular basis will put myself, my family, and most especially my parents in their 70s at a higher health risk. I also have concerns about students not following social distancing before and after school hours. I have a teacher friend who taught in person summer school. Though she only had 4 students in her class, she regularly witnessed students not social distancing or wearing masks immediately before entering campus, and immediately after leaving campus. I am concerned for my own health, the health of my parents, and the health of my students who come to school.

Secondly, I am concerned over conversations regarding cutting teacher pay. I understand our state is in a deficit, but this is no different than the condition of all other states. I think the economic situation will require all states exhaust emergency funds, ask the federal government for financial bailouts, or borrow money in the form of municipal bonds. Unfortunately, the noble desire to balance the budget through cutting salaries of state workers like teachers and health care workers, may very well backfire and keep our state from getting the federal help we need when other states are getting federal assistance because we do not show a need. Again, all states are experiencing economies that are suffering.

I feel grateful to still have a job when other are worse off, however, I have had conversations with a teacher friend who left her job and began collecting unemployment before COVID. She says with the additional \$600 she was making more than she did as a teacher. She told me she paid off all her debt. Similarly, I had a conversation with a waitress family member and she said she was making more on unemployment than she made while working. Hearing stories like these make me feel it is unfair to cut my pay and the pay of healthcare workers while I am putting myself in a position of high risk, while others take time off, collect unemployment, and go surfing. It is simply unjust to cut teachers or healthcare workers pay at a time like this. Please do the right thing.

Mahalo for considering our position,  
Michelle Molina

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Ulu <kaulullanes22@gmail.com> on behalf of Ulu  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:27 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** TESTIMONY - DO NOT OPEN SCHOOLS ON AUGUST 4TH!

Aloha mai kāua,

As a 3rd grade teacher, I am strongly against moving forward with the opening of schools on August 4th. Lets defer the start date of schools opening! I believe it is too soon and not enough planning and details are set in place to guarantee the safety of administration, teachers, staff, students and families. Safety should be out top concern and out main priority!!! DO NOT OPEN SCHOOLS ON AUGUST 4TH!! Let's keep our keiki safe! Let's keep our teachers safe! Let's keep our families safe! Learning can occur anywhere at any time.

Mahalo,

Kaulu Llanes

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Heather McKenzie <hmckenzie@iaoschool.org> on behalf of Heather McKenzie  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:27 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** RE: Opening of school year 2020-2021

Aloha BOE,

My name is Heather McKenzie and I am entering my 6th year teaching in the HIDOE.

I would like to share my strong feelings about going back to school. We are many, serving as ONE educational entity. As of now, we lack the planning and training to go back to school in any capacity. Asking kids to come back to school on August 4th is unrealistic and will result in chaos. We are not ready.

Teachers are not ready to facilitate distance learning, nor are schools ready to receive students in-person. As a teacher, I absolutely want kids back in school for their emotional and social well being, as well as many other reasons. However, we are not prepared with a plan to enforce social distancing, to wear masks all day at school, or even the proper equipment to keep our schools sanitary and minimize risk.

Every classroom should have a hygiene station for hand washing or sanitizing. Schools will have to figure out recess, lunch time, physical education, class rotations, and more. This takes time to plan. New routines will need to be created, implemented and practiced.

Asking students and teachers to wear masks (especially in Hawaii's heat, sometimes without air conditioning) while teaching and learning is unhealthy on a physical and mental/emotional level. I wear my mask when I go out in public, and last week I had an anxiety attack in Costco because I was having a hard time breathing in my mask. I have not had that happen before and it came out of nowhere. As I was having this experience all I could think about was "What do I do WHEN this happens to my students?"

Please let's at least take the first quarter to plan, practice distance learning while creating standards and guidelines, and to train teachers and students to thrive in a new era of education. ***This starts with pouring more resources into us instead of taking any away.***

It is time for us to now come together for our keiki, just like we have for each other during this unprecedented time. We need to partner with each other and our communities to create better solutions. Remember, "If you build it, they will come."

Mahalo for your time and consideration, and ultimately making the best decision for us all.

--

With Aloha,

"Coach Heather" McKenzie  
7th Grade Health  
Iao Intermediate School

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Jeanine Coombs-todd <jeanine.coombs-todd@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Jeanine Coombs-todd  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:28 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony Action item H

Dear DOE-

Please do not open schools as scheduled. We are not safe and will be putting everyone at Risk. I am immunodeficient as a former Kidney Transplant patient and while I VERY much want to return to the classroom, our campuses are not prepared. We are not prepared nor have we received the proper training. Please revisit the "H" section of our agreement. The liability you are taking for our lives as educators is very important to consider.

Mahalo-

Jeanine Coombs- Todd

Maui Waena IS

Teacher 7th/ 8 th

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Stacey Dela Cruz <sdelacru2004@yahoo.com> on behalf of Stacey Dela Cruz  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:29 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** CUTS TO SHORTAGE DIFFERENTIALS & DELAYING THS REOPENING OF SCHOOL

ALOHA BOE,

This is my personal testimony as an employee of the Department of Education as a Special Education Teacher and a mother of 3 keiki's that take part in public education.

As an employee I ask that with the shortages happening, I cannot afford a cut in my pay. I have debated many times to leave the DOE, however my heart is with the island and the keiki. With pay cuts, I will have no empathetic choice but to leave the DOE. The special education department has been the one to suffer the most cutbacks and yet, we are the teachers and staff that are asked to stay hours at a time for IEP meetings, team meetings, referral cases and work in coming up with plans for modifications for 504s or general education teachers questions. As a special education teacher, I unfortunately sacrificed time with my own kids to service my students. Time that I will never get back. Since no one in the BOE is listening to our concerns, I am forced with taking Emergency COVID-19 leave to ensure that on my children's virtual days, I am able to help them with their learning.

I have a 98 year old grandmother that I care for in hospice care. The Ohana Bubble sounds like a great idea but when working with SPED inclusion: Physical therapist, speech, occupational therapist and other related services, that students bubbles gets expanded beyond the original bubble. Teachers rotating in and out expands the bubble. Going to the cafeteria expands the bubble. I've worked in an FSC and Med-Fragile setting previously for many years, how will you ensure the safety of the students and staff?

Protocols and procedures are created, yet teachers have not seen them, given feedback or expressed concerns for the set procedures. We have not been given time to review the protocols. Are questions are left with principals saying they need to follow up with the CAS and then then CAS saying they need to follow up with Superintendent. Who will give us the solid direction and procedures that all schools need in order for parents, students and staff to feel and be safe.

PPE and safety gear are on order. We do not have confirmation that we have enough for students and staff as we open up next month. BOE you cannot leave these important decisions for the principals and administrators to figure out. You are the leaders of the Hawaii Education system. We all take direction from the BOE. Our principals are yet the scapegoats to put blame once a protocol that the specific school came up with fails. BOE you need to stand up and take responsibility to brainstorm, create and disseminate protocols, and procedures for the DOE schools to follow.

Do not be cowards and hide behind the mask and say you are giving school principals and administrators that option to create those plans. We have never been in a situation as this and some may be comfortable creating the plans, however it is shameful that our top leader sits in a conference with our State Senators and could not answer more than 50% of the questions asked.

STAND UP BOE!!!! LISTEN TO OUR VOICES, DON'T JUST HEAR US!!!!!! KEEP THE KEIKI'S AND STAFF SAFE!!!!

Stacey Lynn Dela Cruz Reese

“The reasonable man adapts himself to the world: the unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore all progress depends on the unreasonable man.”

— **George Bernard Shaw**

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Katherine Shinsato <kshinsato2019@gmail.com> on behalf of Katherine Shinsato  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:29 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony - 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 re

To whom it may concern,

During the upcoming school year, I will be a Special Education teacher at He'eia Elementary School.

I kindly ask that you consider postponing the reopening of schools, because there are still many questions that need to be addressed prior to reopening. Although I understand the desire to open as scheduled on August 4, I believe that it would be much safer if we do not cut corners on safety precautions and the implementation of distance learning.

I understand that the implementation of distance learning during the 4th quarter of this past year was necessary, even if we did not have much opportunity to meet or receive PD prior to having to implement it. However, this time around, I feel that this would be a beneficial time for teachers and staff to receive PD on how to create meaningful distance learning opportunities. Although I feel that most schools and teachers tried their best with what they had, distance learning seemed to be inconsistent. Additional guidance and professional development would be greatly appreciated prior to having to implement any distance learning. I would like more time to receive feedback from the parents on how distance learning went and how we can best support them during this time and learn more about strategies and resources that are available to support distance learning. Even for schools that will have blended learning or a significant amount of in person instruction, the new health and safety guidelines, such as social distancing, will impact how we provide instruction to our students. Strategies and resources to provide meaningful instruction will be appreciated for teachers providing in-person instruction as well.

As a Special Education teacher, I understand that my population of students is considered to be vulnerable and would be offered face-to-face instruction daily. However, if one of my students' families opts to take advantage of the 100% distance learning option, how will I be able to support this student appropriately and adhere to their IEP requirements in addition to the other students' IEPs in my classroom? I also wonder whether IEPs will need to change as a result of the new distance learning and in-person measures. These changes may include placements that were changed to minimize movement of teachers and students, students' regression during their time away from school for an extended amount of time, and new or modified goals that need to be changed because of distance learning. Time to modify these sections of students' IEPs and determine how these changes will be implemented will need time and work for the Special Education teachers.

My husband works at Foodland as a manager. Recently, he got sick and got tested for COVID-19, while I was teaching summer school. I had to take off from school, because I wanted to make sure that I did not infect my students if he did have COVID-19 if he did test positive for the virus. Fortunately, he tested negative, and I was able to resume summer school once we got his results. It was challenging for admin and myself to find a sub for me in such short notice. I wonder what would have happened if he or I tested positive for the virus, and I needed to be out for a longer period of time. I am concerned, particularly for secondary where the teachers and students come into contact with so many groups of students, if a teacher or student does test positive for COVID-19. Not only may it be challenging to find a substitute teacher that will not mind being exposed to

students that may have been exposed to the virus, what will happen to the students and staff members that this teacher or student that had the virus or has a family member that has the virus?

There are so many other unanswered questions that I feel that additional planning would benefit so many teachers and staff members since so many things continue to change or be unanswered. Again, I respectfully ask you to consider postponing the reopening of schools.

Sincerely,  
Katherine Shinsato

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Rosemarie C Rawlins <rose627@gmail.com> on behalf of Rosemarie C Rawlins  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:29 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Aloha,

I am testifying on Discussion 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.](#)

Rosemarie Rawlins

SPED teacher

He'eia Elementary, Windward District

As a SPED teacher, I am already feeling so overwhelmed with anxiety. I have had to meet with grade level teachers, principal, both virtually and face to face to work out scheduling issues. This is taking away from my time with my family already and during my summer to begin planning for the school year. I am no where close to being prepared to begin the school year. Classes need to be setup, new signs need to be put up, configuration of chairs/desks need to be made by teachers. This isn't all going to magically happen in a day. Planning with 2 grade levels for teaching my own bubble group of 11 students. Curriculum needs to still be ordered for us being that we are taking our own homeroom classes. There are so many major details that still need to be discussed and 4 days is not enough and is an unfair time to begin such a drastic change. If we could have students date of start delayed that could make for more of our own unanswered questions, collaboration, curriculum planning for both distance and in person planning more concrete to present to families that would be much more helpful. This is a huge disservice to parents, students, and teachers to be so underprepared and rushed into beginning the school year with so many unanswered, unresolved concerns that have everything to do with health and safety of our students, staff, and families. Give us time to get the training that we all so desperately are asking for and delay the start of schools. Thank you for your time.

Rosemarie Rawlins

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Ulu <kaulullanes22@gmail.com> on behalf of Ulu  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:29 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** TESTIMONY - DO NOT OPEN SCHOOLS ON AUGUST 4TH! PUSH THE START SAFE BACK!

Aloha mai kāua,

As a 3rd grade teacher, I am strongly against moving forward with the opening of schools on August 4th. Lets defer the start date of schools opening! I believe it is too soon and not enough planning and details are set in place to guarantee the safety of administration, teachers, staff, students and families. Safety should be our top concern and our main priority!!! DO NOT OPEN SCHOOLS ON AUGUST 4TH!! Let's keep our keiki safe! Let's keep our teachers safe! Let's keep our families safe! Learning can occur anywhere at any time.

Mahalo,

Kaulu Llanes

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Brynn Leake <brynnleake@gmail.com> on behalf of Brynn Leake  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:30 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** 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

My name is Brynn Matthews and I teach 2nd grade at Blanche Pope Elementary School. I'd like to first state that I am excited about returning to school and returning to some sense of normalcy for our keiki. I have worked on a cadre with my principal and 18 other colleagues to reshape our school design for the past month. We have worked diligently but as we get closer to the openings date - I am concerned that we are so overwhelmed with decisions to make and that we might compromise student and staff safety.

There are a few things that stick out for me:

1. The lack of a state wide protocol for entering a campus. Do teachers get health and temperature screening daily? Do students? Where and how does this happen? I believe it should be the same system at each school.
2. Safety at work. - I can stay in an Ohana bubble at school with my students but that may break with the simple and daily task of printing and copying at the xerox machine. We have 2 on campus. For all staff and they are located in the library and office.
3. Cleaning supplies - do we really have enough supplies to clean the classrooms, bathrooms? How can we be sure we won't run out?
4. PPE. What is the standard for every employee?

I have taught for over 20 years and have served in many leadership roles. I often have felt like the top down style from the DOE of management and school has been - "you figure it out" or "do what's best for your school". I think having a "one band, one sound" approach to the health and safety of our students and employees needs to be a priority.

Standards of Practice need to be established that is consistent from school to school. We are professionals but we are not epidemiologists and should not be making these decisions at a school level.

We need to get the opening of school right and safe for everyone. We can't afford for our families to lose confidence in the public school system right now. And as I stated in the beginning, I support the reopening of schools. I look forward to it. Please help to keep us safe with standards of practice that does not vary from school to school.

Respectfully yours,

Brynn Matthews

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Lynsey Gosin <lynseygosin@gmail.com> on behalf of Lynsey Gosin  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:30 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony- Lynsey Gosin

Dear Board of Education,

My name is Lynsey Gosin. As a teacher for over 15 years, I am terrified of returning back to work under the current rising numbers of Covid 19. I am one of the teachers who stepped up and said 'yes' to teaching ESY for 5 weeks during the summer. Trust me, it wasn't an easy decision to make. I did it because as a teacher and a natural helper, we often put our needs last and sacrifice for the needs of others. This is an unfair pressure that the state is putting on us. During that time of as little as 4 students and a variation of 3-6 adults at any given time, it was still nerve wracking. Everyday after work I went home and showered before picking up my 1 year old daughter. We made it through with one EA getting very sick from the get go and not returning. She never got tested for Covid, and we carried on. I couldn't help but be worried that some of us may be asymptomatic. We followed all the protocols and precautions and thankfully we got through the rest of ESY. However, it doesn't negate the fact that we are all putting ourselves at risk, not just the staff and their own families but the students as well. I believe in time we can return to school with better safety plans in place. But for now, I think it is a terrible decision for our state to reopen face to face instruction on August 4, 2020. Please reconsider going virtual until the Covid cases steadily decline and/or there is proven vaccine.

Mahalo,

Lynsey Gosin

Special Education Teacher



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** cfermin44@gmail.com  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:31 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony -differential cuts

Dear Board of Education

I am writing to testify in opposition of temporary differential cuts. It has been brought to my knowledge that the differentials have already made a positive difference on the quality of education for our keiki. There has been lower teacher turnover in these "high demand" positions and an increase in the number of teachers in these areas. As a result, it has helped tremendously in filling the gaps for our keiki, which is what should be the underlying factor in guiding our decisions. Correct me if I am wrong, but our main concern should be the well-being of our students in every aspect? And that starts with having quality teachers, and schools. With that being said, if we make the differential cuts, we would be hurting those who are responsible for that, not to mention our keiki's education. Many of these teachers that will be affected rely on those differentials to support their own families.

I urge you to reconsider and take more time to find another way, or a combinations of different ways to address the problem.

Thank you for your time.  
Respectfully yours,  
Chrystal Fermin

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** kaleohonolua808@gmail.com  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:32 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony: Don't Open Schools on Aug 4th

Aloha kākou,

My name is Kaleo Perry I am a 4th grade teacher of Ke Kula 'o 'Ehunuikaimalino. I am strongly against moving forward with the opening of schools [on August](#). I believe it is too soon and not enough planning and details are set in place to guarantee the safety of administration, teachers, staff, students and families. Safety should be our top concern and our main priority!!! DO NOT OPEN SCHOOLS [ON AUGUST 4TH](#)!! Let's keep our keiki safe! Let's keep our teachers safe! Let's keep our families safe! Learning can occur anywhere at any time.

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Leslie <fongr015@hawaii.rr.com> on behalf of Leslie  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:33 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Delay School reopening

Hello,

My name is Leslie Isaacs. I teach third grade at Maemae Elem.

I urge you to delay the start of school. There are too many unknowns ie online school, what safety procedures are available to keep me and kids safe in class and how to implement.

It takes more than a mask to start school safely. I have been in my room all day for several days trying to set up my room. New questions arise minute by minute and schools need time to get them answered.

The state is rushing this why? Pleasing certain people should not be more important than safety.

Everything is being dumped on individual schools to figure out and as such we should get more time to help ourselves problem solve.

Mahalo

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Jake Yonamine <jake.yonamine@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Jake Yonamine  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:33 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Good afternoon,

My name is Jake Yonamine and I work at Kaimuki Middle School. The purpose of my testimony pertains to the DOE's comprehensive plan for reopening of schools.

As of today, July 21, Tuesday, I am very uneasy, anxious, and nervous about Hawaii public schools reopening so soon without a clear, coherent, and visible plan of action to open safely. When I talk to my colleagues about this situation, from my school and other schools ranging from elementary, middle, and high school, everyone has different plans, ideas, and ways of reopening which is not consistent to what is being said in news outlets and live meetings. In the middle school setting, and a school like mine, the number of students attending are high. For example, even with a schedule where I will only see half my class, I still have a class of 16. Talking to my coworkers, one teacher said her biggest class split is 18 and she is fearful that her room will not be able to handle that sort of social distancing. I have fears as well, but everything needs to be thought of as a chain reaction because we are seeing all periods everyday, and for that teacher who teaches an elective course, she has students from multiple teams, who will then come in contact with our core content classes and the bubble will burst and tracing will become problematic. In the middle and high school setting, it will be a daunting challenge to grip and handle a pandemic where students from various age groups, learning levels, and teams will be intermingling together.

Also, in the case of someone testing positive for COVID-19 can happen anywhere and it only takes one person to spread the virus. A lot of families are multigenerational households, and the type of work they do varies, meaning they are going to have to encounter a variety of people, who may in return infect our students or staff. Plus, it is important to note that just because someone does not show that they are sick, does not mean they do not have the virus as COVID-19 varies from person to person. Some will become very sick and show all the symptoms, while others could be asymptomatic. There are too many known variables to keep schools closed until more can be done to safely reopen, and there are still too many unknown variables to make this demographic of people exposed to what could be life and death.

Online distance learning is possible without having to see our students in school for the time being. What was a downfall or hindrance with quarter 4's distance learning was that everything was noted as enrichment, so naturally, students did not take their lessons and academics as seriously. Now that we are faced with this obstacle, I believe teachers, students and families will rise to the occasion and be willing to enhance distance learning with more rigor and value. I believe it will take time for some to get used to this continued process, but at least people will be safer and feel more at ease to focus on the lessons at hand. Distance learning has genuinely changed my mindset of teaching and how I can be more effective while not seeing my students on a daily basis, but at least I was able to focus on this one task, rather than worry about the procedures of cleaning, becoming sick from the classroom, or even getting my students sick.

I hope that the state will be proactive, rather than reactive, to a scenario like this because we are counting on you to make the right decisions to help keep Hawaii's teachers, students, families, and communities safe. Please consider postponing the reopening of schools and allow everyone a sense of security when it comes to this predicament.

Thank you,

Jake Yonamine  
Kaimuki Middle School

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Carene Nakamura <carene.nakamura@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Carene Nakamura  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:34 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** STUDENT SAFETY AT RISK

No child in Hawaii should be going to school while we are still having new cases of Covid19 occurring every day.

How can a child learn when his or her safety is at stake? When the lives of their loved ones are at stake?

One thing that is unconscionable is the risk our government is willing to take in saddling a vulnerable, innocent child with the knowledge that he or she killed his or her beloved grandparent.

So many of our children in Hawaii live in the same house as a medically fragile grandmother or grandfather. Perhaps that child doesn't die from covid19, but what if that child infects the medically fragile elder, and the elder dies? Are we willing to be complicit in the killing of our elderly by prematurely and dangerously opening our schools?

We cannot and should not expect children to comply with safety behaviors such as hand washing and social distancing and mask wearing. Anyone who works with children knows this is not reasonable or realistic. Since we cannot depend on children to do these things, we must protect them by keeping them at home.

As an educator, I am outraged that the governor and the superintendent are not complying with what they said earlier about only opening schools when we have gone two weeks without any new cases of Covid19. Are they willing to take personal responsibility for any student dying of Covid19? Shame on them for not protecting our children. Shame on them for putting our teachers at risk.

If the people who are supposed to protect us are not doing their job, can you please help us? Can the Board of Education see that no meaningful learning can occur, or should occur, when lives are in danger?

As a teacher I am scared to death, not for my own life, but for the lives of my beloved people, my family, my friends, my students.

My mother, the center of my universe, a retired teacher, has lupus, diabetes, and has recently been diagnosed with cancer. Since March I have been scared to death of germs coming into contact with her. I take precautions before seeing her. If I were the reason she died because I brought home covid19 from being in school, I don't know how I could live with myself.

Please help us stay safe by delaying the student start date. This is not the time to allow children to congregate. The consequences of opening schools right now are too dangerous and truly not beneficial to anyone.

Sincerely,

Carene Nakamura  
HIDOE Teacher since 2001  
UH COE alumna

English Department  
Leilehua High School

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Joanna B Kobayashi <joannabkobayashi@gmail.com> on behalf of Joanna B Kobayashi  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:34 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Aloha BOE:

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 Joanna Kobayashi and I teach at Moanalua High School. I am to report to our school's opening day next Wednesday, July 30. As it stands, our school has not released our reopen plan, students have not received information about 100% distance learning options, and we are not ready. Add to that the HHSAA's decision to resume fall sports on August 18th?!

It is clear that these decisions are being made with no consideration to the health and safety of teachers, students, and everyone in the public education community. Teachers need more time to prepare classrooms, to understand how to respond if a child contracts Covid, and to work with colleagues on strategies to minimize exposure.

During this time, as a community, we have had to make sacrifices. A start date of August 4th, is asking students, teachers, and schools to make an unfair sacrifice. Until all teachers have been adequately trained as first responders, which is what our own Lieutenant Governor has called us ("I view our teachers now as first responders because they are out there with our keiki, caring for them and educating them, during a time where we've had significant numbers of Covid-19 cases. We have to make sure it's safe to open schools and some of our teachers would be vulnerable without a comprehensive health plan. I think we should insist on that before we put anyone into harm's way"), we cannot reopen our campuses to our students.

Be brave board members, do the right thing. Our kids deserve better. We teachers deserve better.

Aloha,  
Joanna Kobayashi



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** joanna pillittieri <jpillittieri@gmail.com> on behalf of joanna pillittieri  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:34 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

My name is Joanna Pillittieri & I work at Kalihi-Waena Elementary School. I am testifying on Action Item H.

There are several reasons why the opening of school should be delayed. First, teachers haven't been properly trained for distant learning & given time to prepare for it just in case schools close. Second, it's not safe reopening schools without written protocol from the DOH. And lastly, this process feels rushed as new cases of COVID-19 are still appearing daily. If you delay the opening, we teachers can get more training for distance learning & perhaps we should begin the SY this way with hopes of reopening schools later....during a safer time.

--

Sent from Gmail Mobile

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Sky Macadangdang <skyannm@gmail.com> on behalf of Sky Macadangdang  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:35 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** TESTIMONY

**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.**

Aloha, my name is Sky. I am a special education resource teacher at Nanakuli Elementary. I have been struggling with my own mental health as we are preparing for schools to reopen on July 29. Currently we are not prepared to reopen schools for face-to-face learning, and as much as I would like everything to get back to normal, and get back to teaching in my classroom with my students, I am fearful for my health and safety. I am fearful for the health and safety of my students and their families, but also for my health and my families health. I am a mom to a beautiful 2 year old, and my grandma comes over quite frequently on the weekends to help me care for my daughter. Reopening schools would be jeopardizing not just me, but everyone around me, my family. There needs to be some kind of other option that should be available for teachers. We recently saw what happened to 3 teachers in the mainland who contracted COVID, and one passed away. A parent sent her son to Kama'aina kids after she tested positive for COVID. These should all be examples that we need to consider of what will happen if we reopen schools, but the magnitude of those being infected will be far more greater. I am urging the DOE to keep schools closed until we can find a safer solution for our students, our teachers, and our families.

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Karen Kawahara <kawaharakaren@gmail.com> on behalf of Karen Kawahara  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:36 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Aloha,

This email is in response to Action **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 mother of a teenager who attends MHS, a caretaker of my sickly 92 yr old mother and a Grade 1 teacher at AAES. I am extremely scared of reopening my classroom on August 4. I feel unprepared, unsure of the safety measures I need to take to ensure the safety of my students and myself. There are too many uncertainties and unanswered questions for me to feel confident. Health and classroom guidelines have not been adequately communicated to me. Also, the simplest of school operations, as of today, have not been planned yet. (i.e recess, lunch). I also did not take (nor were offered) any distant learning classes to prepare me for distant teaching. My school has just decided to use the Seesaw platform, but has not trained any of us yet. At this time, with the virus count at one of the highest it has ever been, it seems that we are at a high risk. I understand the importance of the students' education and the amount of time they have lost. But, please do not sacrifice our health and well being by rushing every back to school.

Sincerely,  
Karen Kawahara

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** KJ <kj3490@gmail.com> on behalf of KJ  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:36 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Opening school with Pregnancy + Covid19

Aloha, I am a younger teacher who is on a pregnancy journey and I DO NOT believe we should be opening up schools on August 4th. I have not been in the DOE long enough to accumulate many sick days, therefore using up my sick days to take off time from school during this time is not an option for me, nor is taking half a year or a whole year of unpaid time off. Therefore, I will have to attend school during a chaotic pandemic where I am not only jeopardizing my health (which I am also autoimmune compromised as I have several health conditions listed as a high-risk category), but also the health of my unborn child, as well as the members of the multi-generational home that I live in. It is absolutely appalling to me that the DOE is considering rushing to open up schools without solid plans and guidelines. It seems careless in a time when we should care even more. It seems heartless and I feel disposable. Mostly, what hurts me most is I feel like I am having to choose between going back on August 4th to earn a living, or protecting my health and my unborn child's health by not attending. Please DO NOT open up on August 4th. we need more time.

Please keep my identity and email confidential.  
Thank you.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** K. Janicki <katherinejanicki@gmail.com> on behalf of K. Janicki  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:36 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Opening schools with COVID19 and pregnancy

Aloha, I am a younger teacher who is on a pregnancy journey and I DO NOT believe we should be opening up schools on August 4th. I have not been in the DOE long enough to accumulate many sick days, therefore using up my sick days to take off time from school during this time is not an option for me, nor is taking half a year or a whole year of unpaid time off. Therefore, I will have to attend school during a chaotic pandemic where I am not only jeopardizing my health (which I am also autoimmune compromised as I have several health conditions listed as a high-risk category), but also the health of my unborn child, as well as the members of the multi-generational home that I live in. It is absolutely appalling to me that the DOE is considering rushing to open up schools without solid plans and guidelines. It seems careless in a time when we should care even more. It seems heartless and I feel disposable. Mostly, what hurts me most is I feel like I am having to choose between going back on August 4th to earn a living, or protecting my health and my unborn child's health by not attending. Please DO NOT open up on August 4th. we need more time.

Please keep my identity and email confidential.  
Thank you.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Kate Reimann <kate@roguewavetoys.com> on behalf of Kate Reimann  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:37 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** NO TO RE-OPENING

Aloha, I'm a parent of two public school elementary age boys and we have opted for 100% online learning and we STRONGLY encourage the BOE to push back or eliminate in-person schooling for the following reasons:

1. The long term affects of covid on children is still unknown
2. No person's life — staff, teacher, parent, child — is worth the risk
3. Teachers do not (and should not) have proper training to navigate new school set ups with only two weeks prior to suggested re-open date.
4. Other countries who have opened schools have done so with different data; lower, decreasing rates of covid and after nationwide mask initiatives and TESTING, none of which are presently found on Hawaii or the mainland.

Please take this points into consideration — we value our ohana of teachers, their lives, the lives of their families, and the lives of our community. It's for this reason we've opted for online school and, in the spirit of aloha, we urge you to reconsider in-person classes.

Thank you for your time,

Kate



Kate Reimann, Founder & CEO

~~~~~

248.462.5552

[www.roguewavetoys.com](http://www.roguewavetoys.com)

@roguewavetoys

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Chuyang Huang <chuyanghuang@hotmail.com> on behalf of Chuyang Huang  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:37 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Dear BOD members,

My name is Chuyang Baideme, a teacher working at Kalani High School.

The state's COVID-19 numbers have been increasing over the past few weeks. Some important protocols are not quite established for school opening. Schools and teachers are not quite prepared. Rushing to open school now is not safe for our keiki, the staff and the entire community. If we are already foreseeing the positive case number will climb once the school opens, why do we try to avoid it by preparing us better?

Thank you

Sincerely

Chuyang Baideme

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Kaley Kanbara <kaley.kanbara@gmail.com> on behalf of Kaley Kanbara  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:37 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** TESTIMONY

Hi,

My name is Kaley Kanbara. I work at Holomua Elementary school 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. The retraction of the differentials will not only have a negative impact on me but my students as well. A lack of qualified teachers will not only hurt my school but other schools that my friends work at and the schools in which their keiki attend. We are already having a shortage in teachers and this will only make it worse. Please don't allow this to happen. It already is a difficult time and to cut the differentials won't make it any better. Think about not only the teachers but the keiki in Hawaii and how much this will have an impact on them.

Thank you,  
Kaley



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Lore Lei <lkuheana@gmail.com> on behalf of Lore Lei  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:38 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** TESSTIMONY TO DELAY OPENING

To the Board of Education,

Given the numerous unanswered questions and teachers scheduled to report to campuses on July 29, the Hawaii State Teachers Association (HSTA), to which I belong to, has NO confidence that our school buildings and classrooms are ready for students to open in a manner that minimizes the risk of COVID-19 spreading.

“Our schools are woefully underprepared to deliver a distance learning program should a school be shut down by the Hawaii Department of Health (DOH) due to the spread of COVID-19,” said HSTA President Corey Rosenlee.

Therefore, I implore the state of Hawaii and the Board of Education to DELAY the opening of school buildings to students. The HDOE 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.

The coronavirus has created an ever-changing situation within our communities, and significant stress and fear for our students, parents and guardians, as well as all school staff. While the HSTA believes in the importance of ensuring students are provided instructional services in school year 2020–21, it SHOULD NOT BE at the cost of a safe educational environment.

### **PROMISES of the BOE and DOE have not been met yet.**

Nearly one month ago, HSTA reached an agreement on a memorandum of understanding (MOU) about schools reopening. Yet the HDOE HAS STILL NOT fulfilled their side of the agreement.

We have repeatedly asked for important details, such as written guidance from the state Department of Health (DOH) on the reopening of school buildings. The state even agreed in contract language that such guidance would be provided before schools reopen, yet it has not been provided.

Secondly, the superintendent claims that teachers have received training throughout the summer. That statement is misleading. I HAVE NOT received any DOE sponsored training! I was not even aware that training took place.

The HDOE also claims students will have access to a 100-percent distance learning option. To date, nothing has been published by the HDOE on how this option would be accessed or utilized by families. Some initial reports from school principals redirected families to E-School as the official platform 6-12 grade students could use. This guidance is simply not true. E-School is only a supplementary program and not designed or approved to replace the curriculum provided at a student's home school. The department has provided no guidance for K-5 students' access to 100-percent distance learning options.

"We are two weeks away from school buildings reopening to students, yet critical questions remain unanswered. Educators are still confused and unclear on the necessary measures and steps needed to reduce the risk of COVID-19 spread in our schools,"

I am a 24 year teacher with the Department of Education. I attended my Union meeting to learn about LEAVES. Because I live in a multi-generation household with 2 Senior Citizens in fragile health and a 1 month old, I am strongly considering a leave of absence. I would hate to leave my Principal in a bind but this is about SAFETY.

PLEASE DELAY OPENING SCHOOLS UNTIL WE CAN DO SO SAFELY.

Sincerely,

Lorelei Kuheana

7th Grade Social Studies

Highlands Intermediate

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Jason Tanaka <jason.tanaka@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Jason Tanaka  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:39 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Are my kupuna and I safe when I returning to work on campus?

Aloha,

My name is Jason Tanaka, and I'm a secondary mathematics teacher at Leilehua High in the Central District. I write to you with concern for my retired parents who are approaching 70 and my 97yrs. old grandmother. We do not live together and no one lives in a care home, but I do run errands for and with my parents and/or grandmother. My parents are fortunate to be healthy and my grandmother only has hypertension and early stage kidney disease, but for anyone of them to contract COVID-19 from me would be DEVASTATING to all of us in our family, ESPECIALLY ME, for I would have to live with guilt I gave them COVID-19 and they could possibly not survive.

At the moment, I am SERIOUSLY thinking of separating myself from them until the end of the year for I have concerns of giving them COVID-19 from my workplace. I DO NOT FEEL CONFIDENT & SAFE IN MY CURRENT WORKPLACE FOR THEM. If I were the only person around I wouldn't mind, for I do miss seeing the kids and teaching, but NOT at the cost of my family losing their lives so I could go back to work.

As far as resources go, who's supplying us with PPE's and materials for cleaning? I ain't spending more money to keep the classroom clean, for that is not what I went to college and graduate school for. Materials are already hard to find as the current situation in all retail and warehouse shops have limited supply or none on hand. How are we supposed to keep clean at work, when we barely have enough to keep clean at home?

The only answer I can think of is keeping everyone home and going online for at least the first semester. ALL EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES should ALSO be suspended until 2nd semester. Otherwise, I'm hoping you can find a reasonable explanation, besides Dr Park's "O'hana Bubble," that will ensure myself I will NOT contract COVID-19 in my workplace. According to Dr. Park's theory, each family will bring their bubble to the school, BUT she CANNOT guarantee each family's bubble is clean of infection. As students come to and leave campus, I have doubts of everyone being compliant with health regulations, and possibly bringing COVID-19 to campus. PLEASE RECONSIDER ON-CAMPUS CLASSES AND/OR OPENING SCHOOLS ON AUG 4!

Mahalo for your time,  
~j.tanaka

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Kevin Bulicz <kbulicz@gmail.com> on behalf of Kevin Bulicz  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:39 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.](#)

As a teacher who already has underlying health conditions and the lack of preparation from the state and BOE, including guidelines, supplies, and proper training, I feel the opening of our schools could result in a very dangerous situation for myself, my family, and the families of our students. Please consider rethinking our opening and lets take our time to do it correctly.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Kumi Alice iida <klida@haaspcs.net> on behalf of Kumi Alice iida  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:39 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Subject: 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 opening of schools on August 4 MUST be delayed. We are in no way prepared to welcome back students. The HDOE 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. The coronavirus has created an ever-changing situation within our communities, and significant stress and fear for our students, parents and guardians, as well as all school staff.

I ask the following questions:

- When will the State of Hawaii's Department of Health provide written guidance on the reopening of school buildings, which the HDOE 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? If families are able to choose complete distance because they are at risk, can teachers choose to work full distance if they are at risk, or live with at-risk people?
- 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?

Teachers will be most at risk when schools reopen. They will be in close contact with dozens, and potentially hundreds, of children for multiple hours in a given day.

-----  
**Kumi Iida**

HAAS Public Charter School  
InDigital Program - High School  
Teacher: English Language Arts  
Faculty Advisor: Senior Projects  
Direct Line: 808-965-3730 ext. 215

[kiida@haaspcs.net](mailto:kiida@haaspcs.net)



*‘A‘ohe pau ka ‘ike i ka hālau ho‘okāhi.*



*Not all knowledge is learned in the same school ~ Tutu Pukui*

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Heather Higa-Funada <hhigafunada@gmail.com> on behalf of Heather Higa-Funada  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:40 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** TESTIMONY

My name is Heather Higa-Funada. I am a kindergarten teacher and a parent of a high school student. 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.

We have two weeks before school opens and I do not feel HIDOE is ready. We have not been given adequate time to prepare and arrange our classrooms to allow for proper social distancing. While I have been going in on my own time, I should not have to. Dr. Kishimoto states that we have four days of preparation before students attend school, but that is not true. Two of those days are for administrative purposes.

Dr. Kishimoto announced that teachers have been trained. This is also a false statement. There were a limited number of training on distance learning, but again, this is on our own time and voluntarily. Also, information emails were sent to our DOE email address, one that I do not check often during the summer. This is true for many other teachers across our state.

We are two weeks away and there are still many unanswered questions. Here are just a few:

- 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? This should not be the case! HIDOE should provide the distant learning curriculum to be the same across the board.
- 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. Some schools are saying masks need to be worn in the classroom, while others are saying no. It should be consistent at ALL schools.
- 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? If a student in my class is positive and I need to quarantine, what will the procedure be for my child who is a high school student and her school? Do we ALL quarantine?
- 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?

We need to take time to think, discuss, and answer the questions being asked by the teachers, parents, and community. I urge you to delay the opening of school until after the Labor Day holiday. Please consider the health and safety of our students, faculty, and staff.

Sincerely,

Heather Higa-Funada

Kindergarten Teacher, Kapalama School

Parent of a Kalani High School student



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Jungeun (Lena) Cho <lana200809@gmail.com> on behalf of Jungeun (Lena) Cho  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:40 PM  
**To:** Testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony from Jeong eun Jo -KES teacher

Hello. I am Jeong eun Jo from Kealakehe elementary school. I teach 4th grade. I believe that opening school face to face with DOE's current plan is putting staff and students in a dangerous situation.

As far as I understand, the current plan is students can take their masks off when they are seated in 6 feet apart. Are we not counting the fact that students may sneeze? Are we not counting Covid19 might be airborne? When the CDC guideline shows face covering is required among people, why DOE ignore the CDC's guideline?

In South Korea there were 0 cases of Covid19 in 3 months in all schools in the entire country (over 20,400 schools). Korea requires masks for all students and staff all day (NOT class by class). We can learn something from this to keep our keiki safe.

My point is: if we are not going to require students and staff to wear masks (NOT face shield alone) all day, we are planning to fail as a district. Change the mask rules OR 100% online learning should be the answer.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Ashley Neve <aneve@solomonelementary.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Ashley Neve  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:40 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Delay school start date

Dear BOE,

I am an elementary school teacher and I am scared to return to school this fall. Please consider delaying school for the safety of students, staff and teachers. Thus far we have received zero guidance or professional development on how to keep our communities safe or successfully implement distance learning. I taught summer school, it was a mess and ineffective. My anxiety was constant and I do not believe we were safe from contracting the virus.

Please consider distant learning for the safety of the community until the virus stops spreading.

V/r  
Ashley Neve  
--

**Ashley Neve, MAT**  
**Solomon Elementary School**  
**Pre-K Special Education Teacher**  
**Room B107**  
**"Together Everyone Achieves More."**

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** evelyn cullen <evelyn\_cullen@yahoo.com> on behalf of evelyn cullen  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:40 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Cc:** evelyn cullen  
**Subject:** Delay Start of School

I am a parent and teacher. I am in support of delaying the start of school in person until the pandemic is no longer a threat.

My child is a SEEQER, administration had a parent informational meeting regarding the start of school and although parents in attendance did share they wanted 100% online learning for their child they didn't offer that nor did they address it then or now. Following the meeting I've called and no answer, I've emailed and 48 hours since I've sent it and still have not received a response. I am stating it here now my child will not return to school until I feel safe enough as her parent that her school has done above and beyond in making my child feel and remain in a safe and clean environment and that the it is no longer a pandemic. I understand that student body equals school \$\$ and if my child does not attend then they don't get the funding. No pandemic or vaccine, my child will return, until then she will not, not even twice a day.

When I first heard about COVID19 in December I began purchasing PPE, had my daughter and grandchildren begin to wear masks to school in late January prior to Spring Break. I took it very seriously and even more so now.

As a teacher, 17 years at Central Middle. I have transitioned my entire curriculum to online learning last school year. I am prepared with that aspect of my job. I've gotten beginner training in google suites prior to exiting last school year. I am comfortable with online distance learning. I am not comfortable with my health and safety on campus during this pandemic. I am high risk. I go home to elderly parents who live near me, and grandchildren, one of which is asthmatic who visits me daily who are high risk. I am not willing to expose them to potential death.

I attended a summer meeting via zoom with my administrator, and was not convinced that she had done enough to make me feel safe upon my return. I feel Anne Marie Murphy, Principal at Central Middle has done minimal.

Prior to our meeting and during the summer I have purchased items like PPE and plexiglass to prepare my classroom and have sent her the receipts as DOE guaranteed reimbursement. She flat-out said no, she will not reimburse me for my plexiglass but will reimburse for wipes and lysol.

Last school year, I had purchased out of pocket \$600.00 for online curriculum to take my classroom online because she said I had to. Yet, to date, after providing her with all of my receipts I have not gotten reimbursed.

She spends thousands of dollars on hallway carpets with our Central Middle School Logo on it and I find it hard to think that is essential towards student learning. My thing is that the money never reaches the classroom, Anne spends the money frivolously and rarely reimburse teachers for out of pockets expense teachers spend on student learning.

Several years ago, our School had a Mumps outbreak, administration was slow to share it with parents as not to make light of the severity of the mumps on campus. Why is everything hush hush in the DOE?

With that being said, I think I will now have to prepare a specialized Last Will and Testament to include if I die on the job because I will never know if I will survive my job. I will also state it here that if I contract COVID19 while on the job and then infect my loved ones at home, I will sue DOE and Central Middle

School Administration and hold them solely responsible for knowingly forcing teachers to work in a dangerous environment and causing death to myself and my family.

If a release form comes out following my testimony to not hold DOE or my administrator responsible for my death and the death of my family members, I will not sign it. As I have stated it here prior to. And the same for my child. If she is forced to go back to school I have hold the DOE and her school sole responsible if she exposed and contracts COVID19 at school and I will hold DOE responsible for her medical expenses for life if she has lifelong injuries like blood clots as a result of COVID19.

Thank you!

Mama/Teacher who means Business,

Evelyn Cullen

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Chris Bothmer <bothmerc@gmail.com> on behalf of Chris Bothmer  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:09 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimonial please reject discontinuance of differentials

Aloha,

I was surprised to learn of the July 23, 2020 agenda item requesting discontinuance of pay differentials. I was surprised because in early May, Superintendent Kishimoto stated "we are not supporting a pay cut," and Governor Ige stated cuts would be a "last resort" and "the state has shifted to looking at all other options first." ([civilbeat.org/2020/05](http://civilbeat.org/2020/05))

May we have a discussion on the results of "looking at all other options first"?  
Aren't we all in this together?  
If we have to take a pay cut, why doesn't everybody?

As a demonstration of altruistic leadership, cuts should start at the top.

Mahalo,  
Christine Bothmer-Stinson  
Life Sciences Teacher with a 2.5 hour round trip commute  
Ka'u High & Pahala Elementary (go Trojans!)

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Erin Griffith <eringriffith2727@gmail.com> on behalf of Erin Griffith  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:10 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

To whom it may concern:

My name is Erin Griffith and I am a preschool special education teacher at Kealakehe Elementary in Kailua-Kona.

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 believe that the administrators and teachers need more time to safely prepare for students and staff to be on campus together. There are many unanswered questions, and I feel quite worried about the safety of the teachers and the students and all of the staff on campus and on the buses with so much uncertainty.

I teach in a preschool special education classroom, and there is close proximity to students for much of the day. Depending on the student, there may be toileting needs or assistance needed to eat or wash hands, etc., all which requires very close proximity. I do not feel that these needs can be taken care of at school in a safe way at this time, without more consistent guidance, statewide. Teachers and most other staff do not have medical training to accurately diagnose COVID-19 symptoms.

Thank you for your consideration.

Erin Griffith

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Marilyn Rodgers <marilyn.rodgers99@gmail.com> on behalf of Marilyn Rodgers  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:25 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Action Item H: Starting School Aug. 4th  
**Attachments:** laundry-cleaners-lung-function.pdf

To Whom This May Concern:

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 7th-12th Special Ed Teacher in a Community Based Instruction Fully Self-Contained (CBI-FSC) Program and Placement in Waianae, Hawaii. I have been employed in the State of Hawaii in education since 1995. I also am a college professor teaching future educators.

You have got to be kidding if you think we are prepared to open school. First of all, Covid-19 is still raging here. My students are supposedly the most vulnerable because of their intellectual disabilities, and I have not even been told who my support staff is yet. We have no idea how we are going to structure ourselves to manage pods of students. You must know that most students are not going to be able to sit in a chair, isolate 6 ft. from each other, and learn 4 days per week! It is likened to a prison sentence for them. But that is what is being proposed!!!!

Additionally, I am nearly 70 years old. How about my vulnerability? We are not able to protect our students and our teachers in so many ways. Think of the cleaning and disinfecting situation in my classroom for a minute. I did not allow custodians full reign of my classroom because a couple of times when they did scrub my classroom last year with chlorox, ammonia, or other quaternary ingredients, my students and I suffered for several days from the toxicity. We coughed and choked. Have my administrators allowed me to be exempt from the cleaning requirements? NO!!! And do I really think the custodians will enter all classrooms to clean and disinfect thoroughly? No?

I have only used non-toxic EPA-registered biodegradable disinfectants in my room, the students help keep it clean, and we disinfect. I pay for it out of my own pocket. With the new regulations we are all going to get lung-scars from what the State of Hawaii and CDC guidelines propose to clean our rooms. See the summary of a longitudinal lung study attached. Let me know how I am going to protect my students and myself from Covid-19 given your loose parameters.

In conclusion, do not force school to open on August 4th. We are just not ready to be the ones to risk our lives. I would be happy to share with you a video about this study, with some acceptable cleaning and disinfecting alternatives. We need to be given better options than starting school next week. I am not going to scar my lungs and then be expected to fight a virus that attacks it.

*Sincerely,  
Marilyn Rodgers  
M.Ed., Inclusion Specialist*

*Teacher Community Based Instruction, D-Workroom*

*Kamaile Academy PCS*

*85-180 Ala Akau St. Waianae, HI 96792*

*TEL: [\(808\) 697-7110](tel:(808)697-7110)*

*FAX: [\(808\) 697-7115](tel:(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*



## Cleaning at home and at work in relation to lung function decline and airway obstruction

Ø Svanes<sup>1, 2</sup>, RJ Bertelsen<sup>1</sup>, SHL Lygre<sup>2</sup>, AE Carsin<sup>3, 4, 5</sup>, JM Antó<sup>3</sup>, B Forsberg<sup>6</sup>, JM García-García<sup>7</sup>, JA Gullón<sup>7</sup>, J Heinrich<sup>8</sup>, M Holm<sup>9</sup>, M Kogevinas<sup>3</sup>, I Urrutia<sup>12</sup>, B Leynaert<sup>13, 14</sup>, JM Moratalla<sup>15</sup>, N Le Moual<sup>16, 17</sup>, T Lytras<sup>3, 18</sup>, D Norbäck<sup>19</sup>, D Nowak<sup>8</sup>, M Olivieri<sup>20</sup>, I Pin<sup>21</sup>, N Probst-Hensch<sup>22, 23</sup>, V Schlünssen<sup>24, 25</sup>, T Sigsgaard<sup>24</sup>, TD Skorge<sup>2</sup>, S Villani<sup>26</sup>, \*D Jarvis<sup>10</sup>, \*JP Zock<sup>3</sup> and \*C Svanes<sup>2, 27</sup>

1. Department of Clinical Science, University of Bergen, Bergen, Norway
2. Department of Occupational Medicine, Haukeland University Hospital, Bergen, Norway
3. ISGlobal, Centre for Research in Environmental Epidemiology (CREAL), Barcelona, Spain;
4. Universitat Pompeu Fabra (UPF), Barcelona, Spain;
5. CIBER Epidemiología y Salud Pública (CIBERESP), Barcelona, Spain
6. Division of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, Umeå University, Umeå, Sweden
7. Pneumology Department, University Hospital San Agustín, Avilés, Spain
8. Institute and Outpatient Clinic for Occupational and Environmental Medicine, Clinic Center, Ludwig Maximilian University, Comprehensive Pneumology Centre Munich, German Centre for Lung Research, Muenchen, Germany
9. Department of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, Sahlgrenska University Hospital, Gothenburg, Sweden
10. National Heart and Lung Institute, Imperial College, London, UK
12. Pulmonology Department, Galdakao Hospital, Spain
13. Inserm U1152, Pathophysiology and Epidemiology of Respiratory Diseases, Paris, France
14. UMR 1152, Univ Paris Diderot Paris7, Paris, France
15. Servicio de Neumología, Complejo Hospitalario Universitario de Albacete, Spain
16. Inserm, U1168, Aging and chronic diseases. Epidemiological and Public health approaches, F-94807 Villejuif, France
17. Univ Versailles St-Quentin-en-Yvelines, UMR-S 1168, France
18. Department of Experimental and Health Sciences, Universitat Pompeu Fabra (UPF), Barcelona, Spain
19. Department of Medical Sciences, Occupational and Environmental Medicine, Uppsala University, Uppsala, Sweden
20. University Hospital of Verona, Verona, Italy
21. Pneumologie Pédiatrique, Antenne Pédiatrique du CIC, Grenoble, France
22. Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute, Basel, Switzerland
23. Department Public Health, University of Basel, Switzerland
24. Department of Public Health, Danish Ramazzini Center, Aarhus University, Denmark
25. National Research Center for the Working Environment, Copenhagen, Denmark
26. Unit of Biostatistics and Clinical Epidemiology, Department of Public Health, Experimental and Forensic Medicine, University of Pavia, Italy
27. Centre for International Health, University of Bergen, Bergen, Norway

\*Contributed equally

*Corresponding author:* Øistein Svanes; [oistein.svanes@uib.no](mailto:oistein.svanes@uib.no); telephone: +47 95758248; Department of Clinical Science, University of Bergen, Bergen, Norway

*Contributorship statement:* Ø Svanes wrote the plan of analysis, analysed the data, and drafted and revised the manuscript. C Svanes and JP Zock contributed with the plan of analysis, participated in coordination and collection of data, contributed with interpretation of analyses and revised the manuscript. D Jarvis contributed as above and in addition quality controlled the lung function tests. Ø Svanes, JP Zock and C Svanes are guarantors. RJ Bertelsen, SHL Lygre, JM Antó, AE Carsin, B Forsberg, JM García-García, JA Gullón, J Heinrich, M Holm, D Jarvis, M Kogevinas, I Urrutia, B Leynaert, JM Moratalla, N Le Moual, T Lytras, D Norbäck, D Nowak, M Olivieri, I Pin, N Probst-Hensch, V Schlünssen, T Sigsgaard, TD Skorge and S Villani participated in coordination and collection of data and revised the manuscript. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

*Funding:* None of the study sponsors/funders had any role on study design, data collection, data analysis, data interpretation or writing of the report. The corresponding author had full access to all the data in the study and had full responsibility for the decision to submit for publication.

The project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 633212. The co-ordination of ECRHS I and ECRHS II was supported by the European Commission. The co-ordination of ECRHS III was supported by the Medical Research Council (Grant Number 92091). The funding sources for the local ECRHS studies are provided in the online data supplement.

*Running head:* Long-term respiratory health effects of cleaning

*Descriptor number:* 1.25 Occupational and Environmental Airways Disease

*Word count:* 3036

*At a Glance Commentary:*

*Scientific Knowledge on the Subject:* It is known that cleaning tasks may imply exposure to chemical agents with potential harmful effects to the respiratory system. Further, increased risk of asthma and respiratory symptoms among professional cleaners and in persons cleaning at home is reasonably well documented.

*What This Study Adds to the Field:* This study suggests that also long-term respiratory health is impaired 10-20 years after cleaning activities. We found accelerated lung function decline in women both following occupational cleaning and cleaning at home. The effect size was comparable to the effect size related to 10-20 pack-years of tobacco smoking.

This article has an online supplement, which is accessible from this issue's table of content online at [www.atsjournals.org](http://www.atsjournals.org)

## ABSTRACT

**Rationale** Cleaning tasks may imply exposure to chemical agents with potential harmful effects to the respiratory system, and increased risk of asthma and respiratory symptoms among professional cleaners and in persons cleaning at home has been reported. Long-term consequences of cleaning agents on respiratory health are, however, not well described.

**Objectives** This study aims to investigate long-term effects of occupational cleaning and cleaning at home on lung function decline and airway obstruction.

**Methods** The European Community Respiratory Health Survey (ECRHS) investigated a multi-centre population based cohort at three time points over twenty years. 6230 participants with at least one lung function measurement from 22 study centres, who in ECRHS II responded to questionnaire modules concerning cleaning activities between ECRHS I and ECRHS II were included. The data were analysed with mixed linear models adjusting for potential confounders.

**Main results** As compared to women not engaged in cleaning ( $\Delta FEV_1 = -18.5$  ml/year),  $FEV_1$  declined more rapidly in women responsible for cleaning at home ( $-22.1$ ,  $p=0.01$ ) and occupational cleaners ( $-22.4$ ,  $p=0.03$ ). The same was found for decline in FVC ( $\Delta FVC = -8.8$  ml/year;  $-13.1$ ,  $p=0.02$  and  $-15.9$ ,  $p=0.002$ , respectively). Both cleaning sprays and other cleaning agents were associated with accelerated  $FEV_1$  decline ( $-22.0$ ,  $p=0.04$  and  $-22.9$ ,  $p=0.004$ , respectively). Cleaning was not significantly associated with lung function decline in men, or with  $FEV_1/FVC$ -decline or airway obstruction.

**Conclusions** Women cleaning at home or working as occupational cleaners had accelerated decline in lung function, suggesting that exposures related to cleaning activities may constitute a risk to long-term respiratory health.

**Word count:** 250

**Key words:** Occupational Medicine, Spirometry, Lung Diseases

## INTRODUCTION

Cleaning tasks are associated with exposure to several chemical agents with potential harmful effects to the respiratory system [1] as well as on cardiovascular markers [2]. Excess risk of asthma and respiratory symptoms among professional cleaners [3] [4], as well as asthma and respiratory symptoms in persons cleaning their own home [5] [6] [7] [8], has been reported in several studies. Both specific immunological mechanisms and non-specific inflammatory responses have been suggested [9].

The long-term consequences of cleaning agents on respiratory health are, however, not well described and there is a need for further studies [10]. It seems biologically plausible that exposure to cleaning chemicals could result in accelerated lung function (LF) decline and chronic airway obstruction; low-grade inflammation over many years could possibly lead to persistent damage to the airways, alternatively, persistent damage could result from continued exposure after onset of cleaning-related asthma. To our knowledge there is no previous investigation of long-term effects of cleaning at home on lung function decline and respiratory health. A previous study has shown increased risk of self-reported COPD among occupational cleaners [11] and a newly published large population-based cohort-study from the UK showed cleaners to be among the occupations with the highest risk of spirometric defined COPD [12].

The European Community Respiratory Health Survey (ECRHS) provided an opportunity for longitudinal assessment of cleaning exposure in a large population-based cohort that included information about occupational cleaning and cleaning at home as well as spirometry performed at three time-points. The aim of this paper was to investigate associations of both professional cleaning and cleaning at home with lung function decline and chronic airway obstruction. In addition, the type and frequency of applied cleaning agents were analyzed.

Some of the results of this study have been previously reported in the form of an abstract [13].

## METHODS

### Study design and population

ECRHS is an international multi-centre population-based cohort, established from random population samples of men and women aged 20-44 years in 1992-94 (ECRHS I), reinvestigated 1998-2002 (ECRHS II) and 2010-12 (ECRHS III). Each survey included interviews, spirometry, anthropometric measurements a.o. Written consent were obtained from all participants in each survey, ethical approval was obtained from the regional ethic committee of each centre.

In ECRHS II, 22 study centres included questionnaire modules for selected occupations. This paper presents data from participants who answered entrance questions to questionnaire modules assessing cleaning activities between ECRHS I and II, and had lung function measured at least once (figure E1, online data supplement).

### **Cleaning exposure**

Based on the entrance questions (wording at <http://www.ecrhs.org>), participants were categorised as “not cleaning”, “cleaning at home” and “occupational cleaning”. Participants responding “yes” to at least one module entrance question, answered a questionnaire concerning use of cleaning agents (sprays, other cleaning agents); defining the exposure categories “not cleaning”, “ $\geq 1$  cleaning spray  $\geq 1$ /week”, and “ $\geq 1$  other cleaning product  $\geq 1$ /week”.

### **Lung function**

Maximum Forced Vital Capacity (FVC) and maximum Forced Expired Volume in one second ( $FEV_1$ ) were determined by spirometry; in ECRHS III bronchodilator test was performed. Decline in pre-bronchodilator  $FEV_1$  and FVC was defined as the slope of change between each measurement in millilitres. Post-bronchodilator airway obstruction at ECRHS III was defined as  $FEV_1/FVC < \text{Lower Limit of Normal (LLN)}$  predicted using the NHANES equations [14]. Persons with any airway obstruction at ECRHS I were excluded from analyses with airway obstruction as outcome variable (n=314).

### **Covariates**

Pack-years were calculated from cigarettes per day x years smoked/20, body mass index (BMI) from weight per square height. Age at attained education was used as proxy for socioeconomic status [15] [16]. Father’s and mother’s educational background and an

occupational based socio-economic variable [17] were used as proxies for socioeconomic status in sensitivity analyses.

## **Statistical analyses**

Possible effect on decline in lung function from cleaning exposure was analysed with mixed effect models adjusting for age at baseline and its square, number of years from baseline to each follow-up, height, BMI, lifetime pack-years at each time-point, age at completed education, spirometer type, and centre. Absolute lung function (FEV<sub>1</sub> or FVC) was the outcome variable in all models. Effects of exposures on longitudinal lung function decline were estimated by including interaction terms of exposure with time since baseline. Study participants with only one observation were included in the analyses; although not contributing direct information about the effect of the exposures, they informed the effect of the other fixed covariates on lung function, thereby raising the overall statistical power of the analysis. Change in FEV<sub>1</sub> and FVC was expressed as ml/year; a negative value represented a decline.

Associations between cleaning exposure and airway obstruction were analysed with multiple logistic regression adjusting for BMI, height, age at completed education, pack-years, spirometer and centre. Associations were reported as odd ratios with 95% confidence intervals.

A more detailed description of methods can be found in the online data supplement.

## **RESULTS**

The study population included 6,230 participants with a mean age of 34 years at baseline and 54 years at the second follow-up (ECRHS III). Fifty-three percent of the participants were women, 44% were lifelong non-smokers and ever-smokers had smoked mean 7.0 pack-years at baseline (table 1). The prevalence of asthma confirmed by a doctor increased from the first to the second study wave, and the prevalence of spirometric defined any airway obstruction (based on pre-bronchodilator spirometry), increased from the second to the third study wave. The mean FEV<sub>1</sub> and FVC at baseline were 3.8 and 4.5 litres respectively (table 1).

Of 6235 participants, 2693 (43.2%) and 2740 (44.0%) respectively, performed satisfactory FEV<sub>1</sub> and FVC manoeuvres in two study waves (table 2). 2717 (43.6%) and 2597 (41.7%), respectively, performed FEV<sub>1</sub> and FVC manoeuvres in all three study waves while 825 (13.2%) and 898 (14.4%) respectively, performed spirometry manoeuvres in one study wave (table 2).

Among 3,298 female participants, the majority reported to be the person cleaning at home (85.1%), as compared to 46.5% of 2932 male participants (table 3). There were 293 (8.9%) women and 57 (1.9%) men that reported working with occupational cleaning. Persons cleaning at home were more often never-smokers and had smoked less pack-years than the other two exposure groups. The occupational cleaners had a lower age at attained education compared to others, independent of sex. Women cleaning at home and female occupational cleaners had more doctor diagnosed asthma than women not cleaning. Further, men cleaning at home had more doctor diagnosed asthma as compared to men not cleaning and male occupational cleaners. There was not substantially higher prevalence of spirometric defined chronic airway obstruction in either of the exposure groups as compared to the unexposed group (table 3).

Women not working as cleaners and not involved in cleaning at home showed the lowest decline in FEV<sub>1</sub> and FVC (table 4). Female occupational cleaners, including those who in addition also cleaned at home, had the highest mean decline in FEV<sub>1</sub> and FVC. The differences between each of the two exposed groups and the reference group were statistically significant (table 4). In relation to exposure, the increase in decline was similar for FEV<sub>1</sub> and FVC, and therefore no apparent difference in the decline of the FEV<sub>1</sub>/FVC ratio was seen. The average annual decline was 0.5% in all three exposure groups. Male occupational cleaners and men cleaning at home did not have accelerated lung function decline as compared to men who reported no cleaning activities between ECRHS I and ECRHS II (table E1 in the online data supplement).

Among women, the use of sprays or other cleaning products (i.e. non-sprays) at least once per week was associated with accelerated decline in FEV<sub>1</sub> as compared to not performing cleaning activities (table 4). Use of other cleaning products at least once per week was also associated with accelerated decline in FVC (table 4). Among male cleaners,



not either sprays or other cleaning products were significantly associated with lung function decline (table E1 in the online data supplement).

There was no apparent increased risk of chronic airway obstruction in neither of the cleaning exposure groups and likewise, there was no apparent increased risk of chronic airway obstruction with regard to either use of cleaning sprays or other cleaning products (table 5).

## DISCUSSION

This longitudinal analysis observed that women who had either cleaned at home or worked as professional cleaners had accelerated decline in FEV<sub>1</sub> and FVC as compared to women not regularly engaged in cleaning activities. Furthermore, compared to women not engaged in cleaning activities, women who used sprays or other cleaning agents at least one time per week had significantly accelerated decline in FEV<sub>1</sub> while women who used other cleaning products at least one time per week had increased decline in FVC. No association between lung function and cleaning was seen for males.

To the best of our knowledge, this analysis is the first to address lung function decline in relation to cleaning exposure in occupational life or at home. In general, our findings of poorer respiratory health outcomes in relation to cleaning exposures are supported in the literature on cleaning-related asthma [4] [18]. Previous longitudinal studies on occupational cleaning have shown increased risk of COPD [11] [12]. In the present study, there were relatively few cases of incident COPD and associations with cleaning activities did not reach statistical significance. Our study suggested a steeper decline in FVC than in FEV<sub>1</sub> in relation to cleaning. FVC is an outcome of particular interest as survival in asymptomatic adults without a chronic respiratory diagnosis or persistent respiratory symptoms has been shown to be associated with FVC rather than airway obstruction as defined by the lower than normal FEV<sub>1</sub>/FVC ratio [19]. Brodtkin et al. showed that increased decline in the FEV<sub>1</sub>/FVC ratio might signify accelerated obstructive changes even when the ratio was not below the fixed ratio or LLN [20]. However, in our study there was no difference in yearly FEV<sub>1</sub>/FVC decline between the three exposure groups. This might in part be due to our studying a relatively young population where airway obstruction has not yet manifested as spirometric changes.



The excess decline in the exposed groups amounted to 3.6 ml/year (cleaning at home) and 3.9 ml/year (occupational cleaning) for FEV<sub>1</sub>, and 4.3 and 7.1 ml/year, respectively, for decline in FVC. The absolute decline in lung function over time may possibly be underestimated [21], due to the multi-centre design of our study with 22 participating centres, with different spirometers and technical personnel. This could possibly attenuate true differences between groups, and our study could also be less sensitive to small changes. For comparison within our study population, similar models with similar adjustments showed that heavy smokers (>20 pack-years) had excess decline of 6.1 ml/year in FEV<sub>1</sub> and 8.9 ml/year in FVC (as compared to the excess decline in occupational cleaners of 4.3 and 7.1 ml/year). The effect of occupational cleaning was thus comparable to smoking somewhat less than 20 pack-years.

Most cleaning agents have an irritative effect on the mucous membranes of the airways [22] [9]. One possible mechanism for the accelerated decline in cleaners is the repetitive exposure to low-grade irritative cleaning agents over time, thereby causing persistent changes in the airways. Also, some cleaning agents may have sensitizing properties through specific immunological mechanism; quaternary ammonium compounds are known to have sensitizing effects in the airways, as well as also having an irritative effect [22]. Repeated exposure could lead to remodelling of the airways, thereby over time causing an accelerated decline in FVC and FEV<sub>1</sub>. Also, one could hypothesize that long-term exposure to airway irritants such as ammonia and bleach used when cleaning at home could cause fibrotic or other interstitial changes in the lung tissue, thereby leading to accelerated decline of FVC [23].

Earlier studies have shown that people with asthma, regardless of sex and smoking status, show greater decline in FEV<sub>1</sub> than people without [24]. In the present analysis, asthma was more prevalent in the exposed groups (12.3 and 13.7% versus 9.6%, respectively for women (table 3)); however, adjusting for ever had asthma in either of the three study waves in a sensitivity analysis did not change the associations (table E2 in the online data supplement). Furthermore, the effects were similar when excluding asthmatics (table E3 in the online data supplement), suggesting that the observed accelerated lung function decline is generally not mediated by cleaning-related asthma. This sensitivity analysis also suggests that the

associations with cleaning exposure was not limited to, mediated by or confounded by asthma treatment.

Spirometric chronic airway obstruction is according to the Global Initiative for Chronic Obstructive Disease [25] defined as individuals with a fixed FEV<sub>1</sub>/FVC ratio < 0.70. However, there is concern that using the fixed cut-off as definition of airway obstruction can misdiagnose cases of obstruction as the FEV<sub>1</sub>/FVC ratio varies with age, height and gender [26]. Therefore, using the fixed ratio may result in over-diagnosis of elderly patients whose lung volumes may be reduced as a result of the normal aging process, hence, any airway obstruction was defined as an FEV<sub>1</sub>/FVC ratio less than LLN.

The major strengths of this study include the long-time follow-up with spirometry measurements at three time-points in a large number of participants with extensive data. The population-based design and the multicentre structure make the results applicable to a general population rather than to specific groups. Furthermore, the data from the participants were extensive, ensuring that each participant was well characterised, with ample possibilities to adjust for potential confounders. Post-bronchodilator spirometry values in ECRHS III provided the preferred measure for diagnosing chronic airway obstruction [27] [28]. Cleaning activities were recorded in the ECRHS II, thereby making it possible to establish a temporal relationship between cleaning activities and long-term outcomes. Our data did not allow for a detailed exploration between years in or onset of cleaning activities in relation to lung function decline.

This analysis has some methodological challenges. Firstly, cleaning at home or work by social class may have differential associations across centres, for example it stands to reason that the customs of having someone to clean at home varies between countries. To account for this, centre has been used as an adjustment variable to take into account social-cultural differences. Thus, the multicultural structure of the study makes it possible to take into account heterogeneous cultural differences between centres. Secondly, occupational cleaning may be related to an unhealthy lifestyle where smoking might be one factor even though this was not apparent in this study population. To account for possible confounding, smoking, in terms of pack-years, has been adjusted for in the analyses. Further, age at attained education was used to further adjust for confounding by socio-economic status.

Thirdly, the reference group with women not cleaning at home or working as occupational cleaners was small (n=197) and one could suspect that this group would constitute a selected socioeconomic group. However, adjusting for SES (age at attained education) in the main analysis did not alter the associations, and SES itself was not a significant predictor (p=0.17) of decline in lung function. Furthermore, sensitivity analysis with adjustment for mother's and father's educational level (each in three categories) did not influence the associations of cleaning exposure with lung function decline, and these markers did not have significant effects on lung function decline. Additional sensitivity analysis with adjustment for the occupational based socio-economic variable (based on "uksc") did not either alter the associations, and this social class variable was not a significant independent predictor for accelerated lung function decline.

Smoking in terms of pack-years was included as a time-varying variable in the model in order to account for the effect of smoking over time on lung function decline. To account for possible residual confounding of smoking on accelerated FEV<sub>1</sub> decline, we performed a sensitivity analysis including an interaction term between pack-years and time in the model. This did not alter the estimates of annual decline in FEV<sub>1</sub> or the confidence intervals in the two exposure groups. Differential misclassification bias with regard to occupational cleaning is possible and could cause positive or negative confounding. However, a reporting error in cleaning exposure assessment is more likely to give non-differential bias. The exposure assessment in the present paper is crude ("person doing the cleaning and/or washing at home"; "having worked as a cleaner"), but overall, while the analyses have several methodological challenges, these are likely to have attenuated the associations and cannot easily explain the accelerated fall in lung function in women cleaning at home or working as occupational cleaners.

There was no apparent accelerated decline in lung function in men, but it seems likely that the exposures in men who work as cleaners may be different from those in women. Also, the low number of male occupational cleaners (n=57) gave little power to discover accelerated decline in lung function as compared to men not cleaning. Our entrance questions might possibly not have picked up i.e. male industrial cleaners. Further, it is possible that occupational groups with other, but equally or more, harmful exposures such as industrial cleaners and other industrial workers, were included in the reference category, thereby

leading to an underestimation of the excess loss in lung function due to cleaning activities. Finally, the greater impact seen in women (both cleaning at home and occupational cleaners) could be mediated by a different susceptibility according to sex, as is reported for other mixed chemical exposures such as tobacco smoke and other occupational exposures as wood dust, where studies have indicated that less exposure in women is need to develop illness [29] [30] [31].

In conclusion, this longitudinal analysis of a cohort followed over twenty years found that women cleaning at home or working as occupational cleaners had accelerated decline in FVC and FEV<sub>1</sub>, but no apparent accelerated decline in the FEV<sub>1</sub>/FVC ratio. A causal effect might be biological plausible, since cleaning agents have known irritative effects and potential for causing inflammatory changes in the airways [9]. The effect of treatment for asthma was not investigated in this study. The findings suggest that cleaning activities in women, whether at home or as an occupation, may constitute a risk to respiratory health, not only in terms of asthma as previously shows, but also in terms of long-term impact on lung function decline. Our findings advocate a need for further focus on preventing harmful exposure to the airways from exposure in cleaning activities.

**Table 1. Characteristics of the study population at each survey**

|                                                                            | ECRHS I<br>(n=6,235)* | ECRHS II<br>(n=6,235)* | ECRHS III<br>(n=3,804)* |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Sex (% women)                                                              | 52.9                  | 52.9                   | 53.2                    |
| Age (years Mean $\pm$ SD <sup>†</sup> )                                    | 33.8 $\pm$ 7.2        | 42.7 $\pm$ 7.2         | 54.1 $\pm$ 7.2          |
| Height (meters, Mean $\pm$ SD <sup>†</sup> )                               | 1.7 $\pm$ 0.10        | 1.7 $\pm$ 0.10         | 1.7 $\pm$ 0.10          |
| BMI (Mean $\pm$ SD <sup>†</sup> )                                          | 23.8 $\pm$ 3.7        | 25.4 $\pm$ 4.3         | 26.9 $\pm$ 4.8          |
| Never-smokers (%)                                                          | 44                    | 41                     | 40                      |
| Pack-years (Mean $\pm$ SD <sup>†</sup> )                                   | 7.0 $\pm$ 11.0        | 9.9 $\pm$ 16.1         | 11.1 $\pm$ 19.4         |
| Age at completed education (years Mean $\pm$ SD <sup>†</sup> )             | 19.7 $\pm$ 4.5        | 20.8 $\pm$ 5.4         | -                       |
| FVC (litres, Mean $\pm$ SD)                                                | 4.5 $\pm$ 1.0         | 4.4 $\pm$ 1.0          | 4.0 $\pm$ 1.0           |
| FVC % predicted based on NHANES (Mean $\pm$ SD <sup>†</sup> )              | 100.4 $\pm$ 11.9      | 99.9 $\pm$ 12.4        | 97.3 $\pm$ 13.2         |
| FVC < LLN (%)                                                              | 5.6                   | 6.3                    | 8.9                     |
| FEV <sub>1</sub> (litres, Mean $\pm$ SD <sup>†</sup> )                     | 3.8 $\pm$ 0.8         | 3.5 $\pm$ 0.8          | 3.1 $\pm$ 0.8           |
| FEV <sub>1</sub> % predicted based on NHANES (Mean $\pm$ SD <sup>†</sup> ) | 101.2 $\pm$ 12.8      | 99.8 $\pm$ 13.6        | 95.4 $\pm$ 14.4         |
| Asthma (%) ( <i>"Asthma confirmed by a doctor?"</i> )                      | 6.1                   | 9.5                    | 7.0                     |
| Airway obstruction (%) (defined by LLN <sup>‡</sup> )                      | 5.0                   | 5.3                    | 9.8                     |
| Chronic airway obstruction (%) (defined by LLN <sup>§</sup> )              |                       |                        | 5.6                     |
| Cleaning at home <sup>  </sup>                                             |                       | 4,486 (72%)            |                         |
| Occupational cleaning <sup>  </sup>                                        |                       | 350 (6%)               |                         |

\* Study participants in each study wave who gave information on cleaning activities in ECRHS II and had at least one acceptable measurement of lung function at either of the three study waves.

<sup>†</sup>SD – Standard Deviation

<sup>‡</sup>LLN – Lower Limit of Normal, pre-bronchodilator

<sup>§</sup>LLN – Lower Limit of Normal, post-bronchodilator

<sup>||</sup>Cleaning activities between ECRHS I and ECRHS II

Table 2 Number of spirometry test

|                                 | FEV <sub>1</sub> | FVC         |
|---------------------------------|------------------|-------------|
| Spirometry in one study wave    | 825 (13.2)       | 898 (14.4)  |
| Spirometry in two study waves   | 2693 (43.2)      | 2740 (44.0) |
| Spirometry in three study waves | 2717 (43.6)      | 2597 (41.7) |

American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine  
Copyright © 2018 American Thoracic Society

**Table 3. Covariates at ECRHS II according to exposure to cleaning (from module entrance questions in ECRHS II)**

|                                                       | Not cleaning (reference) |                  | Cleaning at home |                    | Occupational cleaner |                  |
|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------------|----------------------|------------------|
|                                                       | Men<br>(n=1,512)         | Women<br>(n=197) | Men<br>(n=1,363) | Women<br>(n=2,808) | Men<br>(n=57)        | Women<br>(n=293) |
| Age (years) Mean $\pm$ SD*                            | 43.4 $\pm$ 7.2           | 40.3 $\pm$ 7.5   | 42.1 $\pm$ 7.3   | 42.9 $\pm$ 7.1     | 41.3 $\pm$ 6.8       | 42.8 $\pm$ 7.0   |
| Height (meters) Mean $\pm$ SD*                        | 1.8 $\pm$ 0.07           | 1.6 $\pm$ 0.07   | 1.8 $\pm$ 0.07   | 1.6 $\pm$ 0.07     | 1.7 $\pm$ 0.07       | 1.6 $\pm$ 0.07   |
| BMI Mean $\pm$ SD*                                    | 26.4 $\pm$ 3.6           | 24.6 $\pm$ 4.9   | 25.6 $\pm$ 3.5   | 24.7 $\pm$ 4.6     | 26.6 $\pm$ 3.8       | 25.9 $\pm$ 5.4   |
| Never-smokers (%)                                     | 32                       | 41               | 43               | 45                 | 28                   | 44               |
| Pack-years Mean $\pm$ SD*                             | 15.8 $\pm$ 22.0          | 9.1 $\pm$ 14.2   | 9.6 $\pm$ 15.1   | 6.9 $\pm$ 11.7     | 15.3 $\pm$ 17.1      | 8.9 $\pm$ 13.7   |
| Age at completed education (years) Mean $\pm$ SD*     | 20.0 $\pm$ 4.7           | 22.2 $\pm$ 4.3   | 21.6 $\pm$ 5.2   | 21.0 $\pm$ 5.6     | 19.9 $\pm$ 5.1       | 18.1 $\pm$ 6.0   |
| FVC (litres) Mean $\pm$ SD*                           | 5.0 $\pm$ 0.8            | 3.7 $\pm$ 0.7    | 5.2 $\pm$ 0.8    | 3.7 $\pm$ 0.6      | 5.1 $\pm$ 0.8        | 3.6 $\pm$ 0.6    |
| FVC % predicted, NHANES (Mean $\pm$ SD*)              | 99.2 $\pm$ 12.1          | 99.8 $\pm$ 13.7  | 99.1 $\pm$ 12.3  | 100.6 $\pm$ 12.5   | 101.1 $\pm$ 10.2     | 100.2 $\pm$ 12.6 |
| FVC < LLN <sup>†</sup> (%)                            | 6.8                      | 8.1              | 7.6              | 5.2                | 2.0                  | 7.0              |
| FEV <sub>1</sub> (litres) Mean $\pm$ SD*              | 4.0 $\pm$ 0.7            | 3.1 $\pm$ 0.5    | 4.1 $\pm$ 0.7    | 3.0 $\pm$ 0.5      | 4.1 $\pm$ 0.7        | 2.9 $\pm$ 0.5    |
| FEV <sub>1</sub> % predicted, NHANES (Mean $\pm$ SD*) | 100.7 $\pm$ 13.7         | 100.3 $\pm$ 14.2 | 99.3 $\pm$ 13.9  | 99.7 $\pm$ 13.3    | 102.1 $\pm$ 11.0     | 98.3 $\pm$ 13.4  |
| Asthma (%) ("Asthma confirmed by a doctor?")          | 7.0                      | 9.6              | 10.3             | 12.3               | 7.0                  | 13.7             |
| Airway obstruction (%) (defined by LLN <sup>†</sup> ) | 5.0                      | 3.1              | 6.1              | 5.1                | 5.3                  | 6.1              |

\*SD – Standard Deviation

<sup>†</sup>LLN – Lower Limit of Normal pre-bronchodilator values

**Table 4. Associations of decline in FEV<sub>1</sub> and FVC with cleaning at home and occupational cleaning in women. Association between smoking and decline in FEV<sub>1</sub> and FVC given for comparison.**

|                                                                   | Adjusted* decline in FEV <sub>1</sub> and FVC |                |                            |                |                                          |                |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------------------|----------------|------------------------------------------|----------------|
|                                                                   | ΔFEV <sub>1</sub> (ml/year)<br>(95% CI)       | p <sup>†</sup> | ΔFVC (ml/year) (95%<br>CI) | p <sup>†</sup> | ΔFEV <sub>1</sub> /FVC (%/year) (95% CI) | p <sup>†</sup> |
| No cleaning activities between EC I and EC II (reference) (n=197) | -18.5 (-21.3, -15.7)                          |                | -8.8 (-12.4, -5.1)         |                | -0.5 (-0.58, -0.45)                      |                |
| Cleaning at home (n=2,808)                                        | -22.1 (-23.2, -21.0)                          | 0.01           | -13.1 (-14.6, -11.7)       | 0.02           | -0.5 (-0.57, -0.52)                      | 0.39           |
| Occupational cleaner (n=293)                                      | -22.4 (-24.8, -20.0)                          | 0.03           | -15.9 (-19.0, -12.7)       | 0.002          | -0.5 (-0.59, -0.48)                      | 0.60           |
| No cleaning activities between EC I and EC II (reference) (n=197) | -18.7 (-21.6, -15.7)                          |                | -9.5 (-13.3, -5.7)         |                |                                          |                |
| ≥1 spray ≥1 time/week (n=569)                                     | -22.0 (-23.9, -20.1)                          | 0.04           | -13.3 (-15.8, -10.9)       | 0.07           |                                          |                |
| ≥1 other cleaning product ≥1 time/week (n=1,567)                  | -22.9 (-24.4, -21.5)                          | 0.004          | -14.3 (-16.2, -12.5)       | 0.01           |                                          |                |
| Never-smoker (reference) (n=1,670)                                | -21.1 (-22.4, -19.9)                          |                | -11.8 (-13.4, -10.2)       |                |                                          |                |
| <10 pack-years (n=769)                                            | -21.8 (-23.3, -20.3)                          | 0.4            | -12.2 (-14.2, -10.2)       | 0.7            |                                          |                |
| 10-20 pack-years (n=442)                                          | -23.3 (-25.2, -21.4)                          | 0.03           | -12.8 (-15.3, -10.3)       | 0.4            |                                          |                |
| >20 pack-years (n=411)                                            | -27.2 (-29.3, -25.2)                          | <.001          | -20.7 (-23.3, -18.0)       | <0.001         |                                          |                |

\*Adjustments: Age at ECRHS II (centered), age at ECRHS II squared, number of years since baseline, height at baseline, BMI at each study wave, life-time pack-years, age at completed education, spirometer model used at each study wave, and study centre

†p-value from mixed effect models for difference in lung function decline between reference group and exposed groups



**Table 5. Associations between different cleaning exposures and incident airway obstruction in women and men. Association between smoking and incident chronic airway obstruction given for comparison.**

|                                        | Chronic airway obstruction*              |                |                                          |                |
|----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|----------------|------------------------------------------|----------------|
|                                        | Women                                    |                | Men                                      |                |
|                                        | OR <sup>†</sup> (95% CI)                 | p <sup>‡</sup> | OR <sup>†</sup> (95% CI)                 | p <sup>‡</sup> |
| Cleaning at home                       | 5.20 (0.67 – 40.71) (n <sup>§</sup> =86) | 0.1            | 0.89 (0.38 – 2.13) (n <sup>§</sup> =32)  | 0.8            |
| Occupational cleaner                   | 1.93 (0.14 – 20.89) (n <sup>§</sup> =7)  | 0.6            | 1.45 (0.17 – 12.49) (n <sup>§</sup> =2)  | 0.7            |
| ≥1 spray ≥1 time/week                  | 5.87 (0.68 – 51.04) (n <sup>§</sup> =16) | 0.1            | 0.68 (0.79 – 5.76) (n <sup>§</sup> =2)   | 0.7            |
| ≥1 other cleaning product ≥1 time/week | 4.78 (0.56 – 40.10) (n <sup>§</sup> =51) | 0.2            | 1.05 (0.38 – 2.87) (n <sup>§</sup> =22)  | 0.9            |
| <10 pack-years                         | 1.16 (0.54 – 2.47) (n <sup>§</sup> =22)  | 0.7            | 2.07 (0.67 – 6.38) (n <sup>§</sup> =10)  | 0.2            |
| 10-20 pack-years                       | 1.51 (0.63 – 3.61) (n <sup>§</sup> =11)  | 0.4            | 1.79 (0.55 – 5.84) (n <sup>§</sup> =11)  | 0.3            |
| >20 pack-years                         | 3.31 (1.56 – 7.03) (n <sup>§</sup> =28)  | 0.002          | 7.16 (2.91 – 17.64) (n <sup>§</sup> =36) | <0.001         |

\*Participants with obstructive spirometry in ECRHS I (n=314) excluded from the analysis.

<sup>†</sup>Adjustments: BMI and height at baseline, age at attained education, life-time pack-years, spirometer model and centre. In the analyses on smoking adjustment is made for cleaning.

<sup>‡</sup>p-value for the association between different exposures groups and OR of chronic airway obstruction

<sup>§</sup>n signifies the number of persons with spirometric defined chronic airway obstruction in each exposure group

## References

1. Zock JP, Kogevinas M, Sunyer J, Jarvis D, Toren K, Anto JM. Asthma characteristics in cleaning workers, workers in other risk jobs and office workers. *European Respiratory Journal* 2002;20:679-685.
2. Mehta AJ, Adam M, Schaffner E, Barthélémy JC, Carballo D, Gaspoz JM, Rochat T, Schindler C, Schwartz J, Zock JP, Künzli N, Probst-Hensch N, SAPALDIA T. Heart rate variability in association with frequent use of household sprays and scented products in SAPALDIA. *Environ Health Perspect* 2012;120:958-964.
3. Medina-Ramón M, Zock JP, Kogevinas M, Sunyer J, Antó JM. Asthma symptoms in women employed in domestic cleaning: a community based study. *Thorax* 2003;58:950-954.
4. Kogevinas M, Anto JM, Sunyer J, Tobias A, Kromhout H, Burney P. Occupational asthma in Europe and other industrialised areas: a population-based study. *European Community Respiratory Health Survey Study Group. Lancet* 1999;353:1750-1754.
5. Zock JP, Vizcaya D, Le Moual N. Update on asthma and cleaners. *Curr Opin Allergy Clin Immunol* 2010;10:114-120.
6. Zock JP, Plana E, Jarvis D, Antó JM, Kromhout H, Kennedy SM, Künzli N, Villani S, Olivieri M, Torén K, Radon K, Sunyer J, Dahlman-Hoglund A, Norbäck D, Kogevinas M. The use of household cleaning sprays and adult asthma: an international longitudinal study. *Am J Respir Crit Care Med* 2007;176:735-741.
7. Le Moual N, Varraso R, Siroux V, Dumas O, Nadif R, Pin I, Zock JP, Kauffmann F. Epidemiological, Study on the Genetics and Environment of Asthma. Domestic use of cleaning sprays and asthma activity in females. *Eur Respir J* 2012;40:1381-1389.
8. Bédard A, Varraso R, Sanchez M, Clavel-Chapelon F, Zock JP, Kauffmann F, Le Moual N. Cleaning sprays, household help and asthma among elderly women. *Respir Med* 2014;108:171-180.
9. Siracusa A, De Blay F, Folletti I, Moscato G, Olivieri M, Quirce S, Raulf-Heimsoth M, Sastre J, Tarlo SM, Walusiak-Skorupa J, Zock JP. Asthma and exposure to cleaning products - a European Academy of Allergy and Clinical Immunology task force consensus statement. *Allergy* 2013;68:1532-1545.
10. Mirabelli MC, London SJ, Charles LE, Pompeii LA, Wagenknecht LE. Occupation and three-year incidence of respiratory symptoms and lung function decline: the ARIC Study. *Respir Res* 2012;13:24.
11. Svanes Ø, Skorge TD, Johannessen A, Bertelsen RJ, Bråtveit M, Forsberg B, Gislason T, Holm M, Janson C, Jögi R, Macsali F, Norbäck D, Omenaas ER, Real FG, Schlünssen V, Sigsgaard T, Wieslander G, Zock JP, Aasen T, Dratva J, Svanes C. Respiratory Health in Cleaners in Northern Europe: Is Susceptibility Established in Early Life. *PLoS One* 2015;10:e0131959.
12. De Matteis S, Jarvis D, Hutchings S, Darnton A, Fishwick D, Sadhra S, Rushton L, Cullinan P. Occupations associated with COPD risk in the large population-based UK Biobank cohort study. *Occup Environ Med* 2016;73:378-384.
13. Svanes Ø; Bertelsen RJ; Lygre SHL; Antó, JM; Carsin, AE; Kogevinas, M; Leynaert, B; Lytras, T; Mirabelli, M; Moratalla, J; Moual, N Le; Norbäck, D; Olivieri, O; Schlünssen, V; Skorge, TD; Zock, JP, Svanes, C. Long term effect of cleaning on lung function decline in the ECRHS study.
14. Hankinson JL, Odencrantz JR, Fedan KB. Spirometric reference values from a sample of the general U.S. population. *Am J Respir Crit Care Med* 1999;159:179-187.
15. Liberatos P, Link BG, Kelsey JL. The measurement of social class in epidemiology. *Epidemiol Rev* 1988;10:87-121.

16. Basagaña X, Sunyer J, Kogevinas M, Zock JP, Duran-Tauleria E, Jarvis D, Burney P, Anto JM, European CRHS. Socioeconomic status and asthma prevalence in young adults: the European Community Respiratory Health Survey. *Am J Epidemiol* 2004;160:178-188.
17. Rose M. Official social classifications in the UK. Guildford: University of Surrey 1998
18. Kogevinas M, Zock JP, Jarvis D, Kromhout H, Lillienberg L, Plana E, Radon K, Toren K, Alliksoo A, Benke G, Blanc PD, Dahlman-Hoglund A, D'Errico A, Hery M, Kennedy S, Kunzli N, Leynaert B, Mirabelli MC, Muniozguren N, Norback D, Olivieri M, Payo F, Villani S, van Sprundel M, Urrutia I, Wieslander G, Sunyer J, Anto JM. Exposure to substances in the workplace and new-onset asthma: an international prospective population-based study (ECRHS-II). *Lancet* 2007;370:336-341.
19. Burney PG, Hooper R. Forced vital capacity, airway obstruction and survival in a general population sample from the USA. *Thorax* 2011;66:49-54.
20. Brodtkin CA, Barnhart S, Checkoway H, Balmes J, Omenn GS, Rosenstock L. Longitudinal pattern of reported respiratory symptoms and accelerated ventilatory loss in asbestos-exposed workers. *Chest* 1996;109:120-126.
21. Sharma G, Goodwin J. Effect of aging on respiratory system physiology and immunology. *Clin Interv Aging* 2006;1:253-260.
22. Quirce S, Barranco P. Cleaning agents and asthma. *J Investig Allergol Clin Immunol* 2010;20:542-50; quiz 2p following 550.
23. Arif AA, Hughes PC, Delclos GL. Occupational exposures among domestic and industrial professional cleaners. *Occup Med (Lond)* 2008;58:458-463.
24. Lange P, Parner J, Vestbo J, Schnohr P, Jensen G. A 15-year follow-up study of ventilatory function in adults with asthma. *N Engl J Med* 1998;339:1194-1200.
25. From the Global Strategy for the Diagnosis, Management and Prevention of COPD, Global Initiative for Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease (GOLD) 2016. 2016
26. Quanjer PH, Stanojevic S, Cole TJ, Baur X, Hall GL, Culver BH, Enright PL, Hankinson JL, Ip MS, Zheng J, Stocks J, ERS GLFI. Multi-ethnic reference values for spirometry for the 3-95-yr age range: the global lung function 2012 equations. *Eur Respir J* 2012;40:1324-1343.
27. Halbert RJ, Natoli JL, Gano A, Badamgarav E, Buist AS, Mannino DM. Global burden of COPD: systematic review and meta-analysis. *Eur Respir J* 2006;28:523-532.
28. van den Boom G, van Schayck CP, van Mollen MP, Tirimanna PR, den Otter JJ, van Grunsven PM, Buitendijk MJ, van Herwaarden CL, van Weel C. Active detection of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and asthma in the general population. Results and economic consequences of the DIMCA program. *Am J Respir Crit Care Med* 1998;158:1730-1738.
29. Silverman EK, Weiss ST, Drazen JM, Chapman HA, Carey V, Campbell EJ, Denish P, Silverman RA, Celedon JC, Reilly JJ, Ginns LC, Speizer FE. Gender-related differences in severe, early-onset chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. *Am J Respir Crit Care Med* 2000;162:2152-2158.
30. Foreman MG, Zhang L, Murphy J, Hansel NN, Make B, Hokanson JE, Washko G, Regan EA, Crapo JD, Silverman EK, DeMeo DL, COPDGene I. Early-onset chronic obstructive pulmonary disease is associated with female sex, maternal factors, and African American race in the COPDGene Study. *Am J Respir Crit Care Med* 2011;184:414-420.
31. Jacobsen G, Schlünssen V, Schaumburg I, Taudorf E, Sigsgaard T. Longitudinal lung function decline and wood dust exposure in the furniture industry. *Eur Respir J* 2008;31:334-342.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Higa, Mitzie <mhiga@hsta.org> on behalf of Higa, Mitzie  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:28 PM  
**To:** Testimony BOE  
**Cc:** Rosenlee, Corey; Holck, Wilbert  
**Subject:** Submitting TESTIMONY for President Corey Rosenlee, for July 23rd meeting, 1:30 pm, Agenda Item VI, Action Item H  
**Attachments:** BOE-AgenaltemHdelaystudentsoncampus.pdf

Aloha Board of Education,

I am submitting testimony [attached] for the BOE General Business meeting on Thursday, July 23, 1:30 p.m. for Hawaii State Teachers Association President Corey Rosenlee on AGENDA ITEM VI. 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

**He will have two pieces of testimony for two different items.**

**Agenda VI, Action Item H [attached]**

**And**

**Agenda item VI, Action Item G (will be sent in a separate e-mail.)**

Thank you,  
Mitzie Higa  
Hawaii State Teachers Association  
Government Relations Specialist



1200 Ala Kapuna Street ♦ Honolulu, Hawaii 96819  
Tel: (808) 833-2711 ♦ Fax: (808) 839-7106 ♦ Web: [www.hsta.org](http://www.hsta.org)

Corey Rosenlee  
President

Osa Tui, Jr.  
Vice President

Logan Okita  
Secretary-Treasurer

Wilbert Holck  
Executive Director

## TESTIMONY BEFORE THE BOARD OF EDUCATION GENERAL BUSINESS MEETING

RE: AGENDA ITEM VI. 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**

THURSDAY, JULY 23, 2020

COREY ROSENLEE, PRESIDENT  
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

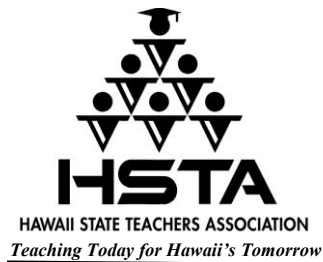
Chair Payne, and Members of the Board:

**The Hawaii State Teachers Association asks the Board for consideration of Agenda Item VI. Action Item H, to urge the Board of Education to delay the return of students to campus. Our schools are woefully underprepared to minimize risk of COVID-19. Given the numerous unanswered questions and teachers scheduled to report to campuses on July 29, the Hawaii State Teachers Association (HSTA) has no confidence that our school buildings and classrooms are ready for students to open in a manner that minimizes the risk of COVID-19 spreading.**

Our schools are woefully underprepared to deliver a distance learning program should a school be shut down by the Hawaii Department of Health (DOH) due to the spread of COVID-19. Therefore, HSTA implores the state of Hawaii and the Board of Education to **delay the opening of school buildings to students.**

**The HDOE 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.** The coronavirus has created an ever-changing situation within our communities, and significant stress and fear for our students, parents and guardians, as well as all school staff. While the HSTA believes in the importance of ensuring students are provided instructional services in school year 2020–21, it should not be at the cost of a safe educational environment.

**Nearly one month ago, HSTA reached an agreement on a memorandum of understanding (MOU) about schools reopening. Yet the HDOE has still not**



1200 Ala Kapuna Street ♦ Honolulu, Hawaii 96819  
Tel: (808) 833-2711 ♦ Fax: (808) 839-7106 ♦ Web: [www.hsta.org](http://www.hsta.org)

Corey Rosenlee  
President

Osa Tui, Jr  
Vice President

Logan Okita  
Secretary-Treasurer

Wilbert Holck  
Executive Director

**fulfilled their side of the agreement.** HSTA has repeatedly asked for important details, such as written guidance from the state Department of Health (DOH) on the reopening of school buildings. The state even agreed in contract language that such guidance would be provided before schools reopen, yet it has not been provided. **Testimony before lawmakers and news conferences do not equate to comprehensive written and endorsed guidance from the DOH.** Health Director Bruce Anderson told lawmakers last Thursday Gov. David Ige asked him “just today” to convene a panel of experts to determine the trigger points for opening and closing schools. It’s unclear whether that has happened with just over a week before educators are supposed to report back to their schools.

Secondly, the superintendent claims that teachers have received training throughout the summer. That statement is misleading. A small fraction of teachers participated in voluntary professional development regarding virtual learning over the summer. Yet many teachers have told us they were unable to participate or not even aware that training took place. In the next federal stimulus bill coming soon both sides of the aisle have stated it will contain more funds to assist schools with these safety measures, and they have also stated that they will be providing more flexibility with the stimulus money that has already been provided to schools as well.

The HDOE also claims students will have access to a 100-percent distance learning option. To date, nothing has been published by the HDOE on how **this option would be accessed or utilized by families.** Some initial reports from school principals redirected families to E-School as the official platform 6-12 grade students could use. This guidance is simply not true. E-School is only a supplementary program and not designed or approved to replace the curriculum provided at a student’s home school. The department has provided no guidance for K-5 students’ access to 100-percent distance learning options.

**We are two weeks away from school buildings reopening to students, yet critical questions remain unanswered. Educators are still confused and unclear on the necessary measures and steps needed to reduce the risk of COVID-19 spread in our schools.**

**While HSTA has continued to work in good faith with the state, HDOE, and**



1200 Ala Kapuna Street ♦ Honolulu, Hawaii 96819  
Tel: (808) 833-2711 ♦ Fax: (808) 839-7106 ♦ Web: [www.hsta.org](http://www.hsta.org)

Corey Rosenlee  
President

Osa Tui, Jr  
Vice President

Logan Okita  
Secretary-Treasurer

Wilbert Holck  
Executive Director

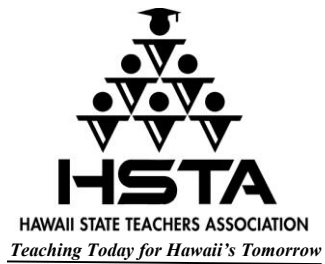
**public charter schools throughout the summer, we continue to ask the following questions:**

- When will the State of Hawaii's Department of Health provide written guidance on the reopening of school buildings, which the HDOE 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?

Teachers will be most at risk when schools reopen. They will be in close contact with dozens, and potentially hundreds, of children for multiple hours in a given day. Yet they seem to be more of an afterthought in the health director's overall concern for health and safety. **In testimony before lawmakers last week, Anderson admitted, "The disease is far more serious for older people. That doesn't necessarily help the teachers, of course, or the faculty who are worried. But for the kids themselves, the risk is relatively low for serious disease."**

In Hawai'i, teacher turnover is high, it is not just our new teachers leaving, and the number of teachers leaving continues to rise even more so now, with COVID-19 and the lack of safety measures being implemented by HDOE.

To take care of the needs of our hardworking public school teachers, and to provide our keiki with the safest return to the quality education they deserve, the Hawaii



1200 Ala Kapuna Street ♦ Honolulu, Hawaii 96819  
Tel: (808) 833-2711 ♦ Fax: (808) 839-7106 ♦ Web: [www.hsta.org](http://www.hsta.org)

**Corey Rosenlee**  
President

**Osa Tui, Jr**  
Vice President

**Logan Okita**  
Secretary-Treasurer

**Wilbert Holck**  
Executive Director

State Teachers Association thanks the Board of Education for considering delaying the return of students to campus until better safety measures, including teacher training, are in place.



## Testimony BOE

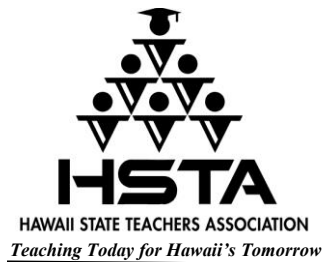
---

**From:** Higa, Mitzie <mhiga@hsta.org> on behalf of Higa, Mitzie  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:42 PM  
**To:** Testimony BOE  
**Cc:** Rosenlee, Corey; Holck, Wilbert  
**Subject:** Submitting TESTIMONY (#2) for President Corey Rosenlee, for July 23rd meeting, 1:30 pm, Agenda Item VI, Action Item G  
**Attachments:** BOE-AgenaltemGpromisedTeacherDifferentials.pdf

Aloha Board of Education,

I am submitting testimony [attached] for the BOE General Business meeting on Thursday, July 23, 1:30 p.m. for Hawaii State Teachers Association President Corey Rosenlee on **AGENDA ITEM VI, 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**

He will have two pieces of testimony for two different items.  
Agenda VI, Action Item H [already e-mailed previously in a separate e-mail)  
And  
Agenda item VI, Action Item G [attached]  
Thank you,  
Mitzie Higa  
Hawaii State Teachers Association  
Government Relations Specialist



1200 Ala Kapuna Street ♦ Honolulu, Hawaii 96819  
Tel: (808) 833-2711 ♦ Fax: (808) 839-7106 ♦ Web: [www.hsta.org](http://www.hsta.org)

Corey Rosenlee  
President

Osa Tui, Jr.  
Vice President

Logan Okita  
Secretary-Treasurer

Wilbert Holck  
Executive Director

## TESTIMONY BEFORE THE BOARD OF EDUCATION GENERAL BUSINESS MEETING

RE: AGENDA ITEM VI, 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

THURSDAY, JULY 23, 2020

COREY ROSENLEE, PRESIDENT  
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Chair Payne, and Members of the Board:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association requests the Board to **oppose** Agenda Item VI, Action Item G.

**The Hawaii Department of Education wants to defer differentials next school year, even though they helped fill vacancies.** In spite of new data showing these differentials were effective, a proposal before the Hawaii State Board of Education (BOE) 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.

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 (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.” **Despite that in the next federal stimulus bill coming soon both sides of the aisle have stated it will contain more funds to assist schools, and they have also stated that they will be providing more flexibility with the stimulus money that has already been provided to schools as well.**

**If this proposal is approved, nearly 4,000 educators will see a drop in pay. HIDOE is going back on a promise to our teachers.**

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



1200 Ala Kapuna Street ♦ Honolulu, Hawaii 96819  
Tel: (808) 833-2711 ♦ Fax: (808) 839-7106 ♦ Web: [www.hsta.org](http://www.hsta.org)

Corey Rosenlee  
President

Osa Tui, Jr  
Vice President

Logan Okita  
Secretary-Treasurer

Wilbert Holck  
Executive Director

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 HDOE money if state lawmakers did not fund it for next school year.

This new proposal breaks that pledge. The HDOE 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. They are not even waiting for the next stimulus bill, or considering that there will be more flexibility with the stimulus money that has already been provided to schools as well.

**The differentials worked as planned! According to the department's own data,** 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 department could not provide comparison data for Hawaiian language immersion positions.

**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.**

**The HSTA 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. 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. Our keiki will suffer the most, especially our most vulnerable students who need experienced educators during these difficult times.

Corey Rosenlee  
President

Osa Tui, Jr  
Vice President

Logan Okita  
Secretary-Treasurer

Wilbert Holck  
Executive Director

In Hawai'i, teacher turnover is already high, it is not just our new teachers leaving, and the number of teachers leaving continues to rise. Currently, only 53 percent of teachers remain in the Hawaii DOE for five years or more. In addition, about 1,000 long-term substitutes and emergency hires filling vacancies in classrooms are not graduates of a state-approved teacher education program. In fact, some of those subs and emergency hires are not even college graduates.

Research shows that teachers become more effective the longer they are in the classroom.

**A study published by the Learning Policy Institute in 2016** showed the following: Based on a review of 30 studies published within the last 15 years that analyze the effect of teaching experience on student outcomes in the United States and met specific methodological criteria, researchers found that:

- Teaching experience is positively associated with student achievement gains throughout a teacher's career. Gains in teacher effectiveness associated with experience are most steep in teachers' initial years, but continue to be significant as teachers reach the second, and often third, decades of their careers.
- As teachers gain experience, their students not only learn more, as measured by standardized tests, they are also more likely to do better on other measures of success, such as school attendance.
- Teachers' effectiveness increases at a greater rate when they teach in a supportive and collegial working environment, and when they accumulate experience in the same grade level, subject, or district.
- More-experienced teachers support greater student learning for their colleagues and the school as a whole, as well as for their own students.

**HSTA urges the BOE to oppose this item. HDOE should not break the promises they made to our teachers for differentials to attract and retain our licensed teachers to special education, hard-to-staff, and Hawaiian immersion positions.** Already, many of our teachers are not staying beyond five years, and now, due to COVID-19 and the lack of safety and clear guidelines and training given to our teachers, and now this proposal of broken promises, even more teachers are thinking about leaving far before their retirement age.

Dear Members of the BOARD OF EDUCATION:

My name is Christy Hiraе. I am a 15 year veteran teacher at Paauiilo Elementary and Intermediate 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 am a single mother who has bills, student loans, child in college, and a mortgage. It is even harder now with the COVID-19 pandemic where the price of goods are astronomically higher in our rural communities.

The differential has made a tremendous impact on my personal life as well as my classroom students lives. The ability to get things for my classroom that would have necessarily gone without such as extra books/workbooks for students, supplies for both the classroom and students has not gone unnoticed. I appreciate that I can make things in my classroom more accessible for each student and my students appreciate the fact that they now have supplies that they can use and not worry who will not get a chance or whose turn it will to have to share. This coming school year the biggest impact the differential will have is that my students will not be having to buy their own school supplies, I was able to purchase their school supplies using the extra money saved from the differential.

The differential has made an impact on teachers here at Paauiilo Elementary and Intermediate School. Out of my 15 years here at the school this coming school year will be the first school year I have seen all of our SPED positions filled! We will actually have “real” certified SPED teachers for our students! The young and vibrant new teachers that we have received this past two years are looking forward to staying which will give the school a stable teaching environment. The students in this small country forgotten sugarcane community deserve to have constant teachers! We have been in such a turmoil with turnover of teachers in the last 7 years and because we are so small we are constantly overlooked. Students are leaving and so are the great teachers. I travel all the way from Hilo to Paauiilo which is almost a roundtrip of 80 miles a day, at least 90 – 120 minutes roundtrip every day in my vehicle (give or take 15 – 20 minutes depending on roadwork or it will be hours if there is a motor accident) just to work there. I love my teaching job and I love working out in Paauiilo with views of the ocean on one side of campus and the mountains on the other side of campus. Having the differential

will help to keep these young and vibrant teachers staying here at our small school which will lead to students returning and staying at our school.

Mahalo for your time and understanding,

Christy Hiraе

Grade 5 Teacher, Paauilo Elementary and Intermediate School

Hamakua District, Hawaii Island

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Lori Towata <lori.towata@gmail.com> on behalf of Lori Towata  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:42 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

My name is Lori Towata, third-grade teacher from Lunalilo Elementary School in Honolulu, Hawaii and I am submitting written testimony regarding the July 23, 2020 General Business Meeting 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, I want to thank the Board of Education for listening to the concerns of the teachers and the community at-large in clarifying that 6-foot distancing was the expectation in restarting the school year. My principal has been extremely proactive in allowing teachers who are willing, the opportunity to come to school early to begin classroom set-up and see what the new normal for the SY 2020-2021 might look like.

The Monday, July 20th press conference, with Governor Ige, Dr. Kishimoto, Dr. Park, and BOE Chairperson Payne, did not offer the reassurances that I was seeking as a teacher for the August 4th reopening of schools to children. I don't feel that schools should reopen without the following in place:

1. Written guidelines provided by the Department of Health (DOH) for school reopening and steps taken should COVID-19 impact a student, teacher, school employee, or related household member;
2. Designated time to prepare for the instructional hybrid model (in-person & distance) adopted by my school for my grade level because 2 days of in-classroom preparation and ½ day trainings once students are in school is not feasible;
3. Clear and consistent communication to families to provide educational options for students and their families;
4. Procedures for students in pre-k, kindergarten, first-, and second-grade and general mask-wearing expectations;
5. School closure procedures if there is a recognized case of COVID-19 within the school community (parent, student, teacher, school employee, or household member).

As a teacher, I provide expectations for my students whenever they have a learning expectation. Major assignments have criteria that must be met and there are assessment rubrics provided ahead of time to know how performance will be measured. Hawaii public schools will be the first district in the nation to open to students in the nation. The Hawaii Department of Education has not provided us with the clear expectations and criteria for very critical parts of providing instruction. It seems unfair that this process is being rushed. Teachers are expected to welcome students back without really understanding what we are supposed to do.

I know school won't be a normal experience for my students and I want to see them everyday, but not at the expense of getting sick or allowing them to get sick as well. I would like the BOE to consider just having teachers return to school and delay the physical return of students until we are properly trained for distance education opportunities. Many parents seem uncomfortable with the lack of clarity provided by the DOE and DOH.

I hope you will consider the health and safety of everyone in the school community as being paramount in this discussion.

Thank you,  
Lori Towata

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Joyce Vea <joycebvea@gmail.com> on behalf of Joyce Vea  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:43 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

**Flag Status:** Flagged

My name is Joyce Vea 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 am a middle school counselor at Waimea Canyon Middle School on Kauai. This school year, I am also expected to teach one elective section of Leadership. I am also a concerned parent of a 2nd grader who will be attending Kekaha Elementary school. I am extremely concerned with the lack of planning, communicating, and implementation of safety protocols as we try to return our students back to face-to-face learning.

I am appalled that the Governor and the Superintendent Kishimoto found it a competent choice to make such statements to the public that our schools are ready to open and that options such as 100% online learning will be offered without their specific guidance on those issues. It feels like the people at top are comfortable making decisions, but it is the personnel at the school level who are doing ALL the work in figuring out what 100% learning will/should look like or how to safely provide education in a face-to-face meeting. This is not adequate leadership. I would hope that the Board of Education would be able to distinguish between leaders who need to sometimes make unpopular decisions for the benefit of our entire state and those who just want to appeal to a certain demographic/group.

While the State Dept. of Health feels that children (as a less likelier group of being infected by COVID) would fare okay in schools, they have totally disregarded the thousands of adults (who may have physical ailments/challenges that put themselves at risk) who work with students directly in the state's reopening plan. I am disheartened and frankly just absolutely tired that our profession is constantly having to defend our worth and our work - and now our safety. Why is my health only considered as an afterthought?

I recently found out that I will be expecting my third child in early 2021. You can imagine our family's concerns with health and safety in regards to this pregnancy. I feel like the state agencies sometimes make decisions in reaction to events happening as opposed to being proactive in their measures. I do not feel that someone like me would be protected in the opening of schools. I am wondering if the DOE or the state would prefer to be sued (such as one teacher union in Florida) in order to think about the ramifications of their current plan???

I am asking the Board of Education to exert their influence to the DOE and state politicians and leaders to produce tangible and realistic measures prior to opening schools. I would also appeal to the DOE to give school personnel and districts the support needed with online options. This is a directive/initiative that should be presented by Superintendent Kishimoto - not one that should be developed by each school independently from one another. The DOE needs to plan and present this option before it is being offered to parents. Where is the planning? We are subjected to evaluations all the time. Where is the accountability on the superintendent, the governor, the health director??? The accountability may be with the BOE. Please help keep our schools safe for students and adults alike. We all want to go back to a sense of normalcy, and I promise to do my part and go back to work, but I would like to feel reassured knowing that my health is being valued.



Thank you for your time,

Joyce Veal

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** (Kalelani Ogata) <kaleko76@aol.com> on behalf of (Kalelani Ogata)  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:44 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 Kalelani Ogata. I am a preschool special education teacher at Lincoln Elementary School. I ask that you please delay the opening of school to allow school personnel, faculty, staff, and administration to adequately prepare for the return of students and prepare for distance learning (train, plan, prep, etc).

In preparation for opening up schools there has not been any training provided by the DOE as they stated in press conferences for safety protocols and distance learning. It feels like every school and teacher is on their own. Our principal has been great and really hold our teachers and children as a priority. She has worked so hard to create a plan with teachers' help but we are all in a fog. There is no real guidance from the top down. Faculty meetings on planning and preparing for school opening have been happening "optionally" during the summer but of course many of us participate because it's important to teachers to safely open for the kids. Even principals are trying to swim through mud to figure out what is expected of us. There is no guidance or support but the CAS, DES, and higher ups have deadlines to meet that are put on the schools so that Dr. Kishimoto can say we are moving forward and are ready to open. We are not ready. And on top of all of the "optional" planning we do on our summer vacation, once we have something to submit then we are told to go back to the drawing board to address something else. The latest that our school just found out about on Monday, 7/20/20, is that we now have to offer 100% distance learning for grades K-5. This was not a part of our original plan. We are not prepared for this. We have to shift faculty to cover distance learning, relearn systems (not even sure what the systems will be if there is any), reorganize and plan. This is too much! And we only have 2 weeks before students return. The opening of schools will not go well at all - you can say it was done but there will not be safety protocols in place especially for how or when does a school close down? Is it just a classroom that closes if there is a positive COVID case or is it the whole school? There are so many questions with no answers. I get that we have to go with the flow but there has to be some foundation of protocols in place prior to opening. There isn't. There is so much being thrown on our plates with no support. Please delay the opening of schools. We need the time to do it right and safely.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Kalelani Ogata

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Kayla Callarec <kaylak.shi@gmail.com> on behalf of Kayla Callarec  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:45 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Delay Reopening Schools

Aloha,

My name is Kayla Callarec and I am an elementary teacher in Hilo, Hawaii. I am currently expecting and have concerns about returning back to work under the current conditions. With me being pregnant, I would fall under the category of those who are at high risk for contracting covid-19. Although I would love to return back to work and see students again, I am thinking of the health of myself, my child, and my husband. The number of cases has continued to rise daily and I do not feel as if schools are ready to reopen. There are still so many unanswered questions. I think the BOE really needs to think about ensuring the safety for not only the students, but for the high risk faculty and staff, including myself. I understand that everyone is doing their best during these challenging times, however delaying the opening of schools could help everyone to be more prepared for what is yet to come. Like the saying goes "rather be safe than sorry." Please consider delaying the opening of schools so other teachers who are in position can feel safe.

Mahalo,  
Kayla Callarec

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Flora Green <flora.green@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Flora Green  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:45 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** delay of reopening schools

To whom it may concern, as an educator and mother of 2 children, I do NOT believe we are ready to reopen our Hawaii schools. There are too many unanswered questions, and too many unclear guidelines that are still not in place. Please re-consider delaying our school opening.

Thank you! Flora Green

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Furian <furian\_rider@hotmail.com> on behalf of Furian  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:45 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony Urgent!

BOE members

It is not fair to subject teachers and students to unsafe conditions due to the possible and likely spread of COVID 19 at this time.

We are not ready for a safe face to face reopening at this time. It seems asinine to even consider this to be a reality we can safely function in at present.

To best serve everyone's need for safety our only real common ground is full distance learning until

Mandating masks and a 6 foot social distancing in classes is a start but cannot guarantee all stakeholders safety. There are numerous examples from others states and municipalities that have already faced spiking C-19 case loads and even DEATH for following these basic protocols; Arizona, Florida, California etc...

Why risk anyone's safety when other measures can be taken by the State government until such time that we can ALL safely return?

Respectfully,  
Chris Westcott  
Social Studies Teacher  
Henry J. Kaiser High School

<https://www.npr.org/sections/coronavirus-live-updates/2020/07/14/890716897/teacher-recovering-from-covid-19-says-school-reopening-is-tough-decision>

<https://www.wfla.com/community/health/coronavirus/teacher-dies-from-coronavirus-pasco-county-parents-nervous-to-send-kids-back-to-school/>

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-merseyside-52248927>

Sent from Earth

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Teresita Neuhart <teresita.neuhart@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Teresita Neuhart  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:45 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** re: testimony on teachers' differential pay  
**Attachments:** BOE Testimony July 2020.docx

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.

## BOE Testimony

Tere Neuhart/Kindergarten

Agenda Item: Temporary Discontinuation of Differential Teacher Pay

Position: Oppose

### Comment:

Please do not discontinue the differential pay for teachers because most of us are struggling teachers that have normal bills like everyone else. Being a teacher on Molokai already has its drawbacks with the increase of food costs, gas/electric costs, and normal living costs. I am the only one with a full time job as my husband is a seasonal worker therefore, we are just getting by and this differential helps a little.

Thank you for your consideration.

Tere Neuhart

Kindergarten Teacher, Molokai



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Keith Shirota <keith.shirota@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Keith Shirota  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:46 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Not ready to start school year

My name is Keith Shirota and I am entering my 29 year at Maui High school. I have been reading the news every day to keep up with our Covid situation and what our school system is sharing. The information I have been reading about is not accurate and factual. Here is what I know at Maui High going forward.

1. We were not allowed to vote for 1 of the 3 choices given by Superintendent of Hawaii schools. We were told to vote whether we wanted choice 3 (Blended) or not. Choice 1 or 2 were not an option for us.
2. Staff was told regular ed students would be all virtual and only SPED, 504 and ELL students would be on campus daily. That is not a blended rotational schedule for all students although Baldwin High School is doing a rotational schedule for all students.
3. We have not had any professional development regarding virtual teaching yet and we start in 2 weeks. What I know is what I have learned on Youtube and Google. I teach a hands on type class (weight training) and there is little to no information to help me with my class. Students don't have access to lifting equipment at home. I believe my class is very important for physical and emotional well being.
4. We were told by our principal that masks are not mandatory. We have to wear it in public places but not in schools. I don't understand this.
5. I would like to know how I am supposed to keep my weightroom disinfected. Do I purchase all cleaning supplies? Does the school provide it? What do I use? How often? Many unanswered questions.
6. How do we ensure that all students have access to computers and the internet ? I had a 30% participation rate during the 4th quarter of last school year.

I can go on and on about not being prepared to begin this school year and I am certain many teachers feel the same way.

Keith Shirota  
Maui High School

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Zan Timtim <zanzibar722@gmail.com> on behalf of Zan Timtim  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:48 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Delay School Opening

Aloha!

I am testifying on the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools plan for the 2020-2021 School Year.

As a parent, I am very concerned for the safety of my children at school. I do not feel the plan that the DOE has put out is sufficient to provide a safe atmosphere for the students and the staff. There are so many unanswered questions.

1. Schools can't 100% successfully control the common cold, flu and ukus. How do you expect to control the coronavirus?
2. There should be 6 feet distance in ALL DIRECTIONS for the students and the teachers. Their 3 feet allowance for as long as the students are seated facing the same direction is unacceptable. It is ludicrous to think that the students won't turn their heads right or left to talk to their fellow classmates.
3. Mask should be ABSOLUTELY REQUIRED for EVERYONE at ALL TIMES FOR ALL PUBLIC SCHOOLS.
4. 100% distance learning should be an option for parents & students until this pandemic is adequately contained and it's safe for everyone.
5. There is no plan for the event of coronavirus infections in the schools. What are the schools going to do when a student, teacher or faculty member test positive for the coronavirus. No plan has been shared with the school or parents.
6. The DOE, BOE and the schools should be prepared for possible lawsuits if a student gets sick/dies from catching the coronavirus in school if the school DID NOT follow the CDC guidelines.

Please, do not rush opening the schools until it is absolutely safe for EVERYONE. That should be the priority!

My son Avan Timtim will be entering the 10th grade at Waipahu High School.  
My daughter Teagan Timtim will be entering the 8th grade at Waipahu Intermediate.

Thank you for your kind attention to this very important manner.

Mahalo,  
Zan Timtim  
Mother

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Shiloh Francis <shilohr@gmail.com> on behalf of Shiloh Francis  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:47 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 Shiloh Francis and I am a high school teacher at Hawaii Technology Academy. I do not think schools are ready to open to students on Aug 4th and would like to see a delayed/phased start to give more time to train teachers on the safest option, which is distance learning. Schools also need more time to inform families of distance learning options and help provide resources like computers and internet connectivity options. Schools also need time to plan for outdoor learning spaces and proper ventilation for when it is safer to return.

Any deaths or long term health conditions to teachers and students is unacceptable. The virus can also spread quickly when kids and teachers go home for the day, which will affect the whole community. Many teachers have high risk conditions, are pregnant (like I am), older or have family members with high risk conditions. There are many unanswered questions like: What are schools supposed to do if there is a positive case? How long teacher/students quarantine if someone in their class(es) exposes everyone? Do teachers use their own sick leave or convert to distance learning for that time?

As a society, I think we can work together to help stop the spread, but for now we need to teach the children in a safer way. First, we need to have a delayed start to train teachers who can then effectively implement distance learning before gradually reopening schools with a hybrid program when it is safe.

Thank you,  
Shiloh Francis

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Erin Noel <eahnoel@gmail.com> on behalf of Erin Noel  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:49 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Aloha,

My name is Erin Noel and I work at Kanuikapono Public Charter School on the island of Kauai. 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 have significant concerns over reopening without clear plans being communicated to staff and families regarding health and safety for on campus instruction. We have repeatedly been told there will be clear plans and protocols in place, but have not been given details about what those are. This leaves educators walking into the school year with anxiety and a lack of clarity. Students love to ask questions whether it is because they are curious or because they are worried and concerned. As educators we are responsible for teaching not only academic standards, but for supporting students' social, emotional, and physical wellbeing. That is the entire premise behind the HA framework. We need to be there for students to support them through difficult times. We have protocols in place for fires, lockdowns, and other emergencies. We educate students on these protocols and answer their questions so they feel safe and are able to be in an emotionally ready-to-learn state. However, without clear protocols and plans for COVID health and safety we are unable to provide answers and reassurance to students that they are in fact safe at school during this current crisis. I urge you to slay the physical reopening of school campuses until guidelines are not only in place but are communicated to staff and families so that everyone is clear on roles and responsibilities and able to effectively follow those guidelines upon reopening. Mahalo for your consideration,

Erin Noel

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Diana Wan <diana.wan@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Diana Wan  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:49 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Delay the Return of Students to Campus

Dear, BOE,

I am a secondary teacher at Washington Middle School.

I urge for the delay of the August 4th arrival of students on campus. Our school administrators, teachers, and staff have been working diligently to prepare for the re-opening of schools and we need more time to prepare a safe environment. Teachers need more than four days of required professional development before the arrival of students on campus to be provided training on safe practices and on how to use technology for distance learning. Departments need meeting and planning time in order to unpack and address their unique needs for delivering in-person instruction safely. Schools need to acquire, distribute, and install PPE, such as plexiglass barriers. We need to receive and understand guidance on what needs to be done with regard to contact tracing and quarantine should someone on campus be infected, including what should be done should someone in a person's out-of-school "Ohana bubble" become infected. We need to understand that "Ohana bubbles" on a secondary school level could mean hundreds of people that will come into contact with each other before, during, and after-school, after-school during extracurricular activities set to resume on August 19th. We need to be clear on how the entry of substitutes into schools will be handled. What training will they have in safe practices? DOE needs to commit to offering a 100% Distance Learning option as promised to families by actually offering it, advertising it to families, and preparing schools to deliver on this promise in a decent way by offering adequate training, resources, and time for teachers to prepare.

We need more time to prepare if schools are going to open safely and effectively; protecting the health and safety of all those in school and their families, providing decent online educational service, and preventing sudden school closures.

Sincerely,  
Diana Wan

--

Diana Wan, M. Ed.  
Dance and Drama Teacher | Washington Middle School  
1633 South King Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96826  
Phone: (808) 973-0177

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** emiri iwasaki <koamai@hotmail.com> on behalf of emiri iwasaki  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:50 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.](#)

I am writing to ask you to reject the above proposal. Being a special education teacher is a very difficult job, often dealing with the most difficult and vulnerable student population in the school. We often do not get recognized for the amount of work we put in. We spend countless hours with the creation of the individualized education plan, consulting and working with various service providers, coming up with the most appropriate plan to support the individual student's needs, spend hours in IEP meetings, at times enduring hostile advocates and angry and emotional parents, and spend everyday carrying out the IEP by creating, assessing, and coming up with various supports on a daily basis for the students with special needs. We also do not receive enough funding for our classroom, and as you are aware, majority of teachers end up using our own money to create the necessary classroom. Students with special needs especially need individualized programs and supports, and we end up using our own money in creating these things to meet their individualized needs. It's no wonder that teachers leave or change out of special education. It takes a toll emotionally and physically after a while, not to mention financially, with not much recognition for the amount of work we do. I truly appreciate the differential pay we received at the ending of last school year. The extra pay I received last semester helped me greatly in paying down the bills that I have accumulated from spending my own money in creating the necessary classroom environment.

Having the differential pay will not keep all special education teachers, but is a good start to making the current special education teachers feel validated and appreciated for the amount of work we do. For the upcoming school year, students with special needs are asked to come to school physically daily, while others without special needs are given a choice of virtual instruction. Often, students with special needs require physical assistance, physical intervention, and physical interaction. We work with aggressive or students that constantly run away. Special education teachers are literally putting their lives on the line. More than ever, because of times like now, if given a choice of teaching regular education or special Education for the same pay, with no differential pay incentive, we will lose many qualified special education teachers.

I have been teaching for 20 years, and I am also wondering, because of the risks involved in working with students with special needs at this time, if it is a safer decision to leave special education, or even, leave the classroom setting entirely. I ask myself, why risk my life, if it can be avoided in another position?

Taking away the differential pay will only worsen the shortage of special education teachers and will ultimately hurt the children with special needs and their families who need trained teachers to meet their individualized needs. I understand the economical impact, however, right at this moment, we need qualified special education teachers more than ever to navigate through this difficult times. Please don't go back on what was approved and promised for this coming school year. Please continue to support special education and the hard working teachers who continue to dedicate themselves in working with the unique and vulnerable special education community.

Sincerely,  
Emiri Iwasaki

Special Education Teacher  
Kanoelani Elementary School

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Shiloh Francis <shilohr@gmail.com> on behalf of Shiloh Francis  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:50 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 Shiloh Francis and I am a high school teacher at Hawaii Technology Academy. I do not think schools are ready to open to students on Aug 4th and would like to see a delayed/phased start to give more time to train teachers on the safest option, which is distance learning. Schools also need more time to inform families of distance learning options and help provide resources like computers and internet connectivity options. Schools also need time to plan for outdoor learning spaces, safety protocols and room set ups, and proper ventilation for when it is safer to return.

Any deaths or long term health conditions to teachers and students is unacceptable. The virus can also spread quickly when kids and teachers go home for the day, which will affect the whole community. Many teachers have high risk conditions, are pregnant (like I am), older or have family members with high risk conditions. There are many unanswered questions like: What are schools are supposed to do if there is a positive case? How long teacher/students quarantine if someone in their class(es) exposes everyone? Do teachers use their own sick leave or convert to distance learning for that time?

As a society, I think we can work together to help stop the spread, but for now we need to teach the children in a safer way. First, we need to have a delayed start to train teachers who can then effectively implement distance learning before gradually reopening schools with a hybrid program when it is safe.

Thank you,  
Shiloh Francis



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Charlotte Husen <husenhawaii@outlook.com> on behalf of Charlotte Husen  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:50 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Please don't cut the differential pay.

“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, I'm a Special Education Teacher at Hilo High School. I have worked with students with disabilities my entire career. Please don't cut the differential pay that we have earned. Many of my co-teachers are considering leaving the educational field. I love teaching.

Thank you,  
Charlotte Husen  
Special Education MA  
Hilo High School

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Margaret Peterson <margaretpeterson11@gmail.com> on behalf of Margaret Peterson  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:50 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony for the delay of school start

I am writing in testimony to delay the start of School Year 2020-2021. TEACHERS NEED MORE TIME TO PROPERLY PREPARE FOR THE RETURN OF STUDENTS TO SCHOOL!

While I understand the importance in getting our students back to the classroom, I have very serious concerns about the current plan to reopen to students on August 4<sup>th</sup>. The Superintendent claims that teachers have been given proper training, which I know for a fact is not the case. Teachers have not even been provided with written safety protocols even though this was promised. We are now less than two weeks away from the start of school, yet there are many unanswered questions as to how teachers will be able to safely provide instruction to students.

Taking the time to carefully and methodically develop proper safety procedures and protocols is the least that our dedicated teachers deserve! It is critical that our teachers feel confident in the established guidelines for the reopening of schools to be successful.

Margaret Peterson  
Kihei Elementary School, Maui

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Grace Giletti <gracegiletti@waikikischool.org> on behalf of Grace Giletti  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:51 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Hello,

My name is Grace Giletti and I work at Waikiki Elementary. I am testifying against action item: <https://hsta.us6.list-manage.com/track/click?u=31be4c2dbdddb0d80b4b4036a&id=8bca9b8f47&e=cbfef4325b>

We can not open schools on August 4th. Important questions remain unanswered before buildings can safely reopen. Also, time for collaboration & PD on distance learning is needed by grade levels/departments in case of a shutdown soon after reopening. The health and safety of the children and staff should be priority.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Pamela Hurley <hurleygirlie66@icloud.com> on behalf of Pamela Hurley  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:52 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Aloha,

I have so much anxiety about going back to school, I find myself crying, exhausted, literally scared for my life. I have always loved my job! I am worried for my fellow teachers, our students their families and our community.

My daughter has decided on 100% distance learning and it is her senior year of high school.

I have to support her decision for safety over senior experience. Our schools are not equipped for this. We are not well prepared. Masks are not mandatory.

As a Christian I will pray for our safety, but I don't feel safe. I will try to have faith and maintain a positive attitude. I will try.

Sincerely,

Pamela Hurley ELA 7th grade  
Kealakehe Intermediate School

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Moe Williams <moesspott@gmail.com> on behalf of Moe Williams  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:52 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha. I am Maureen "Moe" Williams, a special education teacher at Princess Nahienaena Elementary School. I am very concerned of the safety and health of all people of the school. I am concerned about being informed of the plan of the safe and health of all school people (kids, custodians, nurses, lunch servers, teachers, and etc). I am concerned that with the plan we wont have enough time to implement the plan. I am very concerned about my paycheck. If we lose the differentials of hard to place and special ed...I will have a hard time surviving. I have a Masters degree to help with earning more and another job also. I am barely making enough to eat and/ or survive for the price of cost of living. Please find a way to help me and other struggling teachers. Please give us time to work in a safe and healthy place for children to learn and grow. We need to help and keep teachers here to help our kids learn and grow. Thank you for your time.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Dayna Fu <dayna.fu@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Dayna Fu  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:52 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Teacher testimony: Phased Return to School

Aloha Chair Catherine Payne and Members of the Board,

My name is Dayna Fu and I am writing to support a **Phased Return to School** because I am the sole caretaker of two quarantined elderly parents with terminal cancer and am a single parent of a child who will be home alone until August 2020.

Being required to return to school on July 29 will have a negative impact to all those I am responsible for in this unforeseen pandemic. Preparing to return in July is causing a negative strain on my high-risk family members who depend on me to feed and take them to the doctors for treatments, while avoiding contact with people.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.

Mahalo,

**Dayna Fu**

*Career & Life Guidance / Health*

*Academy of Health Occupations Core*

*Academy of Professional and Public Service Core*

**Waipahu High School: 307-9522, Room U203**

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Joy Wolcott <joy.wolcott@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Joy Wolcott  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:54 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Delay Student Start Date

Aloha,

I am an elementary school PE teacher on Kauai. Please consider delaying the start of school for our precious students until we can get set up, communicate with our grade levels, and ensure the safety from Covid19 for all teachers, staff, and students. We want to do this right, not right now. I am 57 years old and fear for my life. It's nothing to talk about, but it is something when it gets real and is about to happen. So many unknowns!

Many thanks for your time,  
Joy Wolcott  
Kapaa Elementary School

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Robin Naope <rnaope@gmail.com> on behalf of Robin Naope  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:55 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.](#)

As a teacher of special needs children, this extra monetary compensation goes a long way in helping to compensate for the numerous hours and time we spend maintaining our special education programs to meet the needs of our special needs population, above and beyond the time allotted in a school day. The reality is there are not enough hours in the school day to truly plan, develop and maintain a special education program. I have been a special education teacher for 10 years now and I can tell you first hand we are always scrimping with what little the department of education gives us. We are constantly making sure we are IDEA compliant, and always on guard because our IEP's are federally mandated, to provide specially designed instruction to each IDEA certified student. This means we need to develop, fulfill, monitor and adjust each student's IEP to make sure they are progressing towards their goals and objectives that are aligned with the state benchmarks and standards. We need to be able to understand the curriculum/benchmarks and standards for multiple grade levels and then be able to teach it to students with a wide range of disabilities (ASD, SLD, ODD, OHD, VI, etc.) at their level. We also need to work with providers, general education teachers and support staff in making sure they are aware of the students' disability and able to work with them. In addition we are scheduling and running IEP meetings with parents annually to review, revise and discuss changes to each child's IEP, this is a painstaking task. We are mandated by IDEA to have all participants present whenever making any changes to a student's IEP. This means meetings are virtually impossible to schedule during the instructional school day and needs to be done after school hours when all team members can attend. IEP meetings run anywhere from 45 min. to an hour +. This means we are running outside of our scheduled work hours. This is just a glimpse of what we as special education teachers deal with daily.

Over the past years the department of education has placed mandate after mandate after mandate on special education teachers with very little guidance and direction and we have met the challenge each time going above and beyond our work day. This extra monetary compensation showed us that you not only valued what we do but you are compensating our time and work. I went to school to become a special education teacher, my passion is working with this particular student population, but I have never worked so hard in my life with so little appreciation. I urge you to continue to fund the extra compensation for special education teachers as we are worth every penny and then some. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Mahalo,  
Ms. Robin Naope  
Special Education Teacher  
Kahala Elementary



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Shanaz Nassar <shanaz.nassar@hotmail.com> on behalf of Shanaz Nassar  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:57 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Opening of Schools

Aloha,

I am asking you to delay schools re-opening due to the following reasons:

- 1- It is not safe! The virus cannot be controlled because students and teachers are in one Ohana bubble.
- 2- What happens if teachers get sick? Will there be any subs? How will this help to control the virus spread?
- 3- It has been really hot and our classrooms have no A/C, and yet we need to wear face masks. How are we going to breathe? I am having a hard time breathing wearing the mask in this heat! I can only imagine how students will be able to tolerate it.
- 4- Not wearing a mask is not an option! I certainly don't want to get the virus, nor do I want any of my students to get it.
- 5- Our schools are not clean enough. We have been understaffed. Did anyone make sure this has changed or are we going to go back and be faced with cleanliness issues?
- 6- I am advocating for the health of our teachers and students!!! We deserve to be treated better than this! Private schools have hired cleaning crews to clean and disinfect every night. What is the DOE doing to protect our students and teachers?

Please give us time to be well-prepared and do not put us in harm's way!

Shahinaz Nassar  
Wailuku Elementary School

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** J U <jmu432@gmail.com> on behalf of J U  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:56 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.](#)

The Board of Education has made many statements and decisions without details or specific direction. They are leaving all of the details up to the teachers to figure out. It is easy to make statements without being on the front line. Teachers are frantically trying to figure out what to do and how to do it, but are not given time to do so. Therefore, the schools are not ready or equipped to open on Aug. 4. We need to be proactive rather than reactive when it comes to this pandemic.

Thank you!

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Janet Sandison <janet.sandison@wheelermiddle.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Janet Sandison  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:57 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Please delay student start date

Aloha,

How many cases does Hawaii have to have in order for schools to close again? We should be preparing for distance learning NOW and not rush back into the classroom. Many new cases will come from tourists after the quarantine is lifted.

I love my job but do not want to risk my life or my family's life. I would love to work from home.

\*\*\* If we make sure students are GRADED, student participation will increase with distance learning.

Mahalo,  
Janet Sandison

--



**Janet Sandison**

Teacher, Wheeler Middle School  
News Writing and Intro to Coding  
janet.sandison@wheelermiddle.k12.hi.us

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** kristy arakawa <kilihune007@hotmail.com> on behalf of kristy arakawa  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:00 PM  
**To:** Testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

I am sending in my testimony 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.

On behalf of over 13,000 teacher educators in the State of Hawaii, I am asking that the BOE take a closer look at the MOU that was originally agreed upon. As an educator for over 14 years, I feel unequipped to start school in 2 weeks. There was no safety training that we went through neither was there opportunity for adequate PD to start the school year off with online distance learning.

Do you value the education, health, and safety of our keiki? If so, let's think this out thoroughly and carefully so that nobody has to unnecessarily suffer any type of undo consequences. Let's be proactive, train teachers and give us the tools that we need to successfully implement online learning, and push back the start of the SY. I realize that this is a new world and new territory for all of us. However, we need to put the needs of our students and teachers first. That means safely sticking to protocols and ensuring nobody is at risk. PUSH the reopening of schools till we are all equipped with the tools and skills needed to move forward. Thank you!

Kristy Arakawa  
8th Grade Science Teacher  
Campbell Complex  
Leeward District

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Jessica Bergner <jessica.bergner@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Jessica Bergner  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:00 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 Jessica Bergner and I teach at Waiakea High School.

I DO NOT agree with the pay cuts for teachers and I DO agree that schools should delay the start date that students return to campus.

Many questions have not been answered by the state and because of that I do not feel it's safe for the teachers or students to start in person yet.

We're supposed to start in person in one week but there aren't exact directions from the state. How can we plan for our classes, and our own health and safety, until there are answers?

Mahalo nui loa,

Jessica Bergner

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Alina Madadi <alinamadadi@gmail.com> on behalf of Alina Madadi  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:01 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony opposing schools reopening and opposing the end of pay differential for sped

To whom it may concern,

I am writing as a concerned educator who has taught for the past six years at Kailua Intermediate school. I am writing to you concerning two issues that will greatly impact myself and my colleagues.

Firstly, having reviewed the DOE's plan for Reopening schools I have a number of concerns particularly for the health of staff and faculty some of whom will have upwards of 150 students cycling through their classes per week. Personally I hate teaching remotely as teaching is So much about personal relationships, but the current plan to resume in person instruction does not seem safe, and only the most highly vulnerable have been given alternative options. I am also very concerned for students and their families. Although only a small number of students seem to be affected just one of our students suffering severe consequences or death from contracting the virus at school would be Too many for me and should be for you also. Further to that, the risk to our communities at large is greatly increased as students go home to parents, and particularly in Hawai'i, elderly grandparents. My own nephew is a student who would risk carrying the virus to his grandparents if he returns to school in person.

Secondly, I am writing to Register my support for the continuation of pay differentials for special education teachers, and other select groups. We know that teachers, particularly in Hawai'i are all substantially underpaid, but the majority of these teachers are often doing up to twice as much work as other teachers. I know people who agreed to take sped positions this year, knowing they would have to work that much more, but convinced to do so by that work finally being valued. Please do not go back on your commitment to those educators.

I ask that you respect the value of teachers' work and lives, and the value of the students and communities that they serve, and vote accordingly in these matters.

Sincerely,

Alina Bwy  
Kailua Intermediate School

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Kim Angay <kkiopa@gmail.com> on behalf of Kim Angay  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:01 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Please OPEN Schools on August 4th

Board of Education - Please hear from a concerned working MOM - Please do not delay in opening schools!

HTSA's ongoing (never-ending) list of manini demands should be promptly answered by the DOE so that we can get on to educating our children. I'm TIRED of Corey Rosenlee and HSTA holding the education of our children hostage as leverage to get teacher salary demands met and finding every excuse in the book to keep schools closed. Teachers need to teach and students need to go to school. Parents are struggling to work without childcare.

I'm an essential worker who has had to go to work and navigate working through a pandemic. I see no reason why the BOE/DOE cannot do the same. This is a call for action for the BOE/DOE leaders to find prompt solutions, bridge the gap and get on with educating our Children who are suffering enormously by the lack of structured educational opportunities.

Thank you,  
Kim Angay

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Carol DeForest <deforestcarol@gmail.com> on behalf of Carol DeForest  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:01 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Aloha All,  
Special Education teachers are at risk!!! Do not remove their stipend when they are on the frontlines!! Stand and pay and support our teachers by maintaining their stipend when returning to school.  
Mahalo  
Carol DeForest



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Allan Lowe <amlowe29527@gmail.com> on behalf of Allan Lowe  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:02 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Shortage Differentials - Please Do Not Cut!!!

Aloha Hawaii Board of Education

I am writing to implore the BOE to avoid cuts to shortage differentials at all costs, especially during this time of COVID-19. As someone who was recruited to come to Hawaii to teach (flown here, not grown here), this differential pay has enabled me to stay in Hawaii at a point that I was seriously considering leaving to return to the mainland due to the high cost of living.

As a SpED teacher, I have seen first-hand how difficult it is to have qualified special education teachers in the classroom. Last year, my school employed three teachers in SpED positions as emergency hire positions. While these teachers did the best work they could, they were simply not prepared for the job that they had to do. Thanks in part to the shortage differential pay, my school has only one SpED position currently unfilled by a qualified SpED teacher.

On the flip side, as the parent of a disabled child, I have seen my daughter's education and growth stunted due to a lack of qualified teachers and staff to work with her. This is directly related to a shortage of qualified teachers and staff. When adjusted for cost of living, the shortage differential pay only brings teacher pay closer to the national average. If Hawaii wants to attract qualified teachers into the profession (whether local or from farther afield), it needs to make proper investments. Teachers work and sacrifice so much for their students, but can not do so if they can not provide for their basic necessities without fear. Especially during this time of COVID-19 and uncertainty, now is the time to be investing in our keiki and their teachers, not looking to take away from them.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Dallas Uti <dallasuti11@gmail.com> on behalf of Dallas Uti  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:03 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Healthy Teachers, Healthy Students

Aloha Board of Education,

Thank you for your continued efforts to support Hawaii's youth and teachers during this unprecedented time. COVID-19 has disrupted our way of life and educational system, forcing our teachers and students to be resourceful and resilient during a very uncertain time. While our beloved state has managed to contain and prevent the widespread infection of this virus because of our strict policies, we have much room for improvement, especially before our children can safely return to school.

As the start of the school year is quickly approaching and our nation and state continue to increase in cases, it is simply irresponsible and counterproductive to open up schools again when the infection numbers are higher than when they were closed. Additionally, we have had a rapid increase of communal spread, as well as infection in our keiki population. As a high school teacher, I am incredibly concerned about the lack of resources provided by the Department of Education, especially with the expectation to begin our school year in two weeks time. Without said critical resources, it is my concern that students will become sick and spread this virus to the more vulnerable populations, especially since Hawaii has the highest amount of multi-generational homes in the nation.

The lack of resources such as space, teachers, substitutes, hand sanitizer, masks, and tissues negatively impact the educational system on a normal basis, but become an incredibly dangerous situation during a global pandemic. Our classrooms and teachers will be negatively impacted by these lack of resources, making it an unsafe environment unfit for learning. As many of our educators like myself also have underlying health conditions, placing them in such high-risk situations with exposure to hundreds of people is not only dangerous, it is simply immoral and abhorrent. Teachers, like students, deserve their health to be a top priority. There cannot be a sacrifice of safety.

As an educator who loves her students and school, I implore the Board of Education to stop the sacrifice of our students and teachers. A better plan must be in place before the reopening of our educational system. The August 4th start date must be postponed, providing schools more time to implement safety procedures that will keep all members of our community safe. As the Aloha state, we cannot in good conscience send our teachers into work unprotected, forcing them to face this virus with little to no resources. Our teachers, our children, and our communities deserve better.

Mahalo for your time,  
Dallas Uti, MA.Ed.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Laurella Pang <laurella.pang@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Laurella Pang  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:04 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for teachers in Special Education

I Am a Special Education teacher with 40 years of experience. I have taught at Palolo Elementary for 38 of those years. I had planned to retire last December, 2019. When we received the differential, I decided to stay another 3 years before retiring. If the differential remains, I will stay, however, if it is cut I will probably retire. It makes a big difference in my decision. Without the differential, I can make ends meet by retiring, and have added outside income which would amount to more than if I stay. With the differential, I am able to be comfortable without straining my budget. Thank you, Laurella Pang

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** MARY AGOR <mka1021@aol.com> on behalf of MARY AGOR  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:05 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** School opening

My name is Mary Agor. I just retired after 30 years as an elementary school teacher for the department of education. My daughter is also a classroom teacher on the intermediate school level.

I have spoken to many of my colleagues and it appears that schools are not ready to reopen, there are so many questions.... elementary school seem to be better prepared but intermediate and high school, with the exchange of classrooms, will cause a lot of confusion and possible contamination.

Please push back the opening dates of school, please have more plans in place especially for sports and for children who will be exchanging classrooms.

Mary Agor

Aiea

mka1021@aol.com

(808)542-8427

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** erich smith <ersmith30@hotmail.com> on behalf of erich smith  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:05 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Hello,

I am offering testimony 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.**

I am a science teacher at Kalaheo High School. I am concerned we are reopening schools too quickly without adequate protective equipment, training, and safety protocols outlined. I am concerned for our at risk students and teachers alike. These are not normal times and we need to prepare accordingly.

Thank you,  
Erich Smith  
Kalaheo High School

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Juvir Martin <juvir.m@gmail.com> on behalf of Juvir Martin  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:05 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony on Action Item H

Aloha Members of the Board,

My name is Juvir Martin and I am a teacher at Iao Intermediate School in Wailuku, Maui. I am submitting 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."

One of my primary concerns is that 10-month classroom teachers return to work on July 29th, with students beginning the following week. This gives teachers and school-level administrators very little time together to prepare to welcome back students. I feel that it will take more time to ensure classrooms and all areas of campuses are ready for students. Teachers and administrators will need to review and collaborate on how to implement guidelines (of which we're still waiting for the State Department of Health). And I feel more time will be needed to align plans and student expectations amongst cohort/team teachers. Further, what about training? This is all new territory and it's a lot to consider in such a short span of time.

There are too many unanswered questions. According to the HSTA, these questions still need to be answered, and I fully agree.

- When will the State of Hawaii's Department of Health provide written guidance on the reopening of school buildings, which the HDOE 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?

I urge the Board and the DOE to delay the start of the 2020-2021 school year for students. Mahalo for your time.

Respectfully,

Juvir Martin  
Wailuku, Maui

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Jimi and Shenell Caldeira <sjcaldeira@icloud.com> on behalf of Jimi and Shenell Caldeira  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:06 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** 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 CHAIR Payne and members of the Board of Education,

Our names is Jimi and Shenell Caldeira, We are makua 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 'Ōlelo Hawai'i as well as teach academic content, but we are also located in a geographic area that is hard to staff.

We understand during this time that the financial hardship that the state might be facing, but now that the school year is here and our students are returning, our teachers are going to be very essential during this time.

This was our first year for my daughter attending a Hawaiian immersion school, starting in the 2nd grade or Papa 'Elua. This was also the first year her Kumu was teaching at Ke Kula 'o



‘Ehunuikaimalino. I’m using her Kumu, Andrea "Kealoha" Reff as an example because she drove from Hilo each day or sometimes stayed at a friends house to be sure she could be at work. Even when she had to take care of her mom and ‘ohana, she would be there for our keiki. She is one of the faculty at this kula that is dedicated to the haumāna because she loves what she does and she loves teaching the haumāna. She even volunteered her time during the end of the year and into a few weeks of summer to assist my daughter and some of her classmates. Our school is growing and right now we have already outgrew our school in space with the amount of people that are interested in having their keiki attend a Hawaiian Immersion school. They have to turn haumāna away or put them on a waitlist because we don’t have the space nor the Kumu’s to accommodate the need.

Why would we want to cut the temporary extra compensation or funding for these classroom teachers that include Hawaiian language immersion, special education, and hard to staff geographical locations for 2020-2021. Our special education programs are just as important to our keiki and is a need that every school needs. If we continue to cut more funding for this, we will lose valuable teachers

We hope that you take our testimony into consideration and it can help make a difference because there is a big need for teachers in this category and we need their expertise in these areas for our keiki to be successful. This is definitely not the right time to be cutting any funds or compensation.

**Mahalo nui no kou kōkua,**

Jimi and Shenell Caldeira

Ke Kula ‘o ‘Ehunuikaimalino

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** David Negaard <draagen@gmail.com> on behalf of David Negaard  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:07 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 Hawaiia 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 David Negaard, a teacher at Baldwin High School in Wailuku, Maui. I strongly urge the Board to delay the return of students to our campuses until such time as schools and staff are thoroughly equipped, trained, and ready to ensure the safety of our communities.

The haste with which this “plan” (haphazard, incomplete, and insufficient) was developed sets our schools up for failure. Worse, it gambles with the lives and well being of our students, our school staffs, and the families of everyone who goes back to school. We are risking our lives and their lives without comprehensive written guidance from the state Department of Health, without training, without clarity, without a plan for what we will do when a student or staff or family member gets sick.

The Department of Education has not provided opportunities for rank and file teachers like me to receive training—my school only picked a model a couple of weeks ago, and the specifics are still fluid. How were we trained for that? We were not.

I am struggling to plan for instruction. I am struggling to write a syllabus. I have a description for the model Baldwin has adopted, but I don't know how to plan for one day a week of face-to-face instruction, three days a week of independent and unsupervised learning, and one day a week of virtual instruction (which I already know not all of my students can or will access). “The devil is in the details,” they say, and we have received no detailed information with which to work. We are not ready.

Add in my constant fear that a student will unknowingly bring COVID-19 onto our campus (or take it home to their family) and be burdened with enormous guilt because someone got sick...or worse.

Lastly, I am dealing with fear for my own safety. I am at increased risk. I have heard nothing from the Department of Education about how to apply for ADA accommodations and I only know such a thing is possible through HSTA, but because it's too much to wrap my head around, I'm going back to the classroom when directed. In the meantime, I'm applying for life insurance and putting my affairs in order. I will probably be fine, but there is a very real chance that I will be a statistic; my life is among the stakes with which the DoE is gambling with this “plan.” Really, it is a hope more than a plan—so vague and aspirational, without contingencies or specifics—just throwing students and staff together and hoping against all judgement that everything will just work.

Teachers are retiring or leaving over this. Substitutes are not planning to come back. How can they—how can we—trust the DoE when they have shown by their actions that they are not ready, but nevertheless determined to roll the dice with our lives. And without trust, why would we risk it?

Delay the return of students to campuses until the teachers and school staff have been well trained in the practices required under these circumstances. Delay the return of students until we all have a comprehensive, detailed, actual plan with contingencies and fallback options and orderly alternates for when things go wrong. Hope for the best, sure, but never plan like the best is guaranteed. Plan for the worst.

For all our sakes, pause and reflect on the risks and the stakes.

Delay.

Mahalo,

--

David Negaard (he/him/his)

“Man is most nearly himself when he achieves the seriousness of a child at play.” -Heraclitus

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Amy Colmenares <mrscolmenares7@gmail.com> on behalf of Amy Colmenares  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:07 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** testimony

BOE Members,

I am testifying in relation to Action Item H. My name is Amy Colmenares, and I am writing on behalf of myself and my husband, David. We are both teachers at Highlands Intermediate School in Pearl City and have a son who will be entering Highlands and a daughter who is at Pearl City Highlands Elementary School.

The decision of the DOE to reopen schools fully on Aug 4 is a ridiculous decision. There is absolutely no way that schools can reopen safely on this date, given that teachers are given FOUR days before that to plan, prepare, and learn everything that we need for this unprecedented reopening of schools. The DOE then gives nine days of half days so that teachers can have additional planning time. How does planning time AFTER students are already there and we're already in a high risk situation help anyone???

Our school has been planning and preparing for the advent of a hybrid schedule since before the DOE came out with any options for schools. Our principal has tried to stay ahead of the game by letting us know what our plans are and providing us with time during the summer to meet with our department members. Even with this planning time, all of our teachers are hesitant, anxious, and downright scared to start the school year. Teachers will have up to 17 students in the classroom at a time, coming into contact with 120+ students. These "ohana bubbles" that you talk about are non-existent, and your continued focus on using this convoluted theory to ensure the public that school reopening is safe is disrespectful and dishonest. When the Department of Health's Bruce Anderson says, "I'm willing to bet that there will quickly be positive cases as we reopen schools," and "the disease is far more serious for older people...that doesn't necessarily help the teachers," this tells me loud and clear that my health, and the health of all of those who have chosen this profession in Hawaii, does not matter. When asked what the specific protocol is for positive results/contact in the Department of Education, NO ONE is addressing this question. There is no specific direction from the DOE or the DOH. You want us to go back into a high risk situation without any plan for how the virus will be controlled from spreading like wildfire.

The DOE is leaving everything in the hands of each individual school, so that when it blows up like we all know it will, they can wash their hands and say that they were not involved in the school's plan. It's interesting to me how Superintendent Kishimoto loved to send her weekly video updates to teachers to put her face out there and pretend she was in the know by visiting schools, but once this pandemic set in, little to no communication came our way regarding the DOE's direction. We learned more from the evening news about the DOE's direction than we learned directly from the DOE. Then we had to appeal to the BOE for her to even abide by the requirements set forth in the MOU after she walked back the six foot social distancing and mask wearing guidelines. Disrespectful and clear disregard for the health and safety of us on the front lines. At yesterday's press conference with Gov Ige, it was obvious through the half-answers and avoidance of any topic that did not shine a positive

light on the DOE, that Kishimoto is more interested in maintaining her reputation than providing any real guidance or truth about what's going on.

When we entered the teaching profession, we knew that this was not going to be a profession that would make us rich, or a profession that was even held in high regard in the public's sense of what esteemed professions are. However, we both love our careers and love working with our students. We pour our time, energy, and whole hearts into this profession. Never before, even in light of being involved in the teacher's strike in sy 2000-2001 and furlough Friday pay cuts, have I ever felt so disregarded, disrespected, and disheartened. As each day passes and we continue to use our hard-earned summer days to plan for and prepare for reopening, I can't help but consider whether this is worth it. Is it worth the risk to our family's lives...is it worth the risk to my 81 year old mother's life (who lives with us)...is it worth the risk to the lives of my students' families. We have never questioned our commitment to our profession before, but the DOE and the state's guidance and decision making have made stepping out of this profession a very real possibility. When (and I mean when, not if) there are positive covid cases traceable to school reopening, let that be on the conscience of the decision makers who are rushing us into this situation. And let's not even get into the discussion of what happens in the terrible instance that a death occurs that is traceable to school reopening.

Be smart, be compassionate, be respectful, be proactive instead of reactive.

Thank you for your time and consideration,  
Amy and David Colmenares

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Gordon Muramaru <kapaacoach@gmail.com> on behalf of Gordon Muramaru  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:08 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** School Opening

Please do not open our schools yet. Can we figure out all the nuances and safety precautions before even considering opening our schools. Morning, recess, lunch and end of school will be a problem. Who is going to supervise our students during these times? What are the consequences if they don't socially distance or wear their masks? You need a strict policy uniformly implemented in all schools. Parents will complain, so rules that are cut and dried mandated from the BOE, will give Teachers and Administrators a reason as to why the student was disciplined. Parents cannot complain. How do you prevent sick students from coming to school? You all know some parents will send their children anyway. Sorry to say, but the honor system, trusting that parents will keep them home will not work.

Sincerely Trying to Stay Safe,

Gordon Muramaru

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Dana Allen <dani2or@yahoo.com> on behalf of Dana Allen  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:08 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony on pay differential

Dear Members of the Hawaii BOARD OF EDUCATION:

My name is Daniella Allen. I am a 15th year teacher at Pa'auilo Elementary and Intermediate 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 3 keiki of my own to support and our family's small business is on hold due to Covid-19. The differential will literally make the difference in being able to buy food for my family.

When I took the job teaching at Pa'auilo in 2018, I was the third preschool special education teacher in the three years of the program. Coming in as a veteran educator who had worked with students with significant disabilities for over a decade, I was immediately offered the position of department head as the rest of my team consisted of a third year teacher, a Teach For America Candidate, and my Emergency Hire husband. Our school had also filled another position using Teach for America and the following year added another emergency hire. We were not able to fill the position that was emergency hired the following year and so my husband, who has a business degree and no teacher training filled it for a second year. Because of the differential, the 2020-2021 will be my first year at Pa'auilo with all of our Special Education positions filled with licensed teachers. With all the uncertainty, it is more important than ever to build strong programs and strong relationships to meet the needs of our students with special needs. Please help our small school continue to keep qualified educators.

Thank you for your time,  
Daniella Allen  
Preschool Special Education Teacher  
Pa'auilo Elementary and Intermediate School  
Hamakua District, Hawaii Island

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Monica Kramp <monica.kramp@gmail.com> on behalf of Monica Kramp  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:08 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony- Delay Reopening of Schools

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 a first grade teacher, I completely understand the importance of reopening schools. Everyone wants it to happen, but most would agree that it isn't safe yet. Especially since there's no clear guidance and no one has received any real training.

I would feel more comfortable to open schools once we actually have a plan and the proper training to do so. I have had discussions with my principal and colleagues about what school is going to be like and how we are supposed to do things and it seems like we still don't know anything.

How can we reopen schools if we don't even have proper protocols? The DOH hasn't provided any clear cut protocols for the reopening of schools. We don't even know what will happen if someone tests positive for COVID or have steps to follow. How can we reopen safely when we don't even have specific guidelines?

These ohana bubbles that are often talked about is a great idea, but it's far from reality. Children will be mixed whether we like it or not. Our communities are already having big gatherings with many different households. Students will congregate during parent pickup, drop off, busses, cafeteria etc. That is one huge bubble with many community members and families involved causing a lot of potential for the spread of COVID-19.

The only way the ohana bubble theory would possibly work if we had clear guidelines. Are masks going to be required? How will we enforce masks? What will teachers' PPE look like? What happens if a family member gets sick? How will we contact trace? How will the classrooms or schools be shut down? When will they shut down?

These are just some concerns that many teachers have. I don't know how anyone expects us to go back so soon without having the proper guidance.

Teachers are only given four days to work prior to reopening our schools to the public. I have seen our opening letter and the agenda for these days, and the two days of professional development we are assigned to isn't enough time to be properly trained. We still need to go over our normal professional development within those two days that do not even involve COVID.

If we are given an extension of reopening, it could alleviate a lot of foreseeable problems. Teachers will be given the opportunity to get properly trained, they can work on their distance learning plans to ensure students at home get what they need, and it will ensure that everyone understands the safety protocols (which we don't even know of yet). I have parents asking me questions about reopening that I don't even know the answers to. I don't even think the DOE has answers for them yet.



We need more time and guidance from the DOH and the DOE so our kids can get what they deserve and everyone can stay as safe as possible.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Lauren Appelbaum <l.appelbaum4@icloud.com> on behalf of Lauren Appelbaum  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:10 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** OL

Aloha,

I have been a teacher for over 20 years in the state of Hawaii. I'm all for face-to-face learning when there's not a pandemic that our country hasn't handled very well. Our state has but our country has not and people travel and they pick up this Virus and bring it to the islands. Throughout the press conference yesterday on July 20, 2020, it was stated multiple times if

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Kinisimere Tokailagi <kinisimere.tokailagi@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Kinisimere Tokailagi  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:10 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** TESTIMONY to Temporary Discontinuing of Differential Pay for Hawaii State Teachers  
**Attachments:** BOE Testimony.docx

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.

## B.O.E. TESTIMONY

Kinisimere Tokailagi, Kindergarten Teacher

**Agenda item:** Temporary Discontinuation of Differential Pay for Hawaii State Teachers

**Position:** I oppose to the idea of temporarily discontinue Differential Pay for State teachers. The reasons are in three folds.

First, the cost of living here on the Island of Molokai is unbelievably high, as compared to other islands. As a single parent, the cost of electricity, water, housing, internet, food, and gas is unbelievably high.

Next, for doctor's (specialized doctors) visits, I need to fly out to Honolulu and stay overnight in hotels. That alone costs a lot.

Thirdly, rewards in many several forms for children in our class come out of our own pockets. So please reconsider your position in having to temporarily discontinue our differential pay. Thank you so much!

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** raynettek@yahoo.com  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:10 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

I am writing in concern with the opening of the 2020-21 school year. I am both a concerned parent and teacher. I am testifying on Action Item H.Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii BOE 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.

The reopening of the school year needs to be pushed back for many reasons. First of all, I don't understand the fact that when the DOE rushed to make a guideline; they first announced that schools would reopen when there would be ZERO community spread for 4 weeks. I'm angry that the DOE is very hypocritical to their first announcement. NOW we are set to open on August 4, with daily COVID-19 cases in the double digits and the numbers that we have now are more than we had when schools closed in March. The situation that our state is in now, it is CLEARLY a COMMUNITY SPREAD!!! I am furious that the BOE/DOE is putting the health of our children and all faculty at risk and our community at risk!!! Second, this "Ohana Bubble" theory may sound good on paper, but the reality is that it is not going to work. For Dr. Kishimoto and Director Anderson to say that if one classroom is affected, then that classroom will be shut down – not the entire school. Well, the reality is, what happens to Classroom A that has to shut down, and Jane Doe in Classroom A has a sibling or siblings in other classrooms in the same school or Middle/High school??? How can these professionals lie to the public that it would only affect just ONE classroom??? Students and their teachers will go outside of their Ohana Bubble right when the bell rings. The Ohana Bubble doesn't include going to the bathroom, having a substitute teacher or P.E. teacher, A Plus, riding the bus, and GOING HOME TO THEIR FAMILY!!! Again, it goes back to a community spread. Did anyone not learn from the recent St. Timothy's Kamaina Kids case? THIRTY-NINE FAMILIES WERE AFFECTED! Or the Hawaiian Airlines cluster? ONE Hawaiian Airlines member is responsible for 44 cases and counting! Do you want Oahu to be the next New York, Florida, Texas, or California??? Third, there is NO CONSISTENCY and NO CLEAR PROTOCOL under this ONE SYSTEM!!! What training have we've gotten? Every school will have a different protocol if nothing is put into place. What's the protocol if one of my student or their family member tested positive, then the entire class has to shut down for fourteen days. Then a week after coming back, another student or family member test positive? Are we just going to go back and forth playing tag? I sure hope my sick leave will not be taking out of that, but yet no clear answers for this. What's the protocol for parent accountability to report positive test results or exposure? The BOE and the DOE has one shot of doing this right, otherwise it will be a nightmare, we will be the next New York, Florida, California, Arizona, and so on!!! Fourth, I am deeply worried about the wellness and safety of my own health and for my family. My mother and my in-laws are elderly, who will be watching my younger son. Going to work with face to face learning is a suicide attempt in the making. I do not have enough personal space in my own classroom. Like all of my fellow colleagues, we space out our 17-20 students six feet apart first, but yet we don't have six feet at our teacher desk or teaching area because there is not enough space in a classroom. The BOE/DOE is also not requiring students to wear a face mask or temperature check. How is this safe for my family and for myself? Lastly, teachers go above and beyond the call of duty (and work overtime for the LOVE of our job), but we are NOT READY to open the school year. Our first PAID work day starts on July 29 – August 3rd, however, one or two of those work days are for the administration to go over the legal things that they need to cover. That leaves teachers ONLY TWO TO THREE PAID DAYS TO PLAN FOR THIS UNKNOWN SCHOOL YEAR! That is not even enough time to plan a rigorous curriculum as a grade level and/or school. Dr. Kishimoto announced yesterday in her news conference, "the current DOE system is set up for a face to face setting." How are we supposed to plan in three days for QUALITY face to face lessons, and online lessons for students who will stay home because of the fear of getting sick or for those who are on a rotational schedule? Let's just say, the classroom or school gets shutdown, THREE days is NOT ENOUGH TIME TO PLAN QUALITY EDUCATION!!! How is this functional and fair? Would you like to work in this environment? Would you

like to be short changed and work for free to do your job right? Wouldn't you want the best for your own child or grandchild, niece or nephew if they attended Hawaii's public school? Starting the school year is a death sentence to our keiki, our teachers, our community and this entire state. If our state is not ready to open up to tourism, we are definitely not ready to open our public schools at this time. I am asking that you consider delaying the opening of the school year to plan the reopening safely and correctly with consistency.

Sincerely,  
Raynette Morioka  
First Grade Teacher  
Pearl City Highlands Elementary

.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Rapunzel Y <rapunzelyao@gmail.com> on behalf of Rapunzel Y  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:11 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** TESTIMONY

Hi,

My name is Rapunzel Yao, a first year teacher in Ewa Beach Elementary. As a first year teacher, we definitely need more time to prepare for this new school year and cannot open school campuses to students on Aug.4. This is not only for the health and safety of our keiki but the staff as well. I am sending an email to testify 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.](#)

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Tim Shim <mauisbest@hotmail.com> on behalf of Tim Shim  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:12 PM  
**To:** boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Principal Testimony

Aloha Board Members,

I am writing this testimony on behalf of myself, an elementary school principal, and the community we serve. Please consider postponing the reopening of schools in August. Although I do feel that students are significantly losing out on their education right now, as a father and a community leader, I am putting the health and safety of our livelihood at the forefront of decision-making. I feel that we are ill-equipped for reopening our campus to hundreds of people daily for the following reasons.

- 1) Health and Safety Guidelines - the direction and guidance given to us has constantly changed over the course of the summer. We have spent countless hours planning with our staff based on "draft" guidance. It seems inevitable that errors will be made in the process and protocols that have not been given to us yet by the Department of Health. We have been receiving conflicting information from the people who we are supposed to lean on to help us plan for the health and safety of our keiki and the community. Supplies are on back order, teachers and school health aids are on summer vacation, and there are still ample unknowns that we must tackle with a very quick turnaround. Documents, guidance, training, and procedures have not been given to us yet and we are told that it will be coming. When? We could've used them 4 weeks ago.
- 2) Training - We still have not received any training on how to reopen safely. Our teachers have not been here to receive training on safety protocols and procedures nor have they been trained on distance learning strategies. It would be in our best interest to ensure that the staff that takes care of our students is properly trained in supporting them. We need more time to do it right.
- 3) The What Ifs - There are too many uncertainties with other operations that have been overlooked like food services, transportation, substitutes, casual hires, etc. We have little to no guidance of how to approach these critical components of daily school functions.

I know as a school level administrator that I must comply and support decisions of the BOE and the DOE and I do that to the best of my ability. These past 4 months have been the most stressful time of my life and career. In fact, I decided to change roles to become a principal at a smaller school due to the stress and anxiety that I was experiencing.

Please consider a delayed start to school. Many of the decisions that are being made right now need and should involve our teachers and other 10-month employees of the school. We are dependent on teachers volunteering their time to participate in planning and decisions. There has been no voice given to HGEA and UPW constituents throughout this whole process. As principals, we feel that the liability of the health and safety of our employees, our students, and our families rests solely on our shoulders. Although I hear our Superintendent say over and over that the Principals this and the Principals that, I must say that I shake my head and bite my tongue. I know that she is doing the best that she can but we are being treated like the second in command. The teachers have been driving everything and it's difficult to try and work



collaboratively when the people who work under you seem to have more authority than you. We need time to work this out together.

Thank you for listening,

Timothy Shim  
Principal  
Pomaika'i Elementary  
Kahului, Maui

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** William Howard <william\_howard@universitylaboratoryschool.org> on behalf of William Howard  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:12 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Budget cuts

Hello,

My name is William Howard and I teach Physical Education and coach Boys Basketball at University Laboratory School in Honolulu.

In this uncertain time as another school year is upon us I urge you to strongly consider not making any cuts due to shortage differentials.

Public education is a cornerstone of any successful community and thus should not be compromised even in times of uncertainty.

I am fortunate to have the opportunity to do something I am passionate about. Our kids deserve the best as they are the future of our state, country and world. Please consider the needs of our state's students in this very difficult time as we move forward together.

Sincerely,

William Howard

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Sheri Yoshikawa <dustirose01@gmail.com> on behalf of Sheri Yoshikawa  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:12 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Aloha,

My name is Sheri Yoshikawa and I am the technology coordinator 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.

I am frustrated with the plans coming from Governor Ige, Board of Education, Superintendent Kishimoto and other individuals who do not spend anytime in schools. I have high risk health conditions, care for my elderly parents and young children. I am deathly afraid of bringing it home to my family.

Covid numbers have been at its all time high recently and the numbers are sure to increase if we bring thousands of individuals back to school. If we as teachers get sick, who will be there to teach our students?

With the recent announcement of Distance Learning being an option yet no clear plan for schools on how to implement it left me in tears. How are I supposed to provide this service when as a resource teacher I do multiple duties that fall well out of my technology coordinator role? Suddenly, we are tasked to come up with a system, find the money to purchase a program if we go with an online option, communicate with our families and our teachers within days.

By pushing back the opening of the school year will allow schools to develop concrete plans to address distance learning, train teachers, communicate with our families and do what is right for our school Ohana.

I am scared. My family is scared. My colleagues are scared. Please give us the time so we can do it correctly and more important safely for the sake of all.

Thank you,  
Sheri Yoshikawa  
Lehua Elementary School

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Matthew Terukina <matthew.terukina@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Matthew Terukina  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:13 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Hello Board of Education members.

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 PE teacher at an Elementary School in Honolulu and a Parent to a son at Stevenson Middle School. Both as a parent and teacher, I am fearful and dreading the start of school. As a teacher, I am now going to be teaching preschool, not PE, which is definitely out of my comfort zone, nor am I certified to do. Due to the 6ft apart rule, we have to utilize more classrooms and not enough teachers to man those classrooms. We have not fully been trained in any safety protocols, emergency procedures if someone were to get sick. WE ARE NOT READY!

As a parent, I have not heard much info aside from a two week half-day schedule about what precautions, methods or protocols they are going to be taking to handle this COVID Academic. Which is not much about anything, they are in the dark just like me. The school didn't even tell me that parents had the option to have their child do 100% distant learning. Things are very unclear in these times. WE ARE NOT READY TO OPEN SCHOOLS YET.

When we first started closing the schools down after spring break last year, COVID-19 cases were occurring 3-5 people at a time. It made best sense for you to close down the school and go to distant learning. Fine. Our teachers went and did the extra. Some learned how to use online tools, some took courses to configure new technology apps to help the students. Many teachers had online meetings and phone calls with students throughout. Many of us had no training at all in distant learning.

My point is, now, with 20+ cases happening a day, now you want to reopen schools? When it was okay to close them with 3-5 cases? It doesn't make sense. You are putting everybody at risk (student, parents and teachers). How will that help us? I feel we should push back the start date until a solid concrete plan has been determined, set and explained to every faculty BEFORE we start school. Even at this point, we teachers don't know much. Two weeks left before school starts, we have no idea what to expect. Because schools are not prepared enough due to the fact because nothing is really set in concrete. I AM NOT CONFIDENT IN STARTING THE SCHOOL YEAR OFF LIKE THIS. WE ARE NOT READY!

Think about if this goes bad, one teacher gets infected, then two. How many teachers you think are gonna be rattled and scared? Some teachers will quit, some will retire early and some will change professions. All because we didn't have clear and concise protocols to prepare us for our safety and no one wanted to wait for the numbers of occurrences to go down. DON'T RUSH IT! WE ARE NOT READY!

No one loves to be with the students more than me. Anyone from my school can vouch for me on that. I am all for the kids and would do almost anything for them. But at this point, with all that's going on, I am scared to be in school with them. Because WE ARE NOT READY!

That is just coming from me. **PLEASE PUSH BACK THE DATE FOR THE START OF SCHOOL AND COME UP WITH A SOLID, EFFECTIVE AND COMPLETE PLAN.**

I am also testifying that our SPED teachers should be given pay differentials. They do so much to support the students and classrooms. I also believe that they will be most at risk in getting infected with COVID. They constantly have to make contact and be almost within 6ft at all times. I feel they deserve it. The effort they put in to individualize for each child is amazing and you can tell the extra work they are putting in. Please allow them to get their pay differentials.

Thank you.

Matt Terukina

Certified PE Teacher

(For the time being, not certified Preschool-K Teacher

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Renee Goff <goffren@gmail.com> on behalf of Renee Goff  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:13 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Fwd: Testimony - Board Meeting on Thursday, July 23, at 1:30 pm Agreement with Delayed Opening of Schools

----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** Renee Goff <[goffren@gmail.com](mailto:goffren@gmail.com)>  
**Date:** Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 4:12 PM  
**Subject:** Testimony - Board Meeting on Thursday, July 23, at 1:30 pm Agreement with Delayed Opening of Schools  
**To:** <testimonyBOE@boe.hawaii>

Aloha Board of Education Members,

I am a Kindergarten Teacher at Iroquois Elementary School (IPES) in Ewa Beach. I saw that the Hawaii State Teachers Association (HSTA) is "...advocating and imploring you to delay the opening" of our campuses. I write in agreement with this suggestion. I agree with HSTA's mention on their Instagram (IG) post that, "The HDOE 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 am very reluctant, scared and uncertain about the protocols in place to prevent, eliminate COVID-19 on our campus, in our students and amongst teachers and ultimately our community at large. Specifically, I do not feel safe stepping on campus as I do not know the safety expectations are (they are not clear cut, not well-communicated, possibly not well-regulated/implemented). I am confused that in March we choose pandemic distance learning and now push for in-person, in-class learning with COVID-19 numbers (people who are dead) on the rise in Hawai'i. Our state has not reopened, your board is meeting via an online video conference, let these be tells that if you're not willing and ready to meet do not push for your children and teachers to meet.

Please remember each number is a person by agreeing with Besty DeVos' push for reopening you (put your name in place of you) are responsible for possible, preventable deaths of children, teachers and our community. Our lives, your children's lives, your lives are not worth sacrificing. Our Administration at IPES made an "opps" in presenting the Model options to our teachers, she used the word "sacrifice." I think she discarded the reality that her teachers could be literally making that choice to sacrifice ourselves for education. We love our classes, students and communities. When funds are continually cut we use our resources, think money, to compensate for what our class lacks, what our students lack. It's never been a question of if we want to teach, it's a matter of life or death. We don't even need to play with death.

I want our economy to thrive and I acknowledge the "normal" dependencies of what's held our economy don't work any longer (think tourism and militarization). Thus, I encourage you to be part of redefining "normal" economically. School is after all, all too often a preschool-to-prison pipeline and if not that a preschool-to-labor pipeline (Yes, I'm thinking in light of Black Lives Matter (BLM), racism, and colorism on this 'aina.). Consider the implications, imagine something beyond that for your children. The current setup being formed is looking frighteningly similar to how I'd imagine jails and prisons being operated.

Secondly, I believe there's been communication concerning teacher's training for online teaching mentioned by Superintendent Christina Kishimoto. I would like to clear up or clarify that this is a misconception and remind the Board that one, your teachers are on summer break. More importantly however the training "received" consists of last year's pandemic distance learning this was not training this was jump-in-full and teach now. There were a few teachers who taught during summer school (note not reflective of a whole campus being filled), and two-hour summer training (in our school for K&2nd Grade, of Seesaw. This was inefficient and confusing.). I do not know how our 1/2 days are going to be used (if training is occurring it hasn't been communicated). Thus, I agree with better, and more training to fluidly maneuver the online portions of teaching.

Again, we have not addressed the inequities of access of digital devices or internet access (both including student abilities with technology - our 'vulnerable' populations, young populations). Our Administration at IPES acknowledges the lack of devices. Meaning we are not equipped to provide every child a device and we have no means of providing internet access. There is also the assumption that teachers have/had access to the internet to be equipped to teach (during pandemic distance learning I did not initially have internet access).

Lastly, I would encourage you to continue working with our government to receive the federal funding to possibly address those financial burdens. Your schools continue to take cuts for the government, no more please. Thank you for how you advocate for the safety, education and thriving of our community.

Much aloha,

--

Renee Goff

(808) 753-7329

[goffren@gmail.com](mailto:goffren@gmail.com)

--

Renee Goff

(808) 753-7329

[goffren@gmail.com](mailto:goffren@gmail.com)

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** marissa faleolo <pomahina@hotmail.com> on behalf of marissa faleolo  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:13 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 Marissa Faleolo. I am a Special Education Teacher at Nanaikapono Elementary School.

**According to the department's data,** 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.”

When you cut a family's pay, they have to make up for it somehow. Our local families do not have a lot of wiggle room in our personal budgets. The decisions that pay cuts force us to make, have longterm effects on our future and our children's future, besides our students' future.

Mahalo,  
Marissa Faleolo



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** shelly cassler <shelly.cassler@gmail.com> on behalf of shelly cassler  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:14 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

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](#)

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Amy M <amypopieski@gmail.com> on behalf of Amy M  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:14 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

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.](#)

It is my desire that the BOE delays the opening of schools to students. The DOE has failed to adequately prepare for students to return to school. A few issues the DOE has not addressed include:

- What's the procedure for getting a mask exemption? May families request their own student be removed from a class with an individual who has a mask exemption?
- What is the procedure when an individual tests positive? Does the whole school close for two weeks?

The DOE claims we have been trained but I have not used my free, uncompensated time to prepare for the year. Many teachers have not, as we are only paid for ten months of work.

My own school has failed to outline attendance procedures and work expectations for students who aren't on campus, preventing me from planning until the decision is made. I am not aware of a plan for student movement, room cleaning procedures, lunch procedures, or even how we will keep our students distances as they arrive on campus.

I am a teacher at Kailua Intermediate School and the parent of a child at Aikahi Elementary.  
Amy Spencer  
Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Kileigh Sanchez <kileighsanchez@gmail.com> on behalf of Kileigh Sanchez  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:14 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony - delay start of school

I am testifying on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of HI BOE 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 am a teacher at Wai'anae Intermediate School on O'ahu and I believe that the state of Hawai'i is not prepared to SAFELY and EFFECTIVELY open schools and proceed with business as usual for the 2020-2021 school year. We need a comprehensive plan, IN WRITING, that protects our teachers and students alike. Why is there not a phased reopening of our schools in writing that applies to all schools? Why are we being thrown into the fire in the middle of a pandemic when cases are on the rise? ALL teachers want to return to a state of normalcy and continue to teach our students, but as a majority, we believe that to do so literally NEXT WEEK is unsafe and a threat to the safety of our entire communities. As the state with the most multigenerational households, we aren't just putting students at risk, but we are putting everyone from grandma to aunty to baby sister at risk. If the wrong decision is made, there will be countless lives at stake and that are at lost due to the BOE's decision. Consider the cost and choose to be proactive in the face of logic, reason and science, rather than reactive, and let's figure out how to safely teach our students with a comprehensive health plan that addresses distance learning, what happens WHEN teachers and/or students become ill, along with the myriad of other questions I'm sure you're reviewing in this process. Hear us and please listen - we care more than anyone about our keiki, and this is why we are asking for you to DELAY opening school as per usual with zero training/planning.

--

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

Confidentiality Notice: This e-mail message, including attachments, is for the sole use of the intended recipient(s) and may contain confidential and/or privileged information. Any review, use, disclosure, or distribution by unintended recipients is prohibited. If you are not the intended recipient, please contact the sender by reply e-mail and destroy all copies of the original message.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Mary Miura-Aguinaldo <mrs.miuraaguinaldo@gmail.com> on behalf of Mary Miura-Aguinaldo  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:15 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Phased Reopening of schools

I am testifying in support of a phased reopening of schools for the 2020-2021 school year. My name is Mary Miura-Aguinaldo and I am a teacher at Mililani High School, and a parent of both Mililani High School and Mililani Middle School Students. I am very nervous and fear for my safety should we reopen schools to in-person instruction too quickly without a solid cohesive plan for how and when schools would adjust to the increase in COVID-19 cases that will rise from increased group contacts.

Although children aren't as likely to suffer serious complications and there is some evidence that young children may not spread the disease as much as others, this is of little comfort to those of us working with adolescents. A classroom of students (even only a half-size class based on hybrid models) would exceed the number of persons for group gatherings of 10 as outlined by the Governor - couple this with the likelihood that teens and tweens may be super-spreaders (<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-07-19/covid-19-spread-fastest-by-teens-and-tweens-korea-study-finds>) and the potential risks quickly increase. Many in our state (myself included) live in a household with those classified as high risk and this is terrifying and unacceptable. I shouldn't have to choose between my "kids" (students) and potentially my own life or the lives of my loved ones.

This is also in clear violation of the Memorandum of Understanding signed by both the HSTA and the state on Saturday, June 27: "In-person schooling will resume in conjunction with written guidance from the Department of Health (DOH)." The DOH has known about this since June 27, and as of Monday, July 20, were only beginning to convene a committee to address this issue. There is no written guidance. Lack of oversight, agreement, and clear recommendations by the DOH means reopening will be uncomfortable at best and deadly at worst.

Data cited by the DOE on parents "preferring in-person instruction" is outdated and not relevant at this point either. As a parent, I completed those surveys back in June when it appeared that the state had successfully flattened the curve and even with reopening a starting, new cases were at an all-time low. If I were to retake that survey now, I absolutely would not answer the same way. Although we are all eager to see things go back to something closer to normal, the virus itself doesn't see or care about our wants and desires. If we try to take shortcuts and relax protocols too quickly, we will see many of the issues that states like California and Arizona are seeing with massive uncontrolled outbreaks. We are already seeing a spike in numbers that are higher than those present when initial shutdowns took place.

**Reopening should be phased in, much like relaxing restrictions on public activities have been phased in. Please refer to the attached photo for the phased reopening plan and what it could look like.**

## 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 18, 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.

While we all recognize the need to have schools reopen in some form so that we can balance the devastating economic effects on our state, we need to do so in a manner that is safe for students and staff alike, backed by science, and grounded in aloha.

Thank you for your time.

Mary Miura-Aguinaldo

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Jean Esaki <sensei@kapaahs.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Jean Esaki  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:15 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Jean Esaki  
Kapaa High School  
World Language teacher

Re: Financial shortage differentials  
Student start date

As a highest risk age teacher, I finally admit that the start of school for students on August 4 is intimidating. The heat in the classrooms as I can feel now at home will also create mask anxiety for students and teachers alike. Because of our long summers, Hawaii needs to get back to the tried-and-true ways of starting school after Labor Day. Aren't the pandemic figures strongly pointing to common sense and not politics? Why are we not following STEM evidence in the education system? Teachers can go back to school and reconfigure how to teach effectively online, no matter how many of us never intended to be online teachers. We need the time to prepare for this—it is not easy for us to make the transition.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** gblas@hawaii.rr.com  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:16 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Hi,

I am a classroom teacher at Kaiulani Elementary and a parent of two children that attend University Laboratory School and Nuuanu 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 feeling extremely uneasy about reopening schools in two weeks. As a teacher and a parent, I do not feel we are ready to teach the children in a safe and healthy manner. With the number of COVID cases rising and with the virus still evidently in existence, the teachers are not ready and equipped to welcome and teach the students and to ensure their safety. Teachers have not received training on anything! There are no procedures in place to ensure that when someone in the school is affected with Covid there are protocols to follow.

Please help to make sure that teachers, students, and school staff are taken care of and every procedure are in place to keep everyone healthy and safe while in schools. Ease the minds and anxieties of parents to ensure the DOE is doing everything they can to keep their children and their teachers safe.

Thank You,  
Georgia BLAS

Sent from my iPhone



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Joanne B Shewbert <jbbarrett55@gmail.com> on behalf of Joanne B Shewbert  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:16 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Concerned for families and teachers

I am a Special Education teacher. Please do not open schools. We are not safe from this virus. It is still pretty much everywhere. There is a lot about this virus that we don't know about. We do know the dangers of this virus. Why are we risking precious lives?

Please do not cut my pay. I am tired of struggling to survive here.

Joanne Shewbert  
Kahului Elementary School

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Stacy Julson <sjulsonteaches@icloud.com> on behalf of Stacy Julson  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:16 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

My name is Stacy Julson. I am a special education teacher at Kauai High School. am responding to **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 pleas we make is that full consideration be made for safety in what is essentially a potential life or death matter. All evidence from the medical expert and scientific community has endorsed what meets a safe return to our classrooms. I believe that with additional time is vital to meeting those needs outlined. Returning prior to implementation of such needs, compromises the best physical school environment for all. In September, COVID19, will have close to six months of activity. More supply, data, developments in vaccine and critical determinants available. This process demands the due diligence of process along with highly critical observation.

We need protections and action in tandem for a result with few regrets, casualties or losses. Teachers are concerned about the simplest of details including meals, toileting, social-emotional stages that younger children and adolescents will struggle to harness because developmentally holding hands with an admirable other is the norm but high risk at this time, for example. Without supports, many unforeseen agitation may surface.

We ask for the gift of time to provide more solid guidance to this high national priority. Others have already decided to delay. May we join them and keep our safety in mind above all?

Mahalo

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Esther <kccdiretor@hotmail.com> on behalf of Esther  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:17 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** DELAY THE RETURN OF STUDENTS TO CAMPUS AND DO NOT CUT TEACHER SALARIES/DIFFERENTIALS

Aloha!

This is an email from a school teacher with an urgent request to delay the return of students to campus. A lot of teachers such as myself feel stressed and not fully prepared for the "new normal" to keep both teachers and students safe on campus. We need time for preparation and need proper training! Teachers feel the strain of having to switch to total online teaching should the school need to close down with increase in COVID-19 cases. Teachers have not been adequately trained for full online teaching let alone training for substitute teachers. If we catch the virus, will our substitute teachers have the proper training to take over our classes? WE need more prep time and more guidelines on how to teach safely with the pandemic going on. My field of teaching is music and I have not been given full guidelines for teaching choir safely in a face to face situation and also teaching choir to a student who chooses to go to school by online only. I also don't feel our school has adequate PPE equipment for safe interaction with teacher and students. Our principal has already shared that supplies were ordered but they have not been able to receive all the supplies due to the shortage situation. I have already invested a lot of money to get PPE supplies for my students and school administration may or may not even reimburse me for purchasing supplies. I don't feel safe in my classroom if I don't have the proper equipment to keep my school area clean and students need the masks to attend classes. We have to have the supplies on hand for sanitation and students need masks in case they don't have one. Guidelines should be given for teaching choir and band students as well as other classes involving face to face contact.

As for salary cuts, this is ridiculous. Teachers are working doubly hard with the covid pandemic at hand. We have extra demands of us to prepare for hybrid teaching, assessment deadlines, setting up online teaching for students who opt to not come back to school, etc (the lists go on and on).....and you want to cut our pay? I am one of the teachers who is high risk due to my age with a serious health situation that compromises my immune system. I am assessing the situation this year and if things don't work out for teachers, I will gladly opt out of teaching. With shortage of teachers, you will lose many of us. I want to teach in a safe environment, have ample time to prepare, have proper training for the "new normal", have the appropriate salary, etc. I also want to stay alive and not contract the virus. My students' safety is also my concern.

Thank you for letting me express the importance of delaying the return of students to campus and the decision on whether to cut teacher salaries or differentials at this time. Our students need us! But teachers need proper guidelines to be safe, need the time to prepare, need to be trained adequately and need to be paid adequately.

Mahalo nui loa,  
Esther Macy/Teacher

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Adele Champlin <adele.champlin@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Adele Champlin  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:17 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony - Shortage Differentials

Item: Continued funding for teacher shortage differentials

Aloha BOE,

My name is Adele Champlin and I have served as a teacher, athletic coach, department head, and now as an Academic Coach at Waianae Intermediate School on the beautiful Leeward Coast. I want to start by thanking you for all the things you do to help our educational system, our students, and our teachers. I recognize that your position on the Board is complex and challenging, and I want you to know just how much of an improvement the hard-to-staff area pay differential made in my life. The small bonus that was tacked onto my paycheck made a real difference in my life and has helped my family to be more financially stable, more able to spend money locally, and made me more willing to stay in the DOE long-term. I'm in my ninth year as a teacher, unmarried, with one dependent, and after taxes, the differential works out to about \$200 additional per paycheck. I'd like to share with you EXACTLY how I have been spending that differential pay, so you will understand what will happen to my family if it is taken away.

My first step was to increase my monthly payments toward my credit card debt and student loan debt by \$50 each per month. Within six months my credit score had improved substantially, and now my credit card debt is almost completely gone. Shedding this burden of debt that I accrued over my past eight years living in Hawaii will enable me to spend more money here in our community, and I finally applied for a USDA home loan. Another thing I began doing right away was putting money away for a house downpayment. My partner and I have dreamed of buying a house out on the west side, but we've always just barely been able to make our rent and bills. When the differentials started, I moved \$100 each month into that dedicated home savings account. Third, I started a 403b for myself. Financial advisers have shown me that between the DOE pension plan and my Social Security benefits, I'll still be several thousand dollars short per month of the amount I will need to survive in my retirement. Starting a 403b was never feasible in the past because we, like many families on Oahu, live hand-to-mouth every month. I have a meager \$50 automatically deducted from one paycheck every month and put into that account. Finally, and most important of all to me, I was able to start a 529 plan for my son's eventual college expenses - something I wanted to do a year earlier when he was born, but couldn't afford to. Even though I'm only able to put in \$50 a month, it's something that I couldn't afford to do at all during the first year of his life, and I hope to increase that contribution amount if my pay isn't docked. All of these things - things every hard-working American should be able to afford to do every month - were enabled by the increase in the hard-to-staff pay differential, and will no longer be possible if it is discontinued.

I'm sharing these personal financial details with you because I want you to know my reality. I don't know for certain, but I doubt that any of you have to think about whether you can afford a \$50 monthly contribution to your child's college savings account. I doubt that increasing a credit card payment by \$25 or \$50 would in turn take that same amount away from your food budget, like it would for me. For us teachers who live paycheck to paycheck each month and worry about the rising costs of rent here in Hawaii and the cost of feeding our families, little sums like a \$200 bonus go a long way to making us more stable, more confident, and more able to contribute to our local economy. If that money is taken away, it isn't manicures, iced coffees, or extra clothes that I'll be missing out on. No. It's the dream of buying a house in Makaha, the hope of being able to help my son pay for college, and the very real fear of not being able to afford food, shelter, or medication in my elderly

years. This money is NOT extra. This money is needed, appreciated, and vital to our survival and our continued dedication to the DOE.

I've spoken only about myself and my family, and not about the children I work for, which feels wrong. Of course, the differentials have benefited the children, and the data shows that clearly. Those benefits will be compounded each year the differentials stay in place. We actually had more teachers move into very difficult to staff SpEd positions this year, and there was a 41% decrease in teachers leaving the hard-to-staff regions, which see a debilitating and demoralizing staff turnover every year. I am tired of seeing my students depressed when another teacher leaves them because it's too hard to make it on one's own in Hawaii. The financial hardship of teachers in Hawaii disproportionately impacts our students who are most in need, and the BOE/DOE have finally found a tactic that is making a positive difference, and it would be an absurd idea to remove those differentials now when the students need dedicated and experienced teachers more than ever.

It is so, so very important that these students have the benefit of long-term teachers who are able to afford to stay and become part of their community. We see students suffer every year when teachers leave them due to the financial compensation of the job just not being enough to justify the selflessness and dedication it requires to treat every student as if they are your own child. Our students - and our teachers - deserve better. Our teachers deserve fair compensation, and our students deserve teachers who can afford to stay and can afford to care for themselves. Only then can teachers give their best selves to their students.

Thank you for your attention, and I plead that you find some way to keep the pay differentials in place so our most vulnerable schools and populations can continue to benefit from better teacher retention. In turn, our students will thrive and our economy will improve.

Mahalo,

Adele Champlin

--

Adele Champlin  
Waianae Intermediate School  
Instructional Coach, Social Studies Department  
(808) 697-7121

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Kathryn Fisher <kthryn\_fisher@yahoo.com> on behalf of Kathryn Fisher  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:18 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Hard to fill bonuses

What would a state bonus be without it being taken away immediately? Teachers stayed at their school who had planned to leave because they were promised a bonus. Why does the state continue to balance the budget on the backs of students and educators? We have endured a lot since this pandemic started. We are essential workers. We need to be paid as if we ARE essential. If the state really cared about teachers, you would not continue to make promises that don't materialize. If the state truly cared about education, it would be fully funded, more important than the rail, tourism or the airlines.

If the state showed how important education is, you'd treat teachers fairly rather than rolling over us at every opportunity. And fully fund education as a promise to the students of Hawai'i

Aloha, Katie

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Terri Simms <msimms@hawaii.gov> on behalf of Terri Simms  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:19 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Kilohana not ready to open

Aloha HI BOE,

Kilohana Elementary School is not ready for students to return to school.

\* We do not have adequate PPE, masks are back-ordered

\* Our teachers have not had an opportunity to be an active part of the discussion due to them being on vacation.

Thank you for your consideration in delaying the opening of schools, for at least 2 weeks.

Marilyn P. (Terri) Simms  
Principal  
Kilohana Elementary School



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Rosa McAllister <rosam@networksfortraining.org> on behalf of Rosa McAllister  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:19 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Maui schools are NOT ready to open!

Aloha!

My son & daughter-in-law are teachers on Maui & my two grandchildren attend elementary & intermediate school here. I live on the westside of Maui in Honokowai & am an educator myself (formerly in person & hybrid, now solely online). For many reasons, including our continuing positive cases here on Maui & across the state, we should not allow our keiki & teachers to be the sacrificial lambs of government's attempt to re-establish the economy. We clearly are not ready to open our schools.

As was stated in yesterday's Governor's address regarding this subject, the overwhelming reason parents have stated they wish schools to re-open is because they see it as a solution to their childcare issues... not for socialization or even better education..... because they need their kids to be watched so they can go to work or for other reasons I will not guess upon. As was stated yesterday, too, it is felt the schools are safe for keiki to return in the month of August. Under what certainty? And for a month?? We are being advised more strongly everyday by the Gov., Lieutenant Gov., Mayors, & other HI & national officials to wear masks in public, socially distance ourselves, do not congregate in groups larger than 10, etc., etc. And yet it is ok for our keiki & teachers to go to school? There is absolutely no logic to this.

We have already lost a record number of teachers to early retirement, have quit teaching, moved on to online charter schools, &/or left the islands because they felt their lives were in peril & they & the keiki were not being honored. How many keiki are transferring to charter schools or home schooling because of your decisions so far to restart our public schools too early? I personally know several & these were all formerly staunch supporters of public schools.

Enough.

Stop this craziness now & allow our schools to stay closed until we know more about this virus & the toll it is taking on our homes, our keiki, our families.

This is a matter of health not wealth.

Sincerely,

Rosa McAllister

(Mother of Michael Landes, Mother-in-law of Megan Landes, & Tutu of Ethan & Olivia Landes)

\*\*\*\*\*  
Rosa C. McAllister, M.Ed., R.M., L.M.T.  
Co-Founder & Organizational Advisor  
Networks for Training and Development, Inc.  
1-866-683-3651 (tollfree)  
[www.networksfortraining.org](http://www.networksfortraining.org)

Personally offering assistance with:

- ~ Organizational, Board, Non-profit, & Community Development
- ~ Assistive Technology & Accessibility Concerns
- ~ Massage, Energy, & Body Work

\*\*\*\*\*



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Emmi E <emmiesaki@gmail.com> on behalf of Emmi E  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:21 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](#)

I strongly urge you to postpone the opening of schools. August 4th is very near and there are so many uncertainties; so many questions and very few answers for teachers, students, and parents. We teachers have been racking our brains to prepare for our own safety, for the safety of our students, for the physical layout of our school and classrooms, for academic challenges, for virtual learning, and for all the other challenges that will surely come up. Schools also don't have all the necessary safety equipment and supplies due to then being on backorder throughout the nation. With so little time, so little guidance, so many last minute changes and decisions, and still so many unanswered questions, we are not ready.

As a parent, I as well as many other parents I know are having a difficult time deciding what will be the best option for our children. We have so little information to base our decisions off of. Dr Kishimoto's community meetings are being held now, right before schools are scheduled to open. Why so last minute? Why is there a rush to open schools right away when the people directly involved (admin, teachers, staff, parents, and students) are voicing their concerns and saying they are not ready?

The opening of the school year should not be filled with chaos, anxiety, and uncertainties. Teachers and students need to feel safe, secure, and prepared to reenter school. Please reconsider your decision to reopen schools on August 4th.

Thank you for hearing our concerns,  
Emmi Esaki

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Mae Masuda-Kop <masudakop@gmail.com> on behalf of Mae Masuda-Kop  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:22 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

**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 Mae Masuda-Kop and I am a music teacher at Salt Lake Elementary School. I am writing this testimony to urge you to delay the opening of schools. In March, we weren't going to open schools until there were 0 cases of COVID-19. Even with the CDC guidelines, I don't feel comfortable with the current numbers of COVID-19 cases. Although the number of students on campus will decrease to allow for physical distancing, I will still be teaching music to all 700 students. By servicing all the students, there is more probability that I could contact COVID-19 and spread it to everyone. My daughter, who is in high school, is also worried that not all students will follow the CDC guidelines, and she does not feel that it is safe to return to school. Please consider delaying the Aug. 4 opening of schools. The health and safety of our students and staff should be a priority.

Thank you,  
Mae Masuda-Kop

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Kira Kolba <kirakolba3@gmail.com> on behalf of Kira Kolba  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:23 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Aloha,

I am a K-12 school counselor at a charter school based in Waipahu with an extension campus in Kona. I have Addison's Disease (primary adrenal insufficiency due to autoimmune conditions - affecting the endocrine system.) Since the adrenals regulate the metabolism, blood pressure, the body's response to stress and the immune system, my immune system is not only compromised because of the steroids that I need to take to stay alive, but by the nature of the disease. I currently have the immune response capability of a 70-85 year old. This condition places me at higher risk of developing severe illness as a result of COVID, according to the CDC, and is recognized by the ADA as a disability. I have requested to telework as a reasonable accommodation and am waiting to hear back from my executive director. I understand that my executive director may need time to process the many similar requests that she is receiving like mine and for this reason, the fact that many schools must remain understaffed until more planning can take place, schools must wait to reopen until after August 4th. It seems irresponsible to act otherwise.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Kira Kolba  
808.494.5365

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** MJ Henry <mjhoomalu@gmail.com> on behalf of MJ Henry  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:23 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Why differentials are so important

To whom it may concern,

I am a teacher working on the Waianae coast. I have been for 15 years. I have seen the struggles economic downturns have done to my school community and myself. I went through pay cuts, furloughs and stagnant economy where there were no pay raises to support my family. This year, the differentials have supported my education by being able to pay for college tuition. I was able to open a savings account and retirement plan. I paid off existing debts with the money that was given with the differential.

If the differential goes away, so many of the necessary things I have put in place will either stop or change because the lack of financial support. The differential not only supports my family but also my students because as you know teachers supply classroom necessities when they can. I am no different, I support my students with as much as I can.

If the differential goes away, many things I can accomplish will either cease or defer until I can manage it financially.

Please rethink these options because despite what is being said, differentials make a difference not just in pay but in the livelihood of the teachers who earn it by working in areas that are hard to fill.

Sincerely,  
Ms. Henry  
Elementary Educator

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Ikaika Vinta <ivinta@kawaihonapcs.org> on behalf of Ikaika Vinta  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:23 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

To whom it may concern,

With schools scheduled to reopen, as a teacher, I am still very fearful of the unknown as it relates to reopening schools. There are so many questions, with no true and substantial answers. Plus, how are you going to cut funds and or teacher pay and expect us to do more than we have ever had to? Furthermore, the statement going around that children are not very likely to catch covid is not a statement that promotes confidence in anyone. Even if only 1% of children can get covid, that is 1% more than anyone should find acceptable.

Most teachers are of the age where covid can be very detrimental to their health and even kill them. Are you going to be ok, when the first teacher or student dies due to covid?

People keep saying that teachers are going to do their best to keep the kids safe, but who is going to do their best to keep the teachers and administration safe?

This type of pandemic has never happened and NO one is prepared for this, teachers included.

NO one has trained teachers on how to handle all the possibilities that could occur due to this pandemic. No one wants teachers to take temperatures of their students because it may be shaming a child if they have to be sent out due to a fever. So what's the alternative? Let a possible sick student stay in the class passing covid to everyone else?

It is more than apparent that schools are NOT yet ready to open.

If the board has to meet virtually to keep everyone safe, and those are just few, and adults, how is it safe to send kids back face to face?

How can Kishimoto say we will NOT return to school until there is 4 weeks of 0 cases and suddenly turn around and make schools open face to face as numbers rise higher than it did at the start back in March?

I implore you to please reconsider open schools on August 4th face to face.

Why can't we start first quarter virtual and packets and as things, HOPEFULLY, clear up, we slowly start face to face school on the A/B schedule and go from there.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Vinta

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Kamakane`eluaokalani Ka`aikaula <kamakane808@hotmail.com> on behalf of Kamakane`eluaokalani Ka`aikaula  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:24 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Delay the opening of school

Aloha mai,

My name is Kamakāne'eluaokalani Ka'aikaula, I am a teacher at Lahaina Intermediate. The start of school should be delayed until teachers can be properly trained with all the new safety procedures necessary to prevent the spread of COVID19, until teachers can be properly trained to the new teaching procedures required, and until all schools have the proper materials and equipment needed to keep all classrooms and all campuses safe.

Mahalo!

A hui hou,

Kamakāne'eluaokalani Ka'aikaula

Sent via the Samsung Galaxy S7 active, an AT&T 4G LTE smartphone



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** kenji kudo <kenjiwiz@yahoo.com> on behalf of kenji kudo  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:25 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Dear Board Members,

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 Kenji Kudo and I am a Fully Self Contained (FSC) classroom Special Education Teacher at Waimea Canyon Middle School.

In my classroom I have students with severe health issues so they are very susceptible to being exposed to the COVID-19 virus. I support the Union's requests in regards to:

\*When will the State of Hawaii's Department of Health provide written guidance on the reopening of school buildings.

\*What are the clear protocols for requesting and receiving approvals for an exception to wearing face coverings at schools?

\*What happens to the students and adults on a school campus if a student, teacher, other school employees, 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?

\*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?

I believe the Board and the Union have worked together for the best interests of everyone involved. However, I support the Union's request to delay the opening of school buildings to students until the previous mentioned concerns are adequately addressed.

Best regards,

Kenji Kudo

Special Education Teacher

Waimea Canyon Middle School

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Cecilia Woodbury <lily.woodbury@gmail.com> on behalf of Cecilia Woodbury  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:25 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Aloha, please push school reopening for students out by at least a month. We are the only or one of the only states where school is beginning so early in the year. I am a returning to teaching after a two year leave. At least I'm experienced. I can't imagine if I was a brand new teacher having to learn everything and having to deal with the Covid situation on top of it.

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** april bright <chooch33@yahoo.com> on behalf of april bright  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:25 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

**I am testifying on behalf of 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 April Bright, I teach 4th grade at Mokapu Elementary School.

I am a teacher and parent. I love teaching; having conversations with my students, watching them learn and seeing that moment when they "get it." More than anything I want things to go back to the way they were, but that won't be happening any time soon.

A few months back, Governor Ige stated that we would not open schools back up until there were four weeks with no new Covid cases. Since we opened life back up, there have been zero days of zero new cases. In fact, our average daily case is almost higher than it was back in April. What happened to that statement from our governor? Why was it important then, but isn't now? We stopped school for fourth quarter because of our daily cases, and now we are asked to report back to school with the same daily numbers of cases? This is unacceptable!

My principal has applied for a 3 foot rule allowance. I don't want a 3 foot rule, I want 6 foot distancing. A 3 ft rule is unacceptable per the CDC guidelines and should be unacceptable at our school. The only truly acceptable amount of space between people is 6ft and that is what we deserve. We didn't get a vote on this nor has it been made public to the teachers or staff. I am worried about my health and that of my family members. If we can't get the 6 foot ruling at our school, this might also be a problem at other schools. If we can't abide by CDC guidelines, then perhaps we should move the start date back and figure out how to make this work for everyone.

All of this is new. We are not prepared to start the school year in the classroom. We would be far more prepared to start the school year with either distance (online - packet) learning, since we did that successfully in fourth quarter, or with moving the start date back so that we can have a better understanding of how to make this work safely for all - students, teachers, and parents.

Why are all of our school meetings on zoom, but it's completely okay for students to congregate? Why did we let felons out of prison, tight spaces, so that they were less likely to be affected by Covid, yet we are asking students and teachers to meet in small, tight spaces? Everything feels backward.

I am also a parent to two students, an elementary and high school learner. Neither go to my school. I completely understand the difficulty with hybrid and full distance learning for parents who work. I don't have all the answers, but I do believe that pushing back the start, or going full online learning for the first quarter appears to be the safest route.

Please think of everyone, the students, parents, teachers and family members that may live within the same households. We are all important. We need to do what is right for everyone.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Casey Ishitani <cishitani@gmail.com> on behalf of Casey Ishitani  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:26 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** TESTIMONY

Hello,

I am a friend of a teacher at Ilima Intermediate School and I am concerned that the State of Hawaii Board of Education is reopening schools too soon. There are just too many new infections on the island of Oahu to fully reopen schools given the limited space and staff to provide social distancing. I feel this is unnecessarily putting the health and safety of students, faculty and staff at risk. The DOE should request more funding for distance learning and only allow on-campus education for students who absolutely cannot receive such measures at home.

This is, simply put, about the preservation of human life. There ought to be no pressure to place anyone on campus until the numbers have lowered drastically or if a cure for COVID-19 is found. Each student risks infecting an entire multi-generational household. Each staff and faculty member risks exposure from multiple classes.

Thank you for your time.

--

Casey Ishitani

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Naedine Amoroso <namoroso77@gmail.com> on behalf of Naedine Amoroso  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:27 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Aloha, my name is Naedine and is a teacher from Alvah Scott 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.](#)

For the safety of our keiki and families, it is not safe for schools to reopen on August 4. There is a lack in training, safety protocol, and not enough planning time for distance learning. The priority right now is not to educate our students, but to make sure we are all safe. As a teacher, I do miss being in the classroom and wanting to be with my students. But, with covid cases rising, and lack of training in distance learning, and no guidance from the DOE it is not safe or fair to teachers, families, especially students to put their health at risk due to the lack of structure needed.

When we first shut down in March, the DOE made a statement that they were to not reopen schools until their were 0 cases for 4 weeks straight. Here we are, 2 weeks before school opens and we are having consistent double digit CoVid cases every day.

I went into my classroom yesterday and to see the seating arrangement of a total of 23 desks spaced out was clearly still not enough space. To think about fire hazard and safety.. I had desks next to a fire extinguisher and blocking exits just to accommodate social distancing.

As a teacher, I live at home caring for elder parents. This puts my family at risk being exposed to the virus within the classroom. The DOE puts an emphasis on placing students in a bubble, this is not reassuring at all. Students are still having to eat their lunch in the cafeteria mixed with other grade levels. All it takes is one student to infect others. At this very moment, safety should be the priority for all students, teachers, and families. It's not about having to teach our students curriculum right now, rather than to survive and make sure we are well and healthy and going back to FLATTENING THE CURVE.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Russell Minobe <minobekai@gmail.com> on behalf of Russell Minobe  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:27 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Pay differentials and School Opening

To whom it may concern,

I am deeply concerned with the issues of pay differentials and opening of our schools in our current pandemic.

"Teachers are arguably the most important members of our society. They give children purpose, set them up for success as citizens of our world, and inspire in them a drive to do well and succeed in life." UoPeople. The foundation of character and life-long learning is fostered by dedicated teachers in an education system that is constantly changing. The COVID19 pandemic has increased the difficulty of our jobs exponentially every day. To say be prepared to teach in an uncertain format, with training forthcoming, in a teaching situation that may change daily makes teaching exponentially harder and also exponentially increases the stress we are already under. To suggest cutting our pay and putting many of us in a financially unstable situation is untenable. We are already considered underpaid. The value of education you demonstrate in your choices will have consequences that could be felt far into the future by teachers, our students, and our society as a whole.

I am extremely confused with how our situation now, which is worse than when we closed in March, makes it okay to open schools. Does the Center for Disease Control (CDC) not still recommend people should not be gathering in groups greater than 10? Have we not just learned that children 10 and above transmit the COVID19 virus just as easily as adults? Are you willing to accept responsibility for deaths of either a child(ren) or a teacher(s) because you couldn't wait 3-6 months for a vaccine or successful treatment regimen that reduces the chances of transmission and/or increases the probability of recovery. Is time only a factor when in the face of imminent danger? Do we actually have to have people die before courageous action is taken to ensure the safety of all? Our Justice system is built on the concept that incarcerating one innocent individual is so unacceptable that we let many guilty ones go free. And yet we are willing to risk the lives of 10s of thousands of teachers and students.

I hope you take into consideration my testimony before making your decisions.

Sincerely,  
Russell S Minobe

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Allen Kaaihue <al\_kaaihue@yahoo.com> on behalf of Allen Kaaihue  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:27 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Aloha,

My name is Allen Kaaihue. I am a normal guy with a normal, non-government/federal, work for a local business job. I am a father of 3 children. 2 of them goes to Mililani Uka Elementary and 1 will be starting at Mililani High School. I am here to say please delay the opening of our schools until more concrete and better safety measures are put into place. There is no sense in rushing the opening and using our children as “guinea pigs” for this deadly virus. I know we could opt in for full distance learning but this is the situation. My 2 elementary school children are being told they need to be in school full time. 1 - because my daughter is in 1st grade and she needs the face to face time for her age and 2 – my son is on the autism spectrum and needs to be in school so he doesn’t fall behind. If we opt in for full distance learning, it will be a full time commitment. My wife is starting to think that she needs to quit her job and stay home with our kids. Now I can see this scenario happening all over the island. But because Hawaii is not the cheapest place to live, most need 2 or more incomes to make an “okay” living which is not anywhere near “okay” in Hawaii. With my wife out of work there goes that 2nd income and her medical coverage and life here will now become nearly impossible. Sure you can say that I can apply for assistance and I totally get that. I have tried just by myself and I was told I didn’t qualify for food stamps because I, alone, make too much money.

So what happens when someone at our kids school gets sick or contracts the virus? I can tell you. School will probably close until further notice because in reality, that would be the best option. All kids and their parents will have to self isolate. There goes all income for at least 14 days. Unemployment (without federal help) is not nearly enough to make a living on. Now if the State of Hawaii cannot get any of this under wraps from adults and quarantine breakers, what makes them think they can start opening schools for kids? You can say its safe all you want. Kids will do what they want and they will forget about all the troubles of this pandemics when they see their friends and teachers again. I love Hawaii very much and I am proud to have been born and raised here, but I really wish you and our government would not use my children or all the keiki as pawns for this virus. Remember, all keiki here are our future. Stop trying to rush this like tourism and figure this out with a better plan than what you already have. Please delay the opening and give the schools more time to prepare.

Mahalo,

Sent from my iPhone



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Kati Hedden <katibhedden@gmail.com> on behalf of Kati Hedden  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:27 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Dear Department of Education Boardmembers,

Aloha. I am Kati Hedden. I am testifying against Action Item G. I strongly oppose the idea of cutting shortage differentials. I am a teacher at Lahaina Intermediate, a hard to staff school. I live and work in Lahaina, in West Maui. I am currently receiving a differential.

It is my understanding that Lahaina is considered a hard to staff geographical area due to the short supply and high cost of housing and living in West Maui. On average, rent is about \$300-400 more expensive in Lahaina compared to other places in Maui. Some staff who work at my school, commute to school from the other side of the Island (Kahului, Wailuku, Pukalani). I believe their dedication to commute to work each day, as well as their multiple years of teaching at our school, vibrantly reflect their dedication to our West Maui Keiki. However, over the three years teaching at my school, we have lost some great teachers because they choose to teach on the other side where living and housing is more affordable. Personally, living in Lahaina, the differential helps me pay my rent. I have thought about moving and working in Kihei or going to Oahu where the cost of living is lower. I love my school and community and I am dedicated to my students, and the differential helps alleviate some of the high cost of living.

I believe teacher retention at schools is invaluable to our Keiki. After three years of teaching at Lahaina Intermediate, I am very proud and happy to have grown to know families by teaching their different children year after year. I believe this type of security and stability is what our keiki needs to feel safe and valued in their school and community. It is not fair to the students to lose their teachers because their teachers can not afford to live or work at a public school in Lahaina. Furthermore, taking away the differentials is inequitable and unsustainable as the differentials simply go towards the additional cost of living in hard to staff areas. Only some teachers are being punished. Plus many teachers who have already relocated to these hard to staff areas have already calculated and budgeted living expenses based on the differentials. Taking away the differentials would be going back on your promise to support these teachers, and we would lose more teachers. Teachers would also be scrambling to find new jobs and new homes at the start of the school year.

All of our students, especially our ones in hard to staff geographical locations, and our most vulnerable students with Special Services, deserve great teachers who stay for years at their school. Taking away the differentials would devastate hard to staff school communities across the islands, and greatly and negatively impact the education of students with Special Services. Since January when we first received the differentials, we have filled a large amount of Special Education vacancies with certified and highly qualified teachers across the islands, including in hard to staff locations. We also have filled large amounts of general education teacher vacancies at hard to staff schools. Please do not take away the differentials and all the amazing progress of teacher hiring that has been made over the last six months. I urge you to continue to provide the differentials for school year 20-21 as you promised back in January. The money has been allocated. Teacher salaries are already the lowest in the nation when adjusted for cost of living. I hope the differentials continue forever. Our keiki deserve certified and highly qualified teachers that stick around for years to come.

Lastly, the education system should not be fully dependent on tourism revenue as our students are part of local families who deserve an education. Our keiki are the future of Hawaii, they deserve the best education possible.

Best,  
Katherine Hedden

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Paul Nielsen <pauln0816@gmail.com> on behalf of Paul Nielsen  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:29 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony for delay of school start

I am writing in testimony to delay the start of the School Year for students 2020-2021.

Yesterday I watched the press conference of Governor Ige regarding the upcoming opening of schools to students, scheduled for August 4th. I listened carefully to our Governor, then listened as Superintendent Kishimoto. Then today I saw the news conference held by HSTA.

While I understand the importance of getting students back to the classroom, we owe it to the students, parents, and teachers to provide the safest possible environment as possible. While the Governor and Superintendent feel that their plan is a good one, it is clear that the HSTA/teachers feel that our schools need more time to prepare for students to return. There are MANY unanswered questions, and much to think about before allowing students to return to school. It is my understanding that teachers were promised written guidelines for safety, but this has yet to be provided. If guidelines have not yet been determined/provided, how is it ok to allow students to return to school in less than two weeks? If guidelines have not yet been determined/provided, how can the Superintendent say that teachers have been properly trained? Does anyone think that our teachers believe they will be safe upon return to school?

Please do the right thing and allow the schools/teachers the extra time needed to develop specific procedures and protocols before students return to school. In order for the return to the classroom to be successful, it is imperative that teachers feel confident in the plan. Let's show our support to our teachers by doing the right thing!.

Paul Nielsen  
Concerned Citizen

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Kristi Lee Higuchi <kristih@juno.com> on behalf of Kristi Lee Higuchi  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:30 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Dear Board of Education,

I would like to testify 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 I am deeply concerned in many ways about returning to school next week (and on August 4 with students).

I would have hoped that the state would re-open first, have that stabilize, then open the schools. Why? Because doing so provides the LEAST transitions for the children. Children are creatures of habit. When March happened, and the unknowns happened, it threw the children into a head-spin. They didn't know what was coming next. Were told, "Just an extension of spring break" then were told "Two week closures" then were told, "Through April," etc. They didn't know what was coming to them, and they had to transition at each point. Yes, we must teach our children to be adaptable and to adjust, but MAKING them have to transition, adapt and adjust is just not necessary right now AND in this capacity.

As a parent - I would HOPE that my child is made to transition as FEW times as she needs to. As a teacher, I feel for these children AND THEIR FAMILIES who will need to transition back and forth should we open, close, re-open, close again, etc. The parents will be there to pick up the pieces of the "Moments" that their children will have during these transitions. As a teacher, I am fearful on many accounts.

My biggest concern is the health and safety for all of us. There is much talk about cohorts. I teach in a high school, which luckily will only have 3 periods a day. But, the next day we will have 3 different ones, and the next day 2 different ones that we had not seen yet. That puts us in EIGHT different cohorts (well, 7 with a prep period in there) and SEVEN different groups of students that, they themselves have all been in 7 different groups of students. Even with social distancing in place, that is not having any sort of cohorts that our leaders are touting. Yes, I can see how cohorts COULD work in an elementary school, but at the secondary level, I do NOT see how that works.

Another HUGE concern is what happens - what REALLY happens when someone is COVID positive? By the time they begin to feel sick they may have already been in school for a week, get tested, everyone they have been around has already been in school and everyone is exposing each other. Then do we quarantine? And who exactly needs to be tested - how do we get tested - who pays for that testing - and most importantly, this WILL include teachers/staff/school personnel - who substitutes for them and takes on their duties?

A third concern is our teacher training. I have worked every day this summer, watching/participating in webinars, work groups and have even attended four virtual conferences, with two more upcoming in the next few weeks to provide myself knowledge and "Training" to push forward in this upcoming year and future years. I have spent every day this summer adjusting, revamping, and at times, redoing my curriculum. Do I feel ready? Somewhat, but I still lack what I need to begin - further guidance from the state, further guidance from the department, and to a degree (ONLY because my school has been amazingly on top of things and at the forefront of adapting to these changes!) further guidance from the school. But, that is me - I know many colleagues who have NOT participated in ANY webinars not required and have NO CLUE how to teach in these hybrid models or at full distance learning. We need proper training to teach our students well. We cannot be reactive, as we were in the spring, teaching to survive. We need to be confident and have

the proper MEANS to teach. Unfortunately that cannot be done in days, especially when 9 of those days are split between teaching and training. Provide us the time to adjust, to relearn, to think differently. The product and result of this change will be better teachers, thus providing much better education to our children of Hawaii.

Yes, we need to adapt. Yes, there are changes in our educational system that needs to adjusted to. Yes, education is not going to be as we knew it for all our life. But, to make these changes and create unnecessary NEGATIVE impact to our students and to our communities is not needed at this time.

Train our teachers how to adapt in their teaching FIRST. Do it well to allow us to do it well. Have our community/ies feel safe upon their return and feel that they can STAY safe upon their return first. Provide means to CONTINUE meaningful planning, discussions and training throughout the year. The children deserve this. The community deserves this.

This is not about the teachers. It is about our children and providing them the means to learn, to grow, to succeed. Allow us to do what we need to do, feel safe doing so, and keep us ALL healthy.

Thank you for your time and dedication to making our Hawaii Schools safe, healthy and providing the best education for our students.

Sincerely,  
Kristi Lee Higuchi-Delos Santos

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** V Pires <hawaiiankolea@gmail.com> on behalf of V Pires  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:31 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Continuation of hard-to-staff differentials

Dear Members of the BOARD of EDUCATION,

My name is Val Pires and I'm a middle school science teacher now teaching at Kealakehe Intermediate in Kona on the island of Hawai'i. I have been a teacher from school year 2001-2002 on Oahu and now on Hawai'i. 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 the BOE if Hawaii continues to value our hard working 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 specifically.

I am beginning this school year at a new school. I transferred out of a charter school that was not compensating their teachers in accordance to the Honoka'a complex. I therefore entered the teacher pool to move schools. My counterparts who have received their differentials here in the Hāmākua chapter have expressed such relief for rent, bill, the potential to go on a trip that was otherwise inaccessible, home improvements, and overall financial health. I needed to leave my complex and move to another school 35 miles away to have the ability to participate in the program. I urge that these differentials remain enacted to show the teachers in these hard-to-staff geographic locations that they are seen and valued for the effort they put into the community they serve. The Kealakehe complex serves State Housing families that are low income. I believe these students can break the cycle they find themselves in if we can give them the education that can change the trajectory of their life. I've seen it happen with my previous middle school in the heart of Kalihi housing.

Mahalo for your consideration and understanding,

Val Pires  
Resident of Hāmākua  
Teacher in Kealakehe complex, Kona  
18 year teaching veteran

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Taryn Imai <taryn.imai@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Taryn Imai  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:31 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 Taryn, I am an educator at a Middle School in Honolulu and I have a child who is currently enrolled at an elementary public school.

My family and I have taken extreme measures to keep our personal "bubble" safe during this pandemic. We live in a multigenerational home with the eldest person 96 years old and youngest 1 years old. I am a mother of 3 children under the age of 4 and they, especially, have given up so much during this time to prevent contact with others and ensure safety.

As a teacher, we are more at risk when schools reopen than students to contracting COVID. Our "bubble" will consist of 50+ students daily and within one week (face-to-face learning will be 4 days per week) that "bubble" will increase to 200+ students. There are so many questions that have been unanswered in regards to our health and safety which makes me not comfortable starting this school year off 100% face-to-face with the guidance that is currently provided. I do not want to delay the start of school either. I would like 100% distance learning to be an option for all teachers as well as all students as we reopen as planned.

As a parent, I am extremely worried about my child's safety and social emotional learning with the reopening plan that has been issued by the public elementary school. The protocols are not clear and their "bubble" will still consist of 20+ kids. Also, as of now, the school still is not offering a 100% distance learning as an option, like the Superintendent mentioned would be 1 of 3 options offered.

I have been so stressed and anxious about the lack of options I, as a teacher and parent, have during this time. How are you, the state, telling me I have to sacrifice my health and safety as well as my school age child and family members and entrust in the guidance the state provided? The guidance is unclear at best. The necessary measures and steps needed to reduce the risk of COVID spread in our schools are confusing and many questions have still gone unanswered. There is one week until teachers are supposed to report back and two weeks until students. I, along with many other educators, do not feel comfortable returning or sending our own children back to school.

Please provide teachers and parents more options so we can continue to provide financially for our families as well as make the best decision for our children's education rather than being told what we have to do.

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Amy Masaoka <amy.masaoka@gmail.com> on behalf of Amy Masaoka  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:32 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.

The discontinuance of the approved differentials is a decision that will negatively impact over 4,000 educators in the State of Hawaii. As a special education teacher placed in a hard-to-staff school, the thought of losing both differentials not only outrages me...it scares me.

Our keiki are amongst the poorest in the state and come from transient families. Many come from multicultural backgrounds where multiple languages are spoken and effective communication is difficult. The educators at our school work hard every day, including nights, weekends, and breaks, to ensure that we are providing the best possible education to our students while offering support to their families. Since I started teaching, I cannot remember a single school year in which we did not have long-term substitute teachers in our classrooms. Many of these long-term substitutes are covering for special education teaching lines and although many try their absolute best, they are clearly not qualified teachers. Our keiki continuously lose out on valuable learning experiences each year. This coming school year, I am happy to announce that we have, for the time in years, a full Special Education department! Having sat in on several interviews over the past few months, I know for a fact that the special education and/or hard-to-staff differentials was an important factor to many interviewees. Therefore, this is proof that the differentials have already made a huge difference in recruiting and retaining teachers.

Even with the differentials, many teachers still need to find a second (or third) job to meet their personal needs, including myself. Along with being a Special Education Teacher, I am also the Site Coordinator for our After-School A+ Program. Getting a second job was necessary for me to keep up with my mortgage payments and basic necessities. Although my second job does not significantly increase my take-home pay, it has definitely helped to add a little cushion here and there. However, I am still living paycheck to paycheck. My days are long but they do not end after A+ ends. I am also the HSTA Head Faculty School Representative and Membership Service Committee Chair and I am often attending meetings or supporting my teachers (and teachers chapter-wide). And of course, once I finally get home, I am busy prepping for my next day. Throughout this pandemic, many people have had to find creative ways to make extra income. Not only were people making face masks, but baked goods, meals, arts and crafts, etc.....anything to help. I'm not going to lie....I'm one of them. And sad to say...I will most likely continue finding alternate means of making additional money to continue living here in Hawaii because my teacher paycheck alone is simply not enough.

We understand that the entire Nation is facing an unprecedented financial crisis due to COVID-19. As stated by HSTA President Corey Rosenlee, "a retraction of differentials may help to balance budgets but 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." I urge you to reconsider the temporary discontinuance of differentials. Our teachers work extremely hard. Not only does every teacher deserve differentials and pay increases, they NEED it.

Sincerely,

Amy Masaoka  
Pahoa Elementary School  
Special Education Teacher



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Neville Kia <nevillekd@gmail.com> on behalf of Neville Kia  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:34 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Shortage of pay and start date for our Keiki

Aloha,

Assuming that you know that educators receive one of the least paid salaries across the globe although every human being on this earth requires some level of education to be a productive citizen to contribute to our society.

Reducing our salaries will create more stress and anxiety on teachers, which ultimately, will impact the quality of how we function on a day to day basis. Mental health is real. If you reduce our salaries, will you be able to provide supplemental financial support to pay mortgages/rent, utilities, food, and the bare minimal costs to care for our own families. What about single parents like myself? Or parents of special needs that requires additional financial resources? How will we survive? Will be protected from evictions? I'm already living paycheck to paycheck and dip into my savings just to make ends meet. I already work 3 part-time jobs which 2 have laid me off due to Covid. Please do not take my reduce my salary. I am already struggling.

In regards to first day of school, It would be harmless to push school back 2-3 weeks to better prepare for our keiki. Professional development is vital to our productivity and will allow us to deliver quality instruction if we are knowledgeable on what we are doing.

Please consider pushing the start date back. Hours can be made up by extended the school day, by 30 minutes at the beginning of each day and by adding 30 minutes at the end of each day.

Please listen to your community and stakeholders.

Respectfully,

Kia Neville

Sent from my iPhone  
Ms. Kia DiAyn Neville, M.Ed.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Lauren Appelbaum <l.appelbaum4@icloud.com> on behalf of Lauren Appelbaum  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:34 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** OL

Aloha,

I have been a teacher for over 20 years in this state. I miss face-to-face learning yet there is a pandemic that our country hasn't handled very well. Our state has but our country has not and this is my concern. Throughout the press conference yesterday July 20, 2020, members of the BOE & DOE stated multiple times "if & when we go back to distant learning ...". Is the state ready to open themselves up to lawsuits because you are liable for people catching this virus and becoming sick passing it on to family members etc. etc...? Would the BOE be willing to visit the schools throughout the state to make sure we're all safe during the first month of this strange new school year? The BOE doesn't feel they're playing Russian roulette with all lives who make up the school community such as custodians, security, clerks, cafe workers besides students & teachers? Is the opening of schools related to federal funds because Trump and DeVos threatened they would not release federal funds if schools did not open face-to-face? In my opinion a better alternative is to remain distant or at home using online learning for a half to a whole quarter, until COVID infection rate flattens out. Please reconsider because playing Russian roulette with thousands of people's lives is wrong.

Mahalos for your time reading my testimonial.

Sincerely,  
Lauren Appelbaum  
Secondary Teacher  
Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Kimberly Onishi <kimberly.onishi@gmail.com> on behalf of Kimberly Onishi  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:35 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Hello,

I am a teacher from Highlands Intermediate School. Although my administrators have worked very hard to prepare for reopening, there are still major concerns. I am not convinced that our classrooms will be adequately prepared to welcome back students on August 4, 2020. My school also wants us to teach 15 students per hour, exposing me to 90 students a day. I was hoping to reduce the number of students per day.

I believe me and my colleagues need more time before students return to school.

The following questions need to be answered.

- 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?

Thank you for your time,

Kimberly

--

**Kimberly Y. Onishi**

Email: [kimberly.onishi@gmail.com](mailto:kimberly.onishi@gmail.com)

Phone: (808) 285-9165

*"Dripping water hollows out stone, not through force but through persistence." -Ovid*

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** ash.cats@yahoo.com  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:35 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

Aloha BOE members,

I have been a science teacher at the same public school in Hawaii for almost 30 years. I implore you to postpone the opening of our schools. Our schools (especially mine), are not ready to open safely. There hasn't been any reassurance from our administration that appropriate steps have been taken to keep us safe. There are too many key questions that have not been answered regarding the securing of materials & guidelines that are necessary to ensure our safety. It is not just teacher safety that I am concerned about. You must set guidelines to look out for every student, teacher, administrator & certificated staff member. (And let's not forget their family members & anyone that comes in contact with them.)

Teachers are sincerely afraid for their safety and health. Many of our students have not been social distancing while out on break. We have seen them together in our neighborhoods, shopping centers, beaches and skate parks. The numbers of young people catching the virus have risen alarmingly over the last month. And especially the last few weeks. Their death rates are increasing also. I do not want myself or my child (who is a public school student at my school) placed in this unprotected environment. If proper measures were in place, then I would be concerned, but not fearful. I am afraid. We have seen the consequences of opening up too early (i.e.situations/cities/states). Opening before we are ready is simply not worth the risk.

There are some schools that have been truly proactive. They have made their own strict guidelines, & have space to implement these guidelines. Some have secured enough cleaning supplies & equipment to last at least a few months. My school is not one of those.

Put yourselves in my place. I am in a school that has a leader who can't answer our questions, and doesn't have even the most basic of plans. Everything is 'pending'. There are only 7 more days to change 'pending' to 'plan'. It hasn't happened in 4 months - how is one more week going to make a difference? I am not only placing myself, but my child at risk. My boss hasn't even bothered to see how many students our classrooms will hold with the agreed upon distance guidelines. I already know that students assigned to more than half of my classes will not be able to achieve the social distance necessary to be safe. Do you want to be my substitute & be exposed to over 180 teenagers - some not even distanced at school?

Teachers already have a lot of hard work ahead of us adjusting to these new teaching parameters. Don't add more stress to parents, students, teachers and their families. Give us time to do this safely.

Consider the consequences of teachers and students getting sick because of your failure to ensure that clear plans are not just in place, but are being followed? Who will ensure that teachers & students get what they need & deserve - a safe educational environment? What will happen to our system when teachers start having to quarantine, go to the hospital, or die? We couldn't get teachers into the profession before this; we are not easy to replace. What will happen to the families of those students who bring the virus home to their parents/grandparents/extended family? Where do your responsibilities lie? Have you truly done the best for us? Or just what is good enough for now?

Please help us to live safely & securely.

Sincerely,

Scared Teacher

(For fear of retribution, I decline to sign my name.

However, I promise you all of the above is true.)

---

"Always do the right thing. This will  
gratify some people and astonish the  
rest." Mark Twain

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** alyssaleahfried@gmail.com  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:35 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Postpone School Start Date

Aloha,

Please consider holding off on sending our kids back to school! My 13 year old daughter should be entering 8th grade & as much as she wants to go to school to see her friends, having them share classrooms & hangout spots is basically asking for them to get sick. I don't want that. Do you?

The teachers must be taken care of as well. We can't let an uncontrolled virus be the cause of so many teachers not being able to have income.

I was laid off by my company, in which I worked for 9 years because of COVID-19. I'm lucky because I had help, a lot of teachers may not have that kind of help- monetarily & otherwise.

Please let our children have a chance to stay healthy & let our influential educators be able to make a living during this confusing time.

Thank you for your time,

Alyssa Fried  
808-799-2412

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** stacia sage <s-sage@hotmail.com> on behalf of stacia sage  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:36 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Schools not ready to reopen.

I am a special education teacher of 10 years at Laie Elementary school on Oahu. Today I went to a meeting along with other Special Education teachers to try and plan for the upcoming school year. We are given the task of figuring out how to meet all of our students with IEP's service minutes while practicing social distancing. This task is feasible, but we have not been given clear and precise guidance for how to keep our students or ourselves safe. No word on who or how our classrooms will be cleaned, no directive on how our para professionals who work closely with our students are to practice social distancing, what is the policy on masks? We are hearing from our administration that masks just have to be worn when they arrive on campus and teachers are the ones to 'visually monitor' for ill students. We need some real leadership here to keep everyone safe. Administrators, the Superintendent, the BOE, and the Governor have all passed the day to day challenges on to teachers. Not only is there limited guidance, we are expected to figure out on our own how to deliver distancing learning, but also how we will hold students accountable.

I am pretty sure all of the persons mentioned above make significantly more than any of us teachers, and none of them will be on the frontlines. Our leaders need to step up or leave their positions, because they are not fulfilling their duties to us teachers or our keiki.

Thank you Stacia Sage

Sent on my Virgin Mobile Phone.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Tina Taniguchi <tinammlt@gmail.com> on behalf of Tina Taniguchi  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:37 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.**

I am first off a parent of 4 on the island of Kauai but I am also an early childhood educator. Although I haven't been working due to me staying home and raising my 4 kids, occasionally I will sub and teach summer programs.

I am simply saying the schools are not ready to be opened! My older 2 go to Kapaa Middle school where we opted and are awaiting instructions for distance learning (very appreciative of their communication and that as an option). My younger 2 were set to attend Kapaa Elementary school, where as a family we have been for 8 years. Kapaa Elementary school does not offer distance learning and I felt there was no option but to pull my kids out of school. Why rush to withdraw? Because I am not willing to further stress the details of this rushed reopening and health and safety is of a high concern. I have been on campus going through the "kindergarten registration" process. I seen first hand that the bathrooms and classrooms are not equiped to protect our teachers or children. Health and safety has and still is a concern for me at school. On any given day you walk into bathrooms with toilets unflushed, and witness no handwashing, disinfecting around campus. We as a family have gone through head lice, pin worms, colds, flus, all of it felt difficult to defeat. We were constantly returning our healthy kids to school to be with a class of kids that are scratching heads, coughing, runny nose etc. There is no health check at schools and there needs to be! Returning to school can happen, you need tonslow it down do a proper health and safety check at each individual school, physically walk through and see what we see. I feel bad for teachers because as one I know parents send their kids to school sick and you try your best to isolate them knowing that parent is working etc. Teachers and kids are being placed in less then optimal health and safety setting. I won't have it and choose to withdraw. I feel my choice is best for my family but it also supports those are need to be in school by keeping the numbers down. I feel like schools should support parents who can and are willing to do the distance learning or homeschooling with resources such as curriculum examples, a list of standards we can focus on, printing capabilities etc. Theres more to be brought to the table verses just physically get everyone back into classrooms. Thank you for reading and I am still awaiting a response from our schools principal and district superintendent.



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Mike Shire <mike.shire@hawaiiantel.net> on behalf of Mike Shire  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:37 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Aloha. I am Mike Shire, a resident of Kailua and father of a teacher at Aiea Middle School.

I am submitting testimony to the Board of Education 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 believe the Hawaii school system is not prepared to safely reopen. Safety of the Teachers, Staff and Students should be the first consideration and I have not seen a comprehensive plan to insure schools open safely.

I am a retired Major Project Manager and I was trained to recognize when plans are not adequate and it is my professional judgement that the current plans do not meet the standards required to insure safety of all. Some examples:

1. There are no plans to provide PPE to Teachers and Staff who have close all day contact with children. Minimum PPE should be face shields and N95 masks. Further, sneeze guards should be erected on teacher desks, similar to what has been installed in retail stores. Young people generally do not become very ill with Covid-19, but many teachers and staff are in the at-risk age groups and need to be protected.
2. There are no plans to sanitize classrooms between sessions. I assume teachers will have to do this themselves. Are they to be provided supplies to sanitize?
3. Plans for dealing with positive Covid-19 tests among students and/or teachers are not clear. A detailed protocol needs to be developed and communicated to all parties because there are going to be children, staff or teachers that test positive after school is in session.
4. Plans for distance learning are not clear as to responsibility and content. It is not clear that parents opting in for distance learning are aware that it is a packaged program and does not allow for teacher interaction. There is also a high level of uncertainty as to how many parents will opt in to distance learning.

The Board of Education should reconsider the start date for public schools. Perhaps a delay of one month will allow most of the shortfalls in planning to be corrected.

Mike Shire

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** slindberg@hawaii.rr.com  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:39 PM  
**To:** 'testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov'  
**Subject:** Testimony

I think with school coming up again so fast and so much confusion as to what that will look like, that it would be much safer to delay the opening of school or to start school with 100% distance learning. The issues that caused us to go to distance learning after Spring Break haven't changed. There are more cases and more deaths since the State has tried to reopen more. We can't count on kids to wear their masks properly, stay home when they are sick, or social distance.

I know that distance learning isn't what we want, but do we really want to risk the health of students and teachers during this time. If we don't have a clear understanding of how to open schools back up in a healthy way, I think we are obligated to postpone the start date, or continue a distance learning platform for students.

Thank you,  
Shelleen Sodersten  
Solomon Elementary School  
Grade 3 Teacher

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Jean Tokuhamma <jean.tokuhamma@campbell.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Jean Tokuhamma  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:39 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Start date for schools should align with data obtained after opening of the state. Said data should be evaluated before opening schools. Parents of my students are very worried about Covid 19 spreading to vulnerable family members including students with underlying conditions.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Cynthia Matsuda <kaskosmom@hawaii.rr.com> on behalf of Cynthia Matsuda  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:40 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.](#)

Schools are NOT ready to be reopened to safely welcome children back to school on August 4th. I have been purchasing my own PPE and safety materials to protect the children and me. I have also purchased my own plexiglass barrier since DOE and DOH insist that children must see teachers' faces for language development. I have my family that I am concerned about when I return to school. DOH continues to talk about the Ohana bubble. Will families truly limit their social activities as requested at Monday's press conference?

On my own time, I have returned to my classroom to setup and prepare the best that I can for my students to safely social distance. Teachers are scheduled to return to school in a week, but where are school's health and safety details and logistical plans? Is it guaranteed that there will be cleaning supplies and disinfectants to clean every classroom everyday?

As the science data and experts have told us that hand-washing, physical distancing, and wearing a mask have a huge impact on stopping the spread of COVID-19. Do schools have hand sanitizing stations that should be in place around campus and in each classroom as stated? Are there physical distancing markings around campus and in classrooms to guide the children so they know how they can help their families and their friend's families stay healthy? Has DOE and DOH emphasized to parents that they need to have their children practice wearing masks for long periods before returning to school?

Yes, people want the economy to get rolling and for that to happen, parents need to return to work. So, I understand when parents say they want their children to return to school. But if parents were told the entire truth and had the opportunity to walk through the schools right now, would they still have the confidence to send their child back? No, schools still need time to have all the health and safety protocols and logistics in place before children can safely return to school.

Thank you for making the morally right decision in delaying the reopening of schools for the health and safety of teachers, and for the children who live in multi-generational homes with their Kupuna.

Cynthia Matsuda  
Elementary School Teacher

Sent from my iPad

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Kathleen Foley <foley.kathleen@ymail.com> on behalf of Kathleen Foley  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:40 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

I am writing to testify about Action item H.

I have 3 children in public school here, one in 11th grade and two in 7th grade, and a toddler at home.

One of my 7th graders has a lung disease; he has reduced lung function and terrible allergies and as such is on several daily medications and two inhalers just to keep his lungs operating enough to work. During a normal school year he regularly has to use his emergency inhaler and regularly gets sent home from school as a result.

My other 7th grader has an IEP for anxiety and ADHD. He is at basically the max level of assistance he can get, and that gets him to \*just\* passing. Sometimes.

He is on two three medications, one for anxiety, one for asthma, and one for severe allergies to basically every plant imaginable, and he also uses his emergency inhaler regularly throughout a normal school year.

Neither of these children are healthy enough to sustain COVID-19, despite their excellent medical team. As such, if schools reopen as scheduled, we will HAVE to opt for distance learning for all 3 kids in an effort to reduce their risk of exposure. This puts my child with anxiety at an extreme disadvantage due to the lack of specialized education.

I beseech you, please delay the school year to give this island time to come up with better options. As it stands, we are forced to choose between keeping one son alive and giving one son a fighting chance at a successful adulthood.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Kathleen Foley

2014 & 2015 Independent and Reserve Installation Marine Corps Spouse of the Year

Please excuse the brevity of this mobile message. I am out changing the world.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Shianne Watkins <20305024@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Shianne Watkins  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:41 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** PLEASE CONTINUE FUNDING SHORTAGE DIFFERENTIALS

To whom it may concern:

I am beginning my second year of teaching kindergarten on the Leeward side. My first year I did not have my certification and barely made it through the year.

This year, I have been able to reclassify which means higher pay, but just that isn't enough to keep me above water. It is the hard to staff differential that makes the difference.

It makes the difference between staying on island and going back home to California. It makes the difference when choosing between paying a car note or the electric bill. It makes the difference when I can afford to buy fresh produce and still have gas money in order to get to work.

I say all this to urge you to continue funding these differentials because if not, you run the risk of losing qualified teachers for our keiki.

Thank you,  
Shianne Watkins  
Leihoku Elementary School  
Leeward District

--

Best,  
Shianne Watkins

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Joseph Jerviss <joseph.jerviss@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Joseph Jerviss  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:42 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Proposed cuts to pay differentials and student start date

To whom it may concern:

I would like to advocate on behalf of NOT cutting the teacher pay differentials. As tireless workers that go above and beyond the call of duty each and every day, teachers deserve to have this pay differential for hard-to-fill positions in our state. Many of my peers drive from the windward coast or downtown just to teach out on the Leeward coast. I know it's not for financial gain, but rather because they have grown to love the students and community. I am a product of that. I'm aghast that all of the proposed cuts we have been hearing about are aimed straight at teachers--the very people who educate our students about dealing with current issues like the pandemic. Further, students need to be in school as soon as possible even if it's through distance learning. It's imperative we begin teaching now because students have missed much over the past few months.

Thank you for your time and consideration!

Mahalo nui loa,  
Joseph Jerviss

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** barrow hutchison <barrow1hutchison@gmail.com> on behalf of barrow hutchison  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:42 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Cc:** Barrow Hutchison  
**Subject:** TESTIMONY

Action item H.,  
MOU between Bd of Ed. and HSTA [SY '20-'21 COVID19 Response]  
Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

I respect the work that the HSTA has been doing to support/educate the teachers and the community. We all strive to create a Safe Educational Environment.

I have been wondering if we will receive clear guidance from the DOH.  
I am challenged when working with Virtual Learning.  
Are there community COVID19 benchmarks to know when to hold the classes and when to fold the classes? As a TEACHER I need to know this! This helps me assess the risk that I face.  
Do teachers need to present 100% distance learning for children that are expected to be Home Bound?

WHAT to do with an infection in the 'class bubble'?  
As a leader in a learning situation, I consider leadership first along with the health dangers for my multi-aged students.  
I write from a position of leadership - 33 years of experience in the classroom!

Wm. Barrow Hutchison. BSc. Ag. B.A. Waldorf Education. Master of Ed. Special Education  
Kona Pacific Public Charter School



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Elisabeth Yuen <lizzyu2010@gmail.com> on behalf of Elisabeth Yuen  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:44 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Delay school start

Aloha,

I am going into my 14th year of teaching and am begging you to delay the opening of the year to allow for proper teacher training and school preparation for students.

Expecting teachers to successfully and safely start the school year without proper training is a detrimental mistake. Expect to be sued by both teachers and parents as they fall ill due to improper training. Expect to receive a plethora of complaints from parents about teachers who do not know how to properly use technology or teach online. Anticipate seasoned teachers to quit at the last minute due to the need to keep themselves and their families safe.

Remedy this by properly training teachers and school staff- allow teachers time to prepare those classrooms for the many changes required to keep students safe. Provide plastic barriers to classrooms and a safety script to follow.

I beg you to please be proactive.

Elisabeth Yuen

Fourth grade teacher

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Pexa, Micah <micah.pexa@kalakauamiddle.org> on behalf of Pexa, Micah  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:44 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Dear BOE,

My name is Micah Pexa, an EL teacher at Kalakaua Middle School. I am writing to offer 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.](#)

As adults, I feel that we teachers are the most at-risk for any Covid virus that may enter schools and classrooms. Should we continue to move forward with in-person classroom teaching, I currently feel under-trained and under-prepared for how to conduct a class that consistently maintains 6 feet of social distancing at all times. As teachers, we all regularly utilize pair and group work, as well as 1-on-1 individual assistance to students, all of which generally happen at less than 6 feet of distancing. Further, enforcing consistent mask-wearing and social distancing with students feels like it will be quite challenging. I would like to see some specific written guidelines as well as receive specific training on how we should run a distanced classroom during this pandemic before we resume in-person classes.

Further, in terms of the online elements of our classes this school year, I also feel under-trained and under-prepared for how to teach online. We have not received any official training on how to teach regular daily lessons online, which is quite a different skill from in-person classroom teaching. In addition, there is still the concern of the lack of internet access and computers for lower-income students should we need to go back to 100% online classes at any point.

I feel that these points need to be clarified and addressed before we resume face-to-face or online teaching this fall, in order to keep teachers and students safe and allow us to deliver the most effective online/blended lessons possible. Thank you very much for your time and understanding.

Sincerely,

Micah Pexa

--

Micah Pexa  
Kalakaua Middle School  
EL Department- Classroom M101B  
Classroom: (808) 305-4595  
Cell phone: (808)747-4601

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Cori Gift <corigift22@gmail.com> on behalf of Cori Gift  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:46 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Members of the Board of Education,

My name is Cori Gift and I'm writing to support a Phased Return to school because I do not feel safe sending my 7yr old daughter with a history of childhood asthma back to school given the high rates of COVID cases in Hawaii currently. Schools were closed in March, when the State only had a handful of cases, and we as parents were told that school would resume only when the State had several days when we had NO new cases in Hawaii. Yet here we are only a few months later, re-opening schools full-time with face-to-face instruction, when new cases counts are ranging from ~20-40 new cases per day. I believe our leadership should stand by their word and follow through with their original guidelines for re-opening in order to keep our children, teachers, and families safe.

Teachers and families are feeling ill-prepared for an August 4th start date. As a parent, I have only received one email from my school with vague, general information about the new year. There are so many questions that need to be answered regarding health checks, masking policies, lunch, recess, before and after school programming, classroom layout, schedule, etc. With so many unanswered questions, I do not feel confident sending my daughter back to school and am strongly considering 100% distance learning. Yet, even then, I have yet to receive any information regarding that option.

We need more time to make informed decisions and we need more clear guidance about our safety and our options from our Schools. Restarting the economy is not as important to me as my child's health and the health of our community. We do not know the long term effects of this virus on children. They could be devastating. I would rather make the necessary sacrifices and work from home with my child by my side, knowing she is safe.

Thank you for your time and consideration,  
Cori Gift  
3434 C Kalihi Street, Honolulu 96819

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Leslie Horn <leslie.horn@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Leslie Horn  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:46 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony - Pay Differentials and School Opening

To the Board of Education of Hawaii,

I am writing to urge you to reject the proposal to cut the pay differentials for special education teachers, Hawaiian language immersion educators, and educators at hard-to-staff schools.

As a special education teacher, when I received this differential last year, I finally felt validated for the work that I and other special education teachers do. Few understand the pressure that special education teachers are under, the high volume of paperwork, and the extra time and effort put into individualizing work for our students. Most of us do not have a curriculum to follow as the mainstream curriculum is typically not appropriate. We have to supplement on our own, create our own curriculum, or find and purchase curriculum that works for our students. Don't get me wrong. I love what I do and I would not be anywhere else other than in special education, but we do have an abundance of work and challenges that other educators do not have. We are also required to have specialized training for our licensure and this pay differential made me feel like that expertise was finally being acknowledged. Specialists in other professions are compensated for their expertise. Finally, it was happening for us in special education and it felt so good and so right. Now, we hear that it may be taken away and I feel so deflated.

The school closure for the fourth quarter of the 2019-2020 school year was extremely stressful for special education teachers. We were put under intense pressure to continue to provide services to our students and document delivery of services with the threat of due process and lawsuits looming over us. Having that differential helped me feel better. At least there was extra compensation for the extra anxiety and pressure.

As we prepare to go back to school with still a very real threat of COVID-19, I am shocked that cutting the differential is being considered. As special education teachers we are the most vulnerable of all educators. I have students who are non ambulatory, who need assistance with feeding and toileting. It is impossible to socially distance with the population I serve. I also have concerns about my students' ability to tolerate the PPE. I will of course do my best to help my students adjust to wearing the PPE but realistically, they will probably not be able to keep it on, putting me and my classroom assistants at greater risk. Instead of compensating us for that extra risk we are taking, we hear that our extra compensation is possibly being taken away. It sends a message to special education teachers that we are expendable.

Being that it is impossible for me to socially distance with my students and that they likely will not be able to tolerate the PPE, I question whether or not we should be returning to the classroom at all. If it is really not safe to be in school without remaining 6 feet apart and without PPE, then perhaps we should not go back just yet. I really do want to go back. I miss my students and I miss my work, however I just don't think we will be able to keep the environment safe and the restrictions within which we have to operate make it impossible to do our jobs.

Thank you for listening.

Sincerely,  
Leslie Horn  
Special Education Teacher - Jefferson Elementary School

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Jonathan Loomis <jonathanloomis@me.com> on behalf of Jonathan Loomis  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:47 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

To the Board of Education:

My name is Jonathan Loomis. I am an AP teacher at McKinley High School.

I encourage the Board of Education to delay the start of school for students.

First of all, I do not think the schools are ready to open safely.

- The DOE and Board of Health officials keep talking about "Ohana Bubbles" but have not been forthcoming about how that concept applies to secondary schools where students move between classes such as middle or high schools. Nor have they discussed how the bubble would apply as students transition from home to campus to the classroom, to after-school activities, and so on. Even in the elementary setting I don't think that their bubble concept is actually going to be implemented as advertised. At the Senate briefing last week they implied that every elementary school class would need to have a different recess and lunch period. I don't know of any school that is actually planning this.
- I don't think schools have been able to acquire the necessary PPE that the DOE has said is part of their safety plan.
- I don't believe the Board of Health has provided any sort of training materials to administrators to share with teachers. I do not feel comfortable going back to school thinking that every administrator is going to make up their own safety training. I think the Board of Education should demand to see what training their teachers will receive before allowing students back on campus.

Second, I do not think the DOE is prepared to help teachers effectively teach in the new setting.

- Most schools have opted for a hybrid model with some instruction being delivered over the computer. This is not a format teachers were trained for. We need to learn how to use this new method because good in-person instruction is not the same as good distance learning. Many teachers are not comfortable with new software needed to produce lessons for distance learning. Administrators don't have any expertise in distance learning either and I do not think that there is any professional development prepared for teachers yet. At the Senate hearing Dr. Kishimoto mentioned something about teachers needing to have students in class and try to do it to learn how. This is not what our students deserve.
- I do not think that the DOE is realistic about the amount of time that will be needed for teachers to effectively deliver distance lessons. As an AP teacher I have started some asynchronous video-based lessons for my students. It easily takes 5-10 hours to plan, film, edit and post each lesson. This year I have three different courses, and if I produce 2 lessons each week for each class, just creating the distance lessons will take my entire working time. When will I have time for grading student work or giving feedback? And, my school expects me to be in class with students. I can't imagine how I will ever provide quality distance instruction. I fear that students will be frustrated and parents will be angry.

Finally, I do not think the DOE has been forthcoming with the public about what full distance learning will be like.

- This summer my school signed on to the DOE's program for computer-based learning called Acellus. I had a chance to preview what learning will be like. It consists of boring (in my opinion) videos of a teacher lecturing followed by multiple choice questions.
- Is this what the DOE is purchasing for the entire state? Or, are they expecting teachers to transition to deliver instruction in a pure distance situation? Either way, I don't think parents and teachers have any idea what the plan is.
- Additionally, parents are being offered at 100% distance option, but no one is saying (to the parents or teachers) what that option actually entails.

In order to address these issues, I think that schools need time to work out realistic solutions. There is no rush to put children, teachers and the public at risk in order to rush into distance learning led by teachers who are not prepared.. Please delay the start of school for students.

Thank you very much for your time.  
Jonathan Loomis  
2626 Aaliamanu Place

Honolulu, HI 96813  
(808) 282-2436

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Ryan Karwiel <ryan.karwiel@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Ryan Karwiel  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:47 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Delayed school opening

Aloha Hawaii BOE,

It is with great concern that my wife and I will be returning to school in a few weeks into a very uncertain environment, only to have students arrive shortly after. Although many people are working extremely hard to best prepare Hawaii's educators and students for an unprecedented year, too much haste will likely result in similar conditions seen globally as a sharp increase in infections plague the world.

It seems reckless to force educators to return to school when most feel ill prepared to do their job safely and effectively. A few short weeks of collaborative preparation seems to be a small request as the alternative could result in illness, hospitalizations and worse.

It is my strong belief that a teacher deserves the right to help determine when they and their classroom is adequately prepared for instruction during a pandemic.

--

Ryan Karwiel  
Highlands Intermediate School  
Team Laule'a  
Science Department

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Margaret Peterson <margaret.peterson@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Margaret Peterson  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:48 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony for Delay of School Start

I am writing in testimony to delay the start of SY 2020-2021 for students. Teachers need more time! We want students to return to the classroom, but want their return to be well planned out, with specific safety protocols in place from day one. Many questions remain unanswered, all of which are important to our safety as well as to the safety of our students and families.

I respectfully ask that you reconsider the decision to allow students to return on August 4th. Please give our teachers the extra time needed for planning and training.

Margaret Peterson  
Kihei Elementary School, Maui

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** kahaholani@aol.com  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:49 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Opening of School August 4th

As an educator and a parent of a senior in high school, I am very concerned about opening our schools on August 4th without clear guidelines and a strategic plan of how to proceed should an individual become ill and test positive for Covid while on campus. We must put health and safety as a priority for all!

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Matthew Medcalf <medcalfmt@gmail.com> on behalf of Matthew Medcalf  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:49 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Differential Pay

Aloha,

I'm a teacher in the windward district & would like to express my concern about the possibility of pay reduction (loss of differential pay). If the pay was reduced I would have a very hard time affording the basic necessities, such as food, medicine, car payment. My rent is already very steep, so this would be an absolute blow to my financial health.

I plan on teaching in Hawaii until I retire.. but with pay reductions it will be hard to afford staying here. I urge you to not reduce the differential pay. It is really making a difference. Mahalo!

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Kekaialoha Keahi <kekaialoha.keahi@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Kekaialoha Keahi  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:49 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Move back start date and protect our students and staff.

This is crazy! How will teachers who have no training on infectious diseases who have limited resources try and keep our students safe as well as ourselves. Just the average flu spreads like wildfire multiple times a year, yet the this new virus is highly infectious, but with no real way to control it. When and if symptoms are detected it is already to late, the chance of spread is is almost 100%. We cannot predict whether a student is infected we can only react to when a student is infected. I care for an elderly unko and my father and mother are a high risk due to their age and a past heart condition that my dad had. I am worried i that myself or even my son who is a Lahainaluna student could bring the virus home and expose my parents or unko. I am willing to put up my own money whatever it cost to build cubicals or some other devices as well as buy disinfecting supplies just to keep my students as well as my family safe, but I feal that it is just not enough.  
GOD HELP US!!!

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Corina Calsing <cbcalsing@gmail.com> on behalf of Corina Calsing  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:51 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Schools need more time to prepare for in-person instruction. We have had 0 training on distance learning, on proper safety protocols, or on how students will be monitored and assessed during an A/B schedule rotation. Two school days next week IS NOT ENOUGH. Sending the students home an hour and a half early for two weeks IS NOT ENOUGH.

The district also needs time to develop a program for the parents who require 100 percent distance learning. The classroom teachers MUST NOT be required to teach their blended classes at school in addition to the 100 percent distance learners DURING THE SAME SCHOOL DAY. It is not feasible. That is the job of two teachers.

We are not prepared to go back. Students will die. Teachers will die. Schools are not babysitters so the governor can get the hospitality workers back on the job in time for his tourists arriving in September. How dare you sacrifice students and teachers for the economy. We need statewide policies and solid protocols in place before proceeding. We need desk shields for every student, paid for by the state. We need time to prepare. Keep the kids home and do the right thing.

Corina Calsing  
fifth grade teacher  
Kalaniana'ole Elementary and Intermediate School

--

Report ebook piracy <http://www.ic3.gov/default.aspx>

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Francis Kim <eigerkim@gmail.com> on behalf of Francis Kim  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:52 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Delaying Student Start date

Aloha,

I am 65 years old teacher at the HSDB.

I do not feel safe to go back to school teach students on August 4th because of Covid 19.

In Hawaii, Covid 19 is increasing and we are not well prepared, so I want school opening date to be delayed.

I hope I do not have to retire because of my safety due to Covid 19.

Sincerely

Sung Kim

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Aziel Whittington <pomai@hotmail.com> on behalf of Aziel Whittington  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:52 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** DELAY

There is ABSOLUTELY no compromise when it comes to our keiki's lives. Following safety precautions a little and keeping them just 3 feet apart will compromise them as well. Delay if need be.

Respectfully,  
Aziel Buck

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Sheinah Ricalde <smpeg0211@gmail.com> on behalf of Sheinah Ricalde  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:52 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Before they reopen our schools the DOE needs to answer all the questions below. Our children and teachers cannot be the guinea pigs on our islands. We need to keep their safety in mind while making decisions.

- If a teacher tests positive for COVID-19 are they required to quarantine for 2-3 weeks? Is their sick leave covered, paid?
- If that teacher has 5 classes a day with 30 students each, do all 150 of those students need to then stay home and quarantine for 14 days?
- Do all 150 of those students now have to get tested? Who pays for those tests? Are they happening at school? How are the parents being notified? Does everyone in each of those kids' families need to get tested? Who pays for that?
- What if someone who lives in the same house as a teacher tests positive? Does that teacher now need to take 14 days off of work to quarantine? Is that time off covered? Paid?
- Where is the district going to find a substitute teacher who will work in a classroom full of exposed, possibly infected students for substitute pay?
- Substitutes teach in multiple schools. What if they are diagnosed with COVID-19? Do all the kids in each school now have to quarantine and get tested? Who is going to pay for that?
- What if a student in your kid's class tests positive? What if your kid tests positive? Does every other student and teacher they have been around quarantine? Do we all get notified who is infected and when? Or because of HIPAA regulations are parents and teachers just going to get mysterious "may have been in contact" emails all year long?
- What is this stress going to do to our teachers? How does it affect their health and well-being? How does it affect their ability to teach? How does it affect the quality of education they are able to provide? What is it going to do to our kids? What are the long-term effects of consistently being stressed out?
- How will it affect students and faculty when the first teacher in their school dies from this? The first parent of a student who brought it home? The first kid?
- How many more people are going to die, that otherwise would not have if we had stayed home longer? 30% of the teachers in the US are over 50. About 16% of the total deaths in the US are people between the ages of 45-65.

We are choosing to put our teachers in danger.

We're not paying them more.

We aren't spending anywhere near the right amount to protect them. And in turn, we are putting ourselves and our kids in danger.

Anonymous

Concerned parent of a child who goes to a school in Waipahu.



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Teri Young <teralina@gmail.com> on behalf of Teri Young  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:53 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Please keep our keiki & teachers/support staff safe

Aloha,

As a former elementary school teacher, I plead with you to keep our keiki and our teachers and school staff safe. Opening up the schools without an airtight plan for smaller classes and 6' spacing exposes TOO many people!! The increase in exposure is exponential, and then keiki bring home germs to their families. Auwe! This is not safe!! I think it could cause covid to spread like wildfire.

There are entire districts who are being required to start their school year online on the Mainland. Santa Clara County, CA, for example Please watch these schools for ow they do it. Even if it means pushing back the school start date, better safe that sorry.

I know there needs to be lots of changes and tough decisions, but we must be safe.

Mahalo,

Teri

Sent from my iPhone please decipher my typos.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Annie Schultz <acm\_schultz@hotmail.com> on behalf of Annie Schultz  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:54 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Dear Board of Education Members,

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 Ann Schultz and I am a teacher at Lokelani Intermediate School.

Please delay the opening of Hawaii's schools until student and family technology needs have been assessed and addressed, faculty laptops and face shields have been ordered and received, student masks have been ordered and received, cleaning supplies have been ordered and received, protocols for student health checks and social distancing on campuses have been established, response plans have been developed to manage coronavirus cases among students and staff, communication protocols have been developed, and all parties have been trained to ensure consistent reinforcement of all policies and procedures. We are in the middle of a pandemic. The lives of our keiki, their families, and our teachers depend on our being properly prepared before taking the risks associated with opening schools.

Thank you,  
Ann Schultz

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** The Jew <axeljew22@gmail.com> on behalf of The Jew  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:55 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Aloha Reader,

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. A close friend of mine is a teacher and they have expressed immense concern about the issues involved with the faculty and students returning to class. In my opinion the mental and physical welfare of teachers, staff and students should be the highest priority. A big concern of mine is the low infection rate in children is because of the schools being shut down and I believe that online schooling should be the current focus instead of re-opening in a capacity that would amplify a potential second wave. Please keep our keiki and educators safe.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** laurie laurie <snorlaxran@gmail.com> on behalf of laurie laurie  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:56 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** testimony

Testifying on action item H. Board action on memorandum of understanding between state of hawaii board of education and Hawaii state teachers association, (school year 2020-2010 COVID19 response.) : 2017-2010 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID19 response for bargaining unit 5 employees.

I feel that the schools should hold on opening face to face for now as the numbers of COVID positive is increasing. I understand people need to go to work and need to place their children somewhere to do so. I understand education is important and we don't want to delay educating children. I am also aware statistics say children do not get as sick as adults and that is the main reason some are saying we should open schools with "social distancing".

However picture this. How many children are in one classroom? Anywhere else we are supposed to limit to 10 right? Do I trust children to be as responsible as adults in keeping their distance and not touching their mask all day as it is irritating even for adults and not touching other surfaces that all the other children can touch as well? Door knobs faucets on the sinks, desks they pass by etc. Are we keeping windows open as closed spaces with the a/c just reticulate the potential virus infused air? Kind of hot now in summer. Children, though they may not get sick or have any symptoms, may be carriers of the virus and spread them to each other and thus it can spread through the many different "bubbles" (class, family, friend, afterschool activities bubbles). So the people that may be more at risk then are not the children, it is the teachers at risk of catching the virus, and the families of all the students. Get it? Children may just be the vectors that spread the virus and the staff and families may be the ones getting sick.

I do want schools to open just need standard guidelines in paper not verbal. And with guidelines the supplies, cleaning, masks, plastic dividers what ever we need for safety in schools. Staff to clean, stall to insure social distancing. Teachers can't do it all where is their break? Teachers after guidelines and supplies are available need to have training of the guidelines. Teachers need support from admin to help inforce the guidelines too not just let admin stay in their office. More staff, more rules with parent support. Then school can open, and even then yes I still expect numbers of covid to rise but at least it we can say we prepared for it and did what we could first. Dr Park and Dr. Kishimoto, in your hearts do you truly think it's safe to open school right now with the unwritten guidelines floating around?

thank you for reading this,

concerned citizen

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Courtney Horwath <chorwath@gmail.com> on behalf of Courtney Horwath  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:57 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Aloha,

We are parents and health care professionals who have continued to work through this epidemic in facilities where positive COVID patients and staff have been present.

I am afraid that if we do not adhere to the CDC and State guidelines during this epidemic we will be setting ourselves up for failure. I believe the 6 foot spacing of students with mask use is a good minimum for prevention. This is with the understanding that kids are kids and will not be 100% compliant during the day. Per the CDC recommendation, all of the desks should face forward in the same direction and that meals should be served in the classroom.

Please mandate that our schools practice 6 foot spacing and do not allow for exemptions, with the understanding that the recommendations are for groups of 10 or less. There was a lot of science, research, effort and thought that went into these guidelines. I do not think that it is in the best interest of our children and community to bypass them.

Thank you for your time and efforts during this extremely difficult time.

Sincerely,  
Robert and Courtney Nikolaisen  
202-6732

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Melissa Sharon Long <melissakapolei@gmail.com> on behalf of Melissa Sharon Long  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:57 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Re: Delaying Student Start Date

Aloha!

I am writing this e-mail on the topic of Delaying Student Start Date for the 2020-2021 School Year. I am a 1st Grade Teacher at a Public Charter School in O'ahu, Hawai'i. As an educator of 7 years, I typically am eager to start the year and get back in the classroom with my haumāna (students); however, this year the feeling is very different. I feel a strong sense of anxiousness and doubt about if opening schools this year is what should be happening. Returning to school means going against all of the social distancing recommendations since the pandemic began. HSTA has done a great job of bargaining with the DOE on what social distancing should look like at school, and I appreciate this. In spite of this, the overall message of social distancing is to keep to yourself! Keep in your bubble. By returning to school we are enlarging this bubble. I have no doubt that my colleagues and all kumu (teachers) will do their best to keep the haumāna in their school bubbles but the contact that will grow just within that bubble is super risky to our health, their health, our/their 'ohana (family), and our community. Our day will be less centered around academics and more about constantly reminding students to keep to their area and stay safe and socially distant. Can't we figure out a safer way to continue educating our keiki without putting the whole community at risk?

Mahalo for your time,  
Kumu Melissa Sharon Kapolei Long

-----  
\m/

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Stan Livingood III <livingoodiii@yahoo.com> on behalf of Stan Livingood III  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:59 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

Aloha Board of Education,

7/21/2020

My name is Stan Livingood, a special education teacher for 10 years in a hard to staff area. I have lived and worked with the largest population of Hawaiians on the westside for over 10 years. I have worked with students with attachment disorders, emotional disorders, autism, mood swings, intellectually delayed, ADHD, attention deficit, sleep apnea, seizures, bi-polar, suicidal, and the list goes on and on.

Being Caucasian, I see why most of my fellow special education teachers go back home to the mainland. The challenge is overwhelming, and it takes a unique type of individual to volunteer to teach the "Emotional Disorder" room. I have a psychology degree from the University of Washington and a Master's Degree in Special Education from the University of Phoenix. I wanted the challenge because I knew it was the best chance to help students who suffer ordeals that are not their fault.

The first things I teach my students are "Successful Students Are Not Afraid of Failures!" and to keep promises. Teachers have uprooted their lives to take on these extra tough challenges and do not deserve to be misled through false advertisement. Other businesses would be punished for falsely leading candidates. This is the first year at Nanaikapono Elementary that every special education student would have a qualified teacher in stead of a substitute. NEVER BEEN DONE BEFORE!

Please don't take the pandemic out on the vulnerable keiki or your hardest working teachers! These type of students are going through enough during this most difficult time. Please don't "Throw them to the Wolves" because teachers are not going to stand for this! Especially while asking us to go back to work in conditions that could get our ohana sick or even death. Lastly, because our profession is already at such a low pay, I need that differential \$ now, more than ever, because of this pandemic! We are only 4,000, a small percentage of state workers, but we are your hard working, bottom line teachers, because there is no one else, after us.

Sincerely,  
Stan Livingood

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Sarah Yee <syee@waialae.edu> on behalf of Sarah Yee  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:58 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.

To the Board of Education:

My name is Sarah Yee. I am a 6th year teacher at Wai'alaie Elementary Public Charter School, and I am writing to you all today regarding the opening of schools in the State of Hawaii. At this current point in the COVID-19 pandemic, I don't feel that the Department of Education (DOE) has provided enough clarity, guidance, or structure to warrant the opening of Hawaii schools on August 4, 2020. While I am most definitely concerned with the many shortcomings of the DOE as highlighted by a recent HSTA email in regards to the MOU executed last month; I am concerned with other potential consequences that reopening schools may incur, and I am perplexed as to why the DOE is in such a hurry to reopen with so many new cases throughout the state, and with so many hurdles and precautions needed in order for students to return.

The DOE has made reference to learning "bubbles" that are designed to reduce the spread of the virus within a school community. However, these "bubbles" are not a solid enough preventative method. Families with multiple children in various grade levels put numerous bubbles at risk should any one of these siblings test positive for COVID-19. I, like many of my fellow teachers, are taking serious precautions to ensure a safe and also sterile learning environment with safety being paramount. What greatly concerns me is that I can do everything in my power to ensure the safety of my class, however, I cannot control the actions of the families at home. Governor Ige alluded yesterday that families knowingly



sending their children to school sick must change, but I truly believe that we cannot take that risk with threat of COVID-19 lurking in our community. Most schools are taking the “blended” approach by having smaller groups of students only a couple of days in person each week. Two days of face-to-face learning does not outweigh the risk that each student takes by coming into school with other students. Distance learning is without a doubt hard—it’s hard on teachers, students and families alike, however I truly believe that this is our safest course of action.

Each time I read an article with the Governor or Superintendent defending their decision to reopen schools on August 4th I ask myself, “Why is the DOE willing to put children, families, and their own employees at risk of infection?” I can’t seem to fathom why it’s safer to have students from multiple households in one isolated indoor space, where spread of the virus is most likely, when it’s a violation to have more than 12 people from different households at the beach. This makes no sense. The DOE is willingly putting our students at risk—over 168,000 students, and even if only ONE student becomes sick and dies from COVID-19, that is ONE death too many when it could have been prevented.

In closing, I implore you to rescind the order for schools to open on August 4th. The DOE needs to do their job and take their time to understand how in person learning can occur in a truly safe environment. Our administrations are not empowered, nor protected by the current “plan” that the DOE is so blindly defending. We are at a crucial point in the battle against COVID-19. The path to success is not easy, and we all must make sacrifices, but is the DOE willing to sacrifice the lives of its students, families, and teachers in order to return to a façade of normalcy for the sake of recovering an already crippled economy. Please don’t make this mistake. Please allow us these precious days leading up to August 4th to prepare adequately for distance learning for the Fall semester.

Thank you for your time,  
Sarah Yee

--

**Sarah Yee** | 5th Grade Teacher  
Wai‘alae Elementary Public Charter School  
1045 19th Avenue, Honolulu, Hawai‘i, 96816  
(808) 733-4880 ext. 243  
<http://www.waialae.edu>



*Confidentiality Notice: This e-mail message, including any attachments, is for the sole use of the intended recipient(s) and may contain confidential and/or privileged information. Any review, use, disclosure, or distribution by unintended recipients is prohibited. If you are not the intended recipient, please contact the sender by reply e-mail and destroy all copies of the original message.*

*FERPA: The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 forbid you to disclose any information about students, which may be contained in this e-mail, to any other party, either outside your organization or outside of the purpose for this disclosure without first obtaining the written consent of the student.*

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** H. Ka'umealani K. Walk <kaumealani@hotmail.com> on behalf of H. Ka'umealani K. Walk  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:59 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

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 e Nā Lālā o ka Papa Ho'ona'auao (Members of the BOE),

I have served as a kumu in Hawaiian Language Immersion Education for almost 30 years and I, currently, teach in the Kula Kaiapuni Hawai'i 'o Kahuku Academy.

I **oppose** the HIDOE's request for a temporary discontinuance of the shortage differentials for all classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

Prior to the devastating economic effects of the current pandemic, a monumental decision was made by the Board to approve shortage differentials for the aforementioned educators. The acknowledgement for the work required to acquire licensure and to serve our students was very much appreciated and long overdue. This influenced many of us, who thought of retiring or moving on to pursue other endeavors, to continue in the field.

At this point, however, with the looming uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic and now with this request to temporarily discontinue the differentials for the 2020-2021 school year and perhaps beyond, I am not certain as to whether I will be able to continue to serve in the classroom.

I implore the Department and the Board to uphold the commitment made to sustain these differentials given, just as promises were kept to members of other unions whose pay raises were approved prior to these uncertain times. May we continue to look in all areas of our operating budgets throughout the state as we seek financial and budgetary solutions.

Mahalo,  
H. Ka'umealani K. Walk

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Bryan Silver <bsilver@kalanihs.org> on behalf of Bryan Silver  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:57 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

[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.](#)

Bryan Silver  
Kalani High School  
Teacher

Important questions remain unanswered before buildings can safely reopen.

Time for collab & PD on distance learning is needed by grade levels/depts in case of a shutdown after reopening.

SpEd & Hawaiian Immersion shortage differentials are set to get cut! Please do not cut these funds to keep those teachers that put in lots of extra work to best serve those populations. As a former Special Education teacher for 11 years, I know the work that is needed to plan, conduct, and file meetings for each of the students in my caseload. Most students needed three contact points throughout the year. Is there a plan for IEP meetings?

I would also point out that our current plan to have students come in on every other class means with an eight-period schedule I will see a student one time a week and three times in a two week period equalling a grand total of 15 direct contact hours in the course of a quarter. This means I will be managing 18 classes this year. One for the online portion of my class (as an Engineering class this will be a challenge when students do not have tools/ supplies) and two in-person classes for each of my classes on the roster.

This year is going to be an incredible amount of work, I am hoping we will get the training and support we need to best give our students the most for learning opportunities this year. The necessary PPE to keep everyone safe.

Thank you,

Bryan Silver  
Kalani High School  
Engineering teacher

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Chris Edwards <chrisedwardshawaii@gmail.com> on behalf of Chris Edwards  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:59 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Christopher Edwards, community member

General business meeting

Return to school for students

Oppose their return Aug 1, it's too soon and too dangerous for them and everyone else.

What we don't know about this virus might be worth considering. It's been around to study for all of 9 months. The after effects can be considerable and it takes years to study. I know the adult thing to do is wait and learn more with the students at home until we have a vaccine, other protection from spread, or virtually no cases because we don't know the long term consequences and no one is immune.

We could really be long term injuring children rushing them into hybrid or in-person classroom learning. And what will we say when the children get sick and have to live with a sickness that can cause coronary inflammation in children 4 to 18 and strokes in 30 year olds both of which can lead to long term sickness and premature death. We don't need horrifying complications in our children's bodies. We have to be adults, we don't know enough about this disease to let children get it at school. We all took science class and we were all children once. We know without immunization and constant testing, if you put people together the virus will spread to those people. And that children shouldn't be expected by adults to follow every rule all the time and that parents do not always instruct and enforce rules.

Young children should be protected from the disease at all costs until we really understand it. It hasn't even been 9 months for anyone on the planet and we don't know the consequences. We're not talking about the adult children in our community. We're talking about 6 to 17 year olds. It's our jobs to protect them at all costs. Don't push for sending them back to school to get a sickness we don't understand. Protect your children at all costs.

The solution is let them learn online from their teachers (which is safe) and let the students and parents organize their socialization outside the classroom. We should not force everyone into a classroom setting, students, teachers, janitors, and office admins. Let interaction be a choice for students and their families outside of school time.

It's not safe and we shouldn't be pretending that it is.

--

Christopher M. Edwards  
203-247-6051

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** V Pires <hawaiiankolea@gmail.com> on behalf of V Pires  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:00 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Delay to return of students to campus

Dear Members of the Board of Education of Hawai'i

My name is Val Pires, and I'm a 18 year veteran of teaching. I'm starting a new position at Kealakehe Intermediate on the island of Hawai'i. I am writing testimony to delay the return on students to campus, and having school start at a distance for all schools.

I am a diagnosed asthmatic from the age of 8. As a child I was on a nebulizer to keep my asthma under control. Today, my asthma is not as severe but I do need to carry my inhalers with me all the time because my lung capacity is not, and never will be, "normal". I also have high blood pressure that runs in my family. In preparation for the potential of opening school, I have made my own masks, stocked up on alcohol for my hands, and purchased face shields from Amazon for my personal protection.

I'm sorry to report, but no school (my past school or present) has given training throughout the summer about safety protocols. This is a high anxiety point because the students and families that Kealakehe Intermediate services belong to low-income State Housing. We all know that these families are hard pressed to socially-distance from potential infected family members, and other residents of their building.

\*\* When will we receive information from the Department of Health about what criteria needs to be met to open, and what threshold must be crossed before schools must close again?

\*\* Families have opted to go 100% distance learning. What platforms are available to them? Who will be the teachers for this student population?

\*\* What will happen when teachers call in sick? Are there enough substitutes to cover teachers calling in sick?

\*\* If a person in a household tests positive for Covid (regardless if they're a teacher, student or family member), will everyone be forced to stay home for the safety of the community?

\*\* When will we teachers receive training on these hybrid platforms and 100% distance models?

With teachers expected to report to work in 8 days, it's difficult to feel confident about our work place when there are so many variables that haven't been addressed or identified. These variables come with heavy, hard-hitting, consequences. Reopening without a safety plan puts me at risk. More than that, my family, my mother, and elderly Auntie I look after. Please consider opening the schools at 100% distance learning. It's not an ideal situation, but the Covid situation in Hawai'i is worse today than it was in March. We have a higher daily infection rate today than in March. The data correlates there's much more rampant community-spread today than in March (also noted by Dr. Anderson on his press conferences). And it's been well documented nationally and world-wide that transmission of Covid is occurring from asymptomatic and pre-symptomatic individuals than those that are showing symptoms. In conclusion, the data suggests our community is not ready.

Mahalo for your consideration and understanding,

Val Pires  
18 years teaching

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Rebecca Kapolei Kiili <kapolei.kiili@gmail.com> on behalf of Rebecca Kapolei Kiili  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:00 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Cc:** kumu kapolei  
**Subject:** Testimony\_BOE\_Kiili\_july23  
**Attachments:** Testimony\_BOE\_Kiili\_july23.pdf

Aloha mai,

Please find my testimony in advance of Thursday's scheduled meeting.

Mahalo,  
Rebecca Kapolei Kiili

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Jay Nakasone <steelers808jn@gmail.com> on behalf of Jay Nakasone  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:02 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Re opening schools & Differential pay.

As part of my schools planning team, I can tell you we are not ready to open schools. We finally configured 6 ft social distancing in the classroom. My school and other schools still need to reconfigure the cafe for 6 ft social distancing. What about keeping parents off campus in the mornings, to minimize classroom bubble interaction. Do you think parents will not walk their kids to class and wait with them? Show us a plan to minimize parents on campus, as we are trying to figure this out. Reality is they will come and walk their kids to class, potentially interacting with their child's class bubble.

Lastly if the Dr. Kishimoto and the BOE changes their mind on differential pay for hard to staff positions. This shows a lack of integrity and leadership. Teachers possibly made career choices, that they may have not done. Our Hawaiian culture values being Pono. I trust that the BOE will do that.

Mahalo,  
Jay



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** l\_fink77@yahoo.com  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:03 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Schools reopening in Maui

Greetings from the mainland,

My name is Lisa Cabassa, and I am emailing you from Gilroy, Ca, regarding the premature opening of schools in Maui.

You're probably wondering why someone in California has reservations about schools in Maui opening next week. (So, if you're still reading this, thank you, and thank a teacher!) I have reservations because my smart, caring, and most excellent educator friend is a teacher in your school system, and frankly, I'm worried about her. I'm worried for her, and for her family, and for all the kids who have the pleasure and joy to be in her class. My dear friend is young and healthy, and based on the stats, would likely be OK if she were to become infected with COVID-19. But likely isn't good enough for me, and it shouldn't be good enough for you. Teachers give and give and give. For once, we need to give back to them. In this case, it may very well be her life that we are giving back.

Opening schools during a global pandemic is scary. Opening schools without proper equipment and training is outright crazy. Please take care of your teachers, and my beautiful friend, the way she is expected to take care of her students. Show her is cared about, and safe. Please do not open schools until more precautions can be put in place, and my friend can be appropriately protected.

Most sincerely,  
Lisa Cabassa  
Gilroy, Ca  
[408-427-5424](tel:408-427-5424)

*Sent from my Verizon LG Smartphone*

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Ashley Giunta <ashley.giunta@alakaiokauai.org> on behalf of Ashley Giunta  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:03 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](#). 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!

Ashley Giunta  
Alakai O Kauai Public Charter School

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Eiger Kim <eigerkim@gmail.com> on behalf of Eiger Kim  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:04 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Delaying school opening date

Aloha,  
I am 6t year s old teacher at the HSDB.  
I really want school opening date should be delayed.  
I an not ready to go back to school to teach students because of Covid 19.  
I do not risk my health.  
I hope I do not have to retire due to health safety.  
Please delay school opening date.  
Thank you.  
Sung Kim

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Peggy Doino <peggy.doino@gmail.com> on behalf of Peggy Doino  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:04 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

To Whom it May Concern,

As a Special Education Teacher who recently received the shortage differentials, I can honestly say that this increase in pay had restored my faith in the Department of Education and their commitment to retaining quality teachers for our keiki. Without this differential, my family will not be able to afford to continue to live in the state of Hawai'i. We have two children who need to be in daycare while my husband and I are at work, as we are both teachers. The cost of daycare is crippling our family financially. I realize this is a challenging time for everyone financially but this differential is something teachers have been fighting for for a long time. is very much deserved, and is essential for my family's financial situation. Also, I've continued to work through my summer, without asking for more pay, to continue my commitment to ensuring the safety of my students and myself during this uncertain time. I would find it extremely unfair if after committing more of my time than required, my pay would also be reduced. We rarely make strides in the field of education and this was a big, necessary step, let's not go back in the other direction now.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Corpuz, Mary Jean <mcorpuz@inouye.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Corpuz, Mary Jean  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:04 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 caseload will special educator's have with IEPs, teaching face to face and planning for distance or blended learning without adequate prep time and training.

Can we ask parents to phone/video conferences 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 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 HDOE 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,

Mary Jean Corpuz

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Janice MV <janicemiyoshi@gmail.com> on behalf of Janice MV  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:05 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

I am a teacher at Kalani High School. I watched the video about the Ohana bubble concept and found it interesting and could be implemented for elementary school. My concern is that it will be very difficult to manage our teenagers. They have numerous classes with different groups of students and teachers. This will make it hard to minimize the risks.

Another concern is teaching partly on-line. I attended many zoom meetings this summer to learn what other teachers are doing. Honestly it's very overwhelming and I feel I need more training so I can deliver content to students with confidence and insure their success. Please consider giving us more time to make sure the rules are consistent and clear re social distancing and having more PD's re technology before having us go back to school.

Thank you for your attention.

Aloha, Janice miyoshi.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Erin Mickelsen <e.m.mickelsen7828@gmail.com> on behalf of Erin Mickelsen  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:05 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 Erin Mickelsen and I am a 3rd grade teacher at Waihee School on Maui. I believe that we should delay the opening of schools to allow for more time to plan and prepare. We need more training on distance learning and we need more time to plan and prepare for the students to return to face to face learning. We have the same number of days that we usually have to prepare for the year but this will NOT be a normal year.

We have no idea if the PPE will be delivered in two weeks when school is supposed to start. I believe that there are too many unanswered questions and I think we should not rush the start back to school. I do not feel safe and I do not feel that the students will be safe. Please consider delaying the opening of schools. Teachers and students are not guinea pigs.

Thank you,  
Erin Mickelsen



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Beth <bethnrod@hawaii.rr.com> on behalf of Beth  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:06 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Push Back Reopening Schools

Hello,

Please push back the opening of schools at least another week. As a teacher I don't feel safe to reopen on August 4th.

Thank you,  
Beth Oka

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Margaret Kamanu <margaret.kamanu@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Margaret Kamanu  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:08 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Re: [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 Margaret Kamanu and I am a teacher at Keaukaha Elementary school. It is imperative that we prepare our teaching environment with the utmost care to provide for the health and safety for our keiki as they return to school. I do not believe that all precautions have been met at this time and we all have a ways to go to be prepared.

With so many new cases spiking in our state, having our students come back at this time without more guidance, training, and focus on the imminent danger for teachers and families would cause more stress and worry for our teachers, but more importantly our students. I've just finished teaching a 5 week summer session to grease 2 struggling students and (starting with 16 and breaking the class to 9 and 6) and one thing they all expressed is the worry of returning to school in the midst of COVID 19. They worry for their families and themselves but yet miss their friends from school. Most of them wanted to continue with distance learning afraid to return to school. We need something in place like a program that was promised by the state to provide for their learn as an alternative choice to attending face to face reducing the danger of contact. What virtual options are available? Because this problem is state wide...the state needs to give more direction and provide the resources to help keep our keiki, families, and teachers safe.

Being on the Big Island we were grateful that our number stayed down. However, if we open schools the spike we see with the opening of travel might then be increased with the heightened contact of keiki one to another across our state.

Teachers need more training and more time to plan how to meet students' safety needs and educational needs at this high stress time. Our parents need training too and who will do that? If they select virtual education for their children it will not just "come naturally" to them so that they can help their keiki be successful in their learning. I've had to work with parents so they could understand the standards.

There is so much foundational work and safety on the ground that needs to be done to realize success and maintain progress that good planning and direction can help to accomplish. One and a half weeks is not sufficient to the tremendous "elephant" in the room who is trumpeting in distress calling for us to listen and HELP provide for our children and families.

Hush ... don't Rush.

Think ... don't sink

Delay ... plan ...and stay

FOCUSED EACH DAY

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.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Kēhaunani Llanos <Kehau\_Llanos@anuenue.org> on behalf of Kēhaunani Llanos  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:08 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

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 kākou,

‘O Kēhaunani Llanos ko‘u inoa a he kumu kaiapuni au. No Waipahū mai au akā noho au ma ke awāwa ‘o Niu ma ka moku ‘o Kona o ka mokupuni ‘o O‘ahu. A‘o au i ka Papa 4 ma ke Kula Kaiapuni ‘o Ānuenue ma ke awāwa ‘o Pālolo. He kumu kaiapuni au no nā makahiki 26 i hala. He hana nui ke a‘o ‘ana ma ka ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i ‘oiai ‘a‘ole nui nā mole i pa‘i ‘ia ma ka ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i.. Haku mākou i nā ha‘awina like ‘ole e a‘o i nā keiki e pili ana i nā mo‘olelo ame nā mookū‘auhau o kēia ‘āina nei. A‘o nā keiki e pili ana i nā ali‘i, nā lōina a me nā hana no‘eau like ‘ole o nā kūpuna. Koho au e a‘o ma ke kula kaiapuni no ka mea, ia‘u, ‘o ia nō ko‘u kuleana. Hiki paha ia‘u ke ha‘alele i ka Papahana Kaiapuni a e a‘o aku ma ke kula haole (‘oi aku ka ma‘alahi o kēia hana) akā koho au e a‘o i nā haumāna kaiapuni.

I kēia makahiki kula 2020-2021, ‘oi aku ka pa‘akikī o ke a‘o ‘ana ma o ka lolouila. Pa‘akikī no ke a‘o ‘ana ma ka ‘ōlelo haole a ‘oi aku ka pa‘akikī ke a‘o ‘ana ma ka ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i. E ho‘eha nui ‘ia ana ka "Distance Learning" i ka Papahana Kaiapuni ‘oiai, ‘o ka ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i ke kahua. ‘A‘ole ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i nā ‘ohana a pau. ‘A‘ole hiki ke ‘a‘apo inā ‘a‘ole ka haumāna ma ke kaiapuni a‘o. ‘O ka ‘oia‘i‘o, e hana nui ana nā kumu a pau i kēia makahiki ma ka DL. E unuhi ana nā kumu kaiapuni i nā ha‘awina ma ka ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i no ke a‘o ‘ana ma o ka lolouila. He mau papahana/polokalamu e ho‘ohana ‘ia ana ma ka ‘ōlelo haole. ‘A‘ole launa iki kēia ‘ano mea i nā haumāna kaiapuni. Eia kekahi, e a‘o aku ana mākou i nā haumāna ma ka lumi papa a me nā haumāna e noho ana ma ka hale i ka manawa like. Pehea lā?

He noi kēia, e ‘olu‘olu, e ho‘omau i ka uku ‘ana i nā kumu kaiapuni, nā kumu kīnānā a me nā kumu ma ke kulana e pa‘akikī e hai ‘ia. ‘A‘ole nui ka uku o ke kumu. He kōkua nui ka differential ia‘u. He kumu a‘o au. E mākaukau ana e a‘o aku, e ‘olu‘olu, e uku mai iā mākou e like me ko mākou waiwai.

Ke aloha nō,  
Kēhaunani Llanos  
Kumu Kaiapuni, Papa 4  
Ke Kula Kaiapuni ‘o Ānuenue

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

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Stephanie McLaughlin <smclaughlin808@gmail.com> on behalf of Stephanie McLaughlin  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:08 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Cc:** Stephanie McLaughlin  
**Subject:** Delay opening schools until ready

I have been a public school teacher in Hawaii since 1990...30 years. I am a teacher at Moanalua High school. Send teachers back to school first to get training and to prepare classrooms. Then send students back. This prep time could take 1-2 months depending on resources provided to the schools...computer programs, cleaning supplies, masks, signs, etc.

Stephanie McLaughlin  
Moanalua high school

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Jennifer Heinzman <jheinzman@puuhale.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Jennifer Heinzman  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:09 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

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 parent, I feel that the start of school needs to be pushed back. Schools all over the country are pushing back their start dates for the same reasons that I am concerned in starting back so quickly. We as teachers as well as the students are putting ourselves on the frontline in something that we are not well-prepared to face. We know how to teach in the traditional sense; however, we do not know how to teach in this new pandemic world. We need proper training not only in distance learning, but how do we ensure that we keep ourselves safe as well as the students. We need to have a clear, standardized protocol as well as training provided by the DOE to include distance learning as well as safety protocol (i.e. disinfecting).

We are yet to have important questions answered. These questions include, when will the State of Hawaii's Department of Health provide guidance on the reopening of school buildings which the HDOE 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 a teacher, I want to be confident that I will be safe when I go to school and in-turn can come home without worrying what I might be bringing to my daughter who is immune compromised or my husband and mother-in-law with underlying conditions. We have so many unknowns that until we can become educated on those unknowns and knowingly answer the questions I stated above, we are not ready to return to the classroom.

Thank you,  
Jennifer Heinzman

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Leah Jade O'Brien <leahjadeobrien@gmail.com> on behalf of Leah Jade O'Brien  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:10 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Aloha Hawaii State Board of Education,

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 opening of schools until students, teachers, staff, and administration can be safe, and so that teachers can train and prepare for effective Model C Hybrid teaching, including Face-to-Face, Blended Rotation, and Distance Learning, for the opening of the 2020-2021 school year.

I ask that you delay the reopening of schools for the safety of both our schools and the community. My multigenerational at-risk household is one of the many within our community. I have two health compromised family members, and I am concerned about returning to school because of the risk to their health. I am also concerned about my 4th grade Wailuku Elementary School nephew returning to school because he is in frequent contact with my at-risk family members.

I ask that you delay the return of students to school for the proposed Model C Hybrid teaching plan for the opening of the 2020-2021 school year in order to plan an effective Model C Hybrid curriculum.

I was hired to teach at ELA at Maui High on 7/9/2020, and I, like many of my colleagues, need time to prepare for effective and engaging online learning within my teaching team and department.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Leah O'Brien  
ELA-Maui High School

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Jean Morris <jeanmorris808@gmail.com> on behalf of Jean Morris  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:12 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** School Reopening

First of all, I want to preface my testimony with: "I am a good soldier!" My name is Jean Morris and I became the TA Principal on March 3, 2020 at Chiefess Kamakahelei Middle School and later appointed officially as principal on July 1, 2020. From Day 1, we have been doing what's in the best interest of students. Our school fed students and plated in access of 75,000 meals between the middle of March and July 17th. We have been on the "front lines," so to speak, doing whatever was necessary to ensure our students had access to materials for the continuity of instruction and that teachers and staff were being provided with as much information as possible without compromising their safety. With that being said, and as hard as I am working to ensure that I have things in place to reopen school following the many guidelines, I can not honestly say that I am 100% ready to do so.

Early on we filled out requests for PPEs, ordered PPEs and still have not received all of what was either promised or ordered. Everyone is short on everything! Budgets were cut and we were told to hold off on major spending because of funding so we did not order our Chromebooks until SFM opened up in July (late) which now puts us into September if we are lucky receiving our Chromebooks. The training that was promised for teachers is coming at too late a time. Although I sent 3 of my best teachers (coaches) to the training of trainers, there is no way that teachers will have sufficient time to provide substantial and effective online learning to meet all student's needs.

The main concern from parents and teachers is about safety. Parents and teachers want to know that we will be doing everything within our power to effectively keep campus sterile of any transmission of COVID. We all know that this is an impossible task because we just don't have the manpower to do so. Some parents feel teachers and students should be mandated to clean their desks in between use to prevent the spread of the virus. Others don't trust that even with preventative measures in place, enough is being done to ensure zero transmission. Also, parents and teachers want clear and definitive answers on how a positive case will be treated, how long will school be closed, and how will they care for their families if they have to stay at home and not work.

Can my school open on August 4th? Of course! We are working diligently to do so. Will I or my staff be 100% ready, NO!

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Rachel Wagner <rachelkwagner23@gmail.com> on behalf of Rachel Wagner  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:13 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

To whom it may concern,

I am deeply concerned with the issues of pay differentials and opening of our schools in our current pandemic.

"Teachers are arguably the most important members of our society. They give children purpose, set them up for success as citizens of our world, and inspire in them a drive to do well and succeed in life." UoPeople. The foundation of character and life-long learning is fostered by dedicated teachers in an education system that is constantly changing. The COVID19 pandemic has increased the difficulty of our jobs exponentially every day. To say be prepared to teach in an uncertain format, with training forthcoming, in a teaching situation that may change daily makes teaching exponentially harder and also exponentially increases the stress we are already under. To suggest cutting our pay and putting many of us in a financially unstable situation is untenable. We are already considered underpaid. The value of education you demonstrate in your choices will have consequences that could be felt far into the future by teachers, our students, and our society as a whole.

I am extremely confused with how our situation now, which is worse than when we closed in March, makes it okay to open schools. Does the Center for Disease Control (CDC) not still recommend people should not be gathering in groups greater than 10? Have we not just learned that children 10 and above transmit the COVID19 virus just as easily as adults? Are you willing to accept responsibility for deaths of either a child(ren) or a teacher(s) because you couldn't wait 3-6 months for a vaccine or successful treatment regimen that reduces the chances of transmission and/or increases the probability of recovery. Is time only a factor when in the face of imminent danger? Do we actually have to have people die before courageous action is taken to ensure the safety of all? Our Justice system is built on the concept that incarcerating one innocent individual is so unacceptable that we let many guilty ones go free. And yet we are willing to risk the lives of 10s of thousands of teachers and students.

I hope you take into consideration my testimony before making your decisions.

Sincerely,

Rachel Wagner



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Mitchell Kimura <mkimura77@hotmail.com> on behalf of Mitchell Kimura  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:15 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Tuesday, July 21, 2020

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 Mitchell Kimura. I teach at Kalani High School. I think all the questions that Corey Rosenlee brought up today at the News Conference (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ogeagS-dmMo>) were very straightforward, basic questions that need straightforward answers before the opening of schools. Plans and procedures (from the DOE, not individual principals) need to be decided on before students and teachers can return. In addition, I think teachers need more time to plan. Personally I attended a day of optional "training" last week, and will have two more days to prepare (not including administrative days), but, honestly, THAT IS NOT ENOUGH PREPARATION TIME. How about delaying the opening one or two weeks? Because, as it is now, I may not be fully ready and, it appears, the HI DOE (as it is right now) is not at all ready for schools to open WITH WELL-THOUGHT-OUT PLANS IN PLACE in a few weeks.

Sincerely,

Mitchell Kimura

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Christine OGorman <kilikini808@yahoo.com> on behalf of Christine OGorman  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:14 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Aloha. I am a Special Education teacher and was initially very happy to return to school and reunite with my students (FSC setting, K-5). It's been extremely difficult for my students with intensive needs to receive the services and instruction they need via virtual learning, in order to progress, as so much of our daily routine is based on functional, physical, occupational and speech skills. My class is definitely a "hands-on" classroom. I was thrilled when my administrator told me that my students would be able to attend a full day of school, as opposed to the other students in the general education setting who would only attend a half-day schedule. I read our MOU and saw the agreements that were made between the BOE and HIDOE and HSTA. Sadly, it appears that all that is required to safely reopen our school has not been achieved. I want to make sure our students, faculty, office staff - everybody connected with our school - is safe, that we have every manner of protection for all of us. Please adhere to the agreement made in our MOU and take the preventative measures to ensure we all stay safe. Aloha, with respect, Christine O'Gorman-Embermate, FSC teacher, HIDOE

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Michele Weinhouse <michele64w@gmail.com> on behalf of Michele Weinhouse  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:15 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

My name is Michele Weinhouse and I am a teacher at Lana`i High & Elementary School. I would like to testify 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 not ready to open school on August 4th. I am not alone. I've spoken to colleagues who feel similarly. Parents are confused, teachers are confused, administrators don't have answers. My classroom has just finished being cleaned (not set up, just its yearly wax and dusting) and my class rosters have not been released yet.

I have not been trained on preparing safely for my students. I have not been offered any training during the summer. If I had, I'm not sure I could have taken it because I had 2 different weeklong trainings on Computer Science Principles. I never even knew there were health safety/COVID-19 trainings?

I voted on an opening model on July 6, received a letter from our principal asking for help on July 13, volunteered to be on a reopening subcommittee on July 14 and have spent the last 3 working days coming up with our school's reopening plan. With this plan come so many questions: how are the half days scheduled? how are students going to get their 1:1 chromebooks? how am I putting all my curriculum online for my students when I don't see them, how will parents make sure students are working at home? etc. I have seen posts on Facebook by confused parents. They seem to know more about the testing schedules than I.

Basically, parents, administration and teachers are NOT on the same page. When will teachers be trained? We have 4 days to train and get our classrooms ready? I haven't even tried to space my students 6 ft apart. I'm one of the lucky ones as I have a large science classroom but there are those that have small classrooms who need time to figure it out. I need time to get trained on proper use of a mask, shield, how to proper distance for teaching (mask/no mask?), how will I run labs? I also need to work on my distance learning curriculum. When will I do this? When will I have time to talk with my colleagues on best practices for distance learning? When will I get training on any of the technology that the DOE will utilize for distance learning? None of this has been done before and there is no template to follow. We need time to figure this out.

More importantly, what are the safety measures I need to put in place? I can't even tell a parent what those safety measures are right now and I don't feel confident the DOE/BOE knows what those are. We need to know those requirements and I need time to be trained on those requirements. Once that happens I will have confidence I can respond to parents. Right now, if a parent were to ask me about my classroom safety measures, my answer would be, "I don't know? Right now, I don't know how I will keep your child safe."

WE, (PARENTS, TEACHERS, ADMIN) NEED TO ALL BE ON THE SAME PAGE FOR SCHOOL TO OPEN SAFELY AND EFFECTIVELY.

--Kapua

Email: [michele64w@gmail.com](mailto:michele64w@gmail.com)

Zip Code: 96763

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Chris Edwards <[chrisedwardshawaii@gmail.com](mailto:chrisedwardshawaii@gmail.com)> on behalf of Chris Edwards  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:14 PM  
**To:** [testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov](mailto:testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov)  
**Subject:** Re: Testimony

Aloha,

Please don't include phone number in signature. Mahalo.

On Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 4:59 PM Chris Edwards <[chrisedwardshawaii@gmail.com](mailto:chrisedwardshawaii@gmail.com)> wrote:  
Christopher Edwards, community member

General business meeting

Return to school for students

Oppose their return Aug 1, it's too soon and too dangerous for them and everyone else.

What we don't know about this virus might be worth considering. It's been around to study for all of 9 months. The after effects can be considerable and it takes years to study. I know the adult thing to do is wait and learn more with the students at home until we have a vaccine, other protection from spread, or virtually no cases because we don't know the long term consequences and no one is immune.

We could really be long term injuring children rushing them into hybrid or in-person classroom learning. And what will we say when the children get sick and have to live with a sickness that can cause coronary inflammation in children 4 to 18 and strokes in 30 year olds both of which can lead to long term sickness and premature death. We don't need horrifying complications in our children's bodies. We have to be adults, we don't know enough about this disease to let children get it at school. We all took science class and we were all children once. We know without immunization and constant testing, if you put people together the virus will spread to those people. And that children shouldn't be expected by adults to follow every rule all the time and that parents do not always instruct and enforce rules.

Young children should be protected from the disease at all costs until we really understand it. It hasn't even been 9 months for anyone on the planet and we don't know the consequences. We're not talking about the adult children in our community. We're talking about 6 to 17 year olds. It's our jobs to protect them at all costs. Don't push for sending them back to school to get a sickness we don't understand. Protect your children at all costs.

The solution is let them learn online from their teachers (which is safe) and let the students and parents organize their socialization outside the classroom. We should not force everyone into a classroom setting, students, teachers, janitors, and office admins. Let interaction be a choice for students and their families outside of school time.

It's not safe and we shouldn't be pretending that it is.

--

Christopher M. Edwards  
203-247-6051

--

Christopher M. Edwards  
203-247-6051

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Kelsey Arakaki <kelsey.arakaki@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Kelsey Arakaki  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:15 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Delaying start

I am writing of my concern to start in August, as I am afraid for myself, my students, families, and my own family. I think there should be a delay until there is a vaccine as our rate of COVID-19 infections are not slowing down. This scares me as I do not feel comfortable returning to work at the said start date, since I fear I do not have enough PPE for myself and possibly my students. I am also scared of bringing the virus home to my family or friends. Due to the virus, I am also considering quitting my job, and instead taking online courses to further my education to gain a second masters or change my career entirely, or even just take a year off. I would prefer that educators are able to get a trained experience online and start our year off online until there is a vaccine or possibly lower cases of infections..

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Lorelei Fajardo <ll.fajardo@yahoo.com> on behalf of Lorelei Fajardo  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:16 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

**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 very concerned with plans for schools to re-open on August 4th, as the number of cases in COVID is still prevalent. I would like parents to have an option of distance learning until there is no risk in the spread of COVID. There are a lot of questions that remain unanswered and it doesn't put us in ease as there are plans to open up in 2 weeks.

Lorelei Bandola  
Pearl City Highlands Elementary School

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** collparl2000@yahoo.com  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:16 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

To the 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.**

My name is Colleen Parlee and I am a teacher at Wheeler Elementary School.

I am concerned that schools are not ready for students and teachers to safely return on August 4th. The health and safety of the students, their families, and the staff of our public schools must be paramount in any decision-making. The Covid-19 cases continue to rise in the State and I am concerned that we are not adequately prepared to return to an environment that is likely to mitigate the spread of the virus. Lives are at stake!

Please reconsider the opening of schools so we have more time to better prepare for instructional services during this ever-changing situation.

Mahalo,

Colleen Parlee



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** BERLYN MATSUMOTO <berlynmats@hotmail.com> on behalf of BERLYN MATSUMOTO  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:17 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony to Delay the Start of School

Dear Members of the 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.](#)

Please do not open the public schools on August 4, 2020. We are not ready. Many of our health and safety questions have not been answered. The lives of our keiki, teachers, families and friends are at risk if we open without the guidelines that we have asked for. This is the first time in my teaching career that I have seriously considering retiring. I don't want to retire but I will, if our health and safety questions are not answered before the start of school.

I am a 5th grade teacher at Ewa Beach Elementary and I love my job. But the schools are not ready to open on August 4, 2020. We need more time to prepare for a safe face to face environment, as well as training for distance learning.

Thank you,  
Berlyn C. Matsumoto

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Holly Kemlsey <hkemlsey@icloud.com> on behalf of Holly Kemlsey  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:17 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony-

To: The Board of Education-Delay the opening of schools

From: Holly Kemsley, 6th grade teacher at Ka'ohao School

To: The Board of Education

From: Holly Kemsley, Ka'ohao School 6th grade ELA/SS teacher

I am writing a formal testimonial in favor of delaying the start of schools reopening, given the number of unanswered questions and the lack of guidance from the DOE. Our facilities and classrooms are NOT ready for students in a manner that minimizes the risk of Covid19 spreading. We all need more time to properly create and implement health strategies, online learning curriculum, and safety procedures for staff and students. Our schools are unprepared to deliver a distance learning program when a school is shut down due to the spread of Covid19.

Indeed, the state of Hawaii itself should not be "open" based on the White House Coronavirus Task Force Gating Guidelines as well as CDC guidelines which strongly recommend that states should not fully reopen unless they are experiencing a decline in Covid-19 case numbers consistently over a two week period. This is NOT the situation that Hawaii finds itself in today. Unfortunately, for more than the last two weeks in Hawaii, case numbers have been rising and although our positivity rate currently hovers a bit below two percent, our Rt is one of the fastest-growing in the nation (7th highest) at 1.22 (at the time of this writing).

Although our school administrator and staff(volunteers) spent the summer creating and planning for the implementation of our school's model of how we "Return to Learn", we are not ready to physically bring students back to campus on August 4. We need to reengineer/rearrange our classrooms, outdoor spaces, common areas, cafe, hallways, etc. We are not ready. Educators need time to prep for the health and safety of our students, set up our classrooms, plan lessons and curricula for the coming semester. Since we have had no direction from the DOE until VERY recently, teachers need more time to prepare. If we are forced back into the classroom too soon when we are not ready, it could cause an unnecessary spread of Covid19 which could include at the very least extended absences for staff and students and hospitalizations and perhaps death. Delay until at least August 18!

Sincerely,  
Holly Kemsley  
Ka'ohao School  
Sixth Grade Teacher

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Kay Ag <kagno86@gmail.com> on behalf of Kay Ag  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:17 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Dear Hawai'i Board of Education,

I am writing this email to express my thoughts and feelings of reopening the school year for 2020-2021. First and foremost, I am a mother to an incoming second grader and Kindergartener, and an educator—currently teaching Kindergarten.

These past few months were clearly unprecedented. As a mother and teacher, I had to think on my feet...fast! Working from home to continue my kids' education and simultaneously teach my students virtually was a challenge and brought much frustration. Unless you have taught during these past few months, you don't know the hardship I was faced with and currently facing on a daily basis. To add to this, my family is at higher risk of contracting this virus because my husband is a healthcare worker, working the frontlines at a major hospital. Imagine the decisions were faced with if both my husband and I contracted COVID19. Who will care for our kids? Who will assist them in their education so they do not fall behind? Who will confidently run my class? Have you ever had to discuss a plan with your spouse incase any of you is diagnosed with COVID19? I have! This is my reality.

And now teachers are being told to run a hybrid model with little to no resource AND little to no training. Next week, I report to duty and I have anxiety! Anxiety of the unknown. When school starts, these are the questions I'll be asking myself everyday: Do I have COVID19? Will my husband or kids contract COVID19? Will my students contract COVID19? What will the repercussions of my health be after recovering from COVID19? Or the health of my kids/students be? This is NOT healthy and NOT fair for a parent/educator to think and feel this way.

Daycare/preschools are currently open and there are already active cases. Now picture 170,000+ students going back to school. Will hospitals be able to accommodate patients when admitted? Are hospital beds readily available when there's a spike in new cases?

Opening schools on August 4th is ill-advised, untimely, and reckless. It is like welcoming death to students, which we cannot afford. I would much rather be present for my students when it is safe than to be present at their funeral.

Delaying the re-opening of school would be a smarter choice...for our teachers, students, family, and community in the state of Hawaii.

I ask for the Board of Education to POSTPONE the reopening of our school year 2020-2021.

Thank you for your time,  
Karen C.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Todd Galbraith <TGalbraith@eagle.org> on behalf of Todd Galbraith  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:18 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** transition for school amidst COVID

Just a note to suggest that online school may make sense for a time, before going to “in person”. Taking the time to do it right may make a difference.

Of course, the logistics of any solution are challenging. Good luck and take care!

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Michelle Matsuzaki <mrmatsuzaki@yahoo.com> on behalf of Michelle Matsuzaki  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:18 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** TESTIMONY

Dear 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.

I'm a kindergarten teacher and still do not feel that it's safe for schools to open. I know that children and families want to be in school for social reasons, but how can children be social when they need to be socially distanced. School will not be the normal that we had back in March. We will be in our bubbles (no lunch or recess with other classes) and each child in the bubble will be isolated from each other (6 feet apart with masks - no play, no centers, no small groups).

I just feel that there are more questions than answers. Many of the answers I hear at press conferences or meetings are very generic and do not reassure me as a teacher or as parent.

As a parent with a child who has health issues, I feel unsafe having her attend in person classes. She is a student in the windward district where 6th grade is still part of elementary school. Dr. Kishimoto said that there is 6-12th grade e-school, but on the DOE website e-school consists of supplemental online courses that are taken in addition to regular classes, so it's not a true curriculum to replace being in school. Nothing has been set forth for elementary schools which does include 6th grade. I know some schools are considering Acellus Academy which is a WASC accredited home school program, while other schools are expecting teachers to provide the online only instruction, along with their blended learning of in-person and distance learning. It seems that online only instruction was offered as an option by the DOE, but there isn't a clear plan put forth and it's up to every school to create their own curriculum and program to provide this to families. Some schools cannot afford an online program and if that's something that is offered, shouldn't the DOE provide the funds to pay for an accredited program?

As a teacher, how would I be able to do in-person learning everyday and also provide distance learning to students on a rotation, along with everyday online with children who are 100% distance learning? During the 4th quarter distance learning, trying to keep 10 kindergarteners engaged during a google meet was difficult even with my attention focused on them. Now add a class of in-person students, who I would need to also keep engaged, manage behaviors and make sure they are on task. Asking teachers to be pulled into so many directions along with the added risk of being exposed to Covid-19 creates a very stressful environment to work in which would cause the quality of education to go down.

I was fortunate to have training this summer on some of the distance learning platforms by the Windward complex, but there were many teachers who didn't do any training because it was voluntary. I also did not receive any information from the Department of Education of any classes for distance learning training. I don't think teachers as well as parents are prepared for distance learning and yet it's what we will have to do.

My biggest worry is health and safety for both me and my daughter. I work with kindergarteners who have fevers, cough, sneeze, have ukus, runny noses, and vomit. I usually get sick at the beginning of the year because many children are sent to school even when parents know they are sick. The scary part is that I can't always tell a child is sick just by looking at them. I've discovered children with fevers because they hug me, but now that we need to social distance, some children may have fevers and I won't even know it. I honestly don't believe that schools will be sanitized as much as the DOE states in the media. We have a limited number of custodians and if they have to thoroughly clean rooms, especially the ones that will be rotating students on a daily basis that would take them well into the night to accomplish.

Also, will soap be provided because many times there is not any, which is why we ask parents to provide or I buy it with my own money. If we're expecting students to be washing hands throughout the day, will the DOE ensure that there is adequate soap and hand sanitizers for all schools to have?

Whenever we talk about school opening, I always hear that it's safe for children to be in school, but not much consideration is given to the adults on campus. Is there adequate PPE for teachers and staff to wear? Many special education teachers and educational assistants work with students who need to be hand fed or support with toileting. How are they being protected? Teachers will be the ones at risk when schools reopen. Middle and high school teachers will be in close contact with hundreds of children from different "bubbles". How can you differentiate between adults and high schoolers or even college students? A senior is almost a college student and they can test positive for Covid. Saying that all children cannot get Covid or pass it on to teachers is not really true. Maybe younger children, but what about high school students? Many teachers are also older with underlying health issues, but we aren't considered a serious factor for not reopening schools.

Many principals, teachers, and staff are working hard to ensure a safe environment, but there are still so many questions that are not answered along with guidelines that are very vague and can be misinterpreted which causes a school to be unsafe for students and adults. I know we cannot stay at home forever, but we also need to make sure that a safe plan is in place with procedures that are clear and leave no room for different interpretations because lives are at stake. Delay re-opening or start with distance learning for the first quarter until protocols are in place that are safe and the DOE and Department of Health can ensure the safety of adults and children on every school campus.

Thank you for time,  
Michelle Matsuzaki  
Kindergarten Teacher  
Kailua Elementary School

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Tyler Hill <tyler.hill@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Tyler Hill  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:20 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Aloha,

My name is Tyler Hill and I am a FST Special Education teacher at Waialua High and Intermediate. 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 concerned for the safety and health of my students as well as my coworkers. I do not feel prepared to have students return in 2 weeks and I feel like I have not received specific guidance and training in what to do and how to do it in regards to covid 19 and teaching this upcoming fall. Please give heed to the HSTA and their concerns and questions.

- Tyler Hill

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Piikea Kalakau <piikeakalakau@gmail.com> on behalf of Piikea Kalakau  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:20 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

Aloha Board of Education Members,

I am a 12-month public school teacher on the Leeward coast. I am writing in support of delaying a face-to-face return date for students and keeping differential pay for those receiving it. To summarize, the differential pay increases have been essential for addressing teacher shortages, and regarding Covid-19 and our schools, I am fearful for my life, the lives of my colleagues, our students and their families.

The Department of Education has promised many things prior to the August 4 opening and has not delivered. Many, many questions remain unanswered, and have been for weeks. On a good day in a public school, there isn't hot water, soap or paper towels available for people to use. I have seen no difference during this time. Administration and school staff are working diligently to make schools as safe as possible with minimal, if any, support from the HDOE.

Teachers are being ignored and thrown out as sacrifices so Hawai'i's tourism machine can run again. We are not babysitters, we are not superheroes and we are not willing to die for any economy. We are educators, professionals with advanced degrees and experience, and should be treated as such.

There is no argument about school resuming. Educators want to teach their students and see them in person. We have not stopped working during this time (many are working more than ever!). Community spread is here and infecting our school families everyday. Please consider going 100% virtual through semester one of school year 2020-2021. Even one school-related Covid-19 death is unacceptable and avoidable.

Sincerely,

Piikea Kalakau-Baarde



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Cherie <koidream@gmail.com> on behalf of Cherie  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:20 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** TESTIMONY

Please include your name, and your school or workplace if you're an educator, or school that your children attend. Please note that submitted BOE testimony is posted online for the public to see so please be cognizant of what you include in your submission.

Aloha,

My name is Cherie Okada-Carlson, I have been a teacher in the DOE for approximately 18 years and an SSC currently on leave without pay for medical reasons from Honaunau Elementary School. While there may be immense pressure to get back to "normal" we need to accept that our world has changed and our previous concept of "normal" is gone. We need to create our new normal. It would be callous and unwise to start school at the "old normal" time. The lives and health of our students and teachers depend upon it. Hawaii already has crisis level issues with teacher retention and shortage of new hires. If the BOE does not cooperate with the HSTA and work out appropriate work/teaching/safe environments, it sends a horrific message to the world and potential hirees that the State of Hawaii does not care about their teachers and in effect their children and whole education system. These are unprecedented times, and minimizing the pandemic because we have low numbers of cases and deaths RIGHT NOW will be catastrophic in the months to come. Please postpone starting school until appropriate safeguards are in place.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Cherie Okada-Carlson

--“We did not change as we grew older; we just became more clearly ourselves.” — Lynn Hall

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** laurenshipley@yahoo.com  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:22 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Please delay opening!

Aloha,  
After speaking to a couple of teacher friends, I am convinced that we are not ready for schools to open.  
I beg you to reconsider.  
This is not fake to the teachers as well as the community.  
Thank you,  
Lauren Shipley

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Deana Ann Rapoza <deana\_\_ann.rapoza@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Deana Ann Rapoza  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:23 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Covid Training

I do feel strongly that we DOE employees need further training regarding Covid 19. I do not feel comfortable returning to school without it. I would feel better if we all had some form of training, even if it is a Covid 101 crash course. At least we have some kind of training.

Mahalo for your time.

Sincerely a concerned parent as well,  
Deana

--

Have a great day,  
Deana Ann Rapoza

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Darryl Munetake <dmunetake77@gmail.com> on behalf of Darryl Munetake  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:23 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Differentials

Aloha,

I've been in the teaching profession from 1985 when I moved from Oahu to Maui.

My starting salary was a little over \$16000 per year. It was so ridiculous that I had to work a second job so I could afford to make ends meet financially. It was a struggle and what made it worse was that I lived in Lahaina which is very expensive place. We are the Waianae of Oahu where once tenure is obtained, teachers leave for greener pastures because they can't afford to live here or they simply cannot afford the high cost of living so they move back to the mainland. The turnover ratio of teachers is very high and our school is hard to staff. The real losers are our students because we have long term substitutes teaching subjects that can't be filled because our teachers struggle financially.

The pay differential was quite a surprise to me and it's something that should have happened many years ago to help us maintain staffing at our school. In order to have consistency in teaching, your staff has to remain stable and this differential has begun to ensure that. Now with the threat of it being cut, we are going to have a difficult time retaining teachers again. Do our keiki deserve that? It's time to really think about the impact this cut will have on all the stakeholders that show up for work daily in the hard to staff rural areas and teach our keiki.. the future of Hawaii.

Respectfully

Darryl K Munetake

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Pat Thompson <3030paka@gmail.com> on behalf of Pat Thompson  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:23 PM  
**To:** Testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Please delay schools reopening.

Aloha,

Please do not reopen schools prematurely. Hawai'i is not ready, our ohana is not ready, teachers and faculty are not ready and our hospitals are not ready.

Wait till testing can catch up so everyone entering a school can be tested prior to entering daily. The test are coming.

We do not want to put any loved ones in jeopardy. We do not want to be the example of how reopening too early brought illness or death to our loved ones.

Mahalo,

Patrick Thompson

Kaua'i Hawai'i

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** tracy chan <chant808@gmail.com> on behalf of tracy chan  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:23 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony: Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association

To whom it may concern:

I am writing in regards to Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association.

My name is Tracy Chan and one of my best friends is a 7th and 8th grade teacher for the Hawaii public school system. Because of her, I support the Hawaii State Teachers Association statement that Hawaii's schools and teachers are NOT ready for classrooms to even partially reopen on August 4.

From a friend and companion's standpoint, teachers are doing their best to adapt right now—working hard to be ready to teach both online and in-person—but they need more time and training for everything to go smoothly. And what about the stress on them, when they're not ready, and worried about jumping into a situation that they're not prepared for and realistically, is not safe for teachers?

Lots of thought has gone into how to keep students socially distant and scheduled, but my friend will still be seeing close to 150 students each day. Even with precautions, she is being put at risk.

I hope the state government will reconsider opening physical classrooms before staff is ready, and give it a little more time. That's all I and my teacher friends ask.

Mahalo,  
Tracy Chan

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Valerie Robinett <outlook\_5DF733906063AFB4@outlook.com> on behalf of Valerie Robinett  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:25 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** testimony

July 21, 2020

I'm a first-grade teacher and parent of 3 students on Lana'i. I feel we're unprepared and should delay the start of school. There are still so many unanswered questions. Our concerns are not being heard and addressed. We're being asked to prepare and adjust but not given any additional time, training or resources to do so. We're having to move classrooms to meet social distancing requirements but haven't been given any additional time to make this happen. We've all given up so much of our summer as it is, by checking our emails daily hoping we would be provided leadership and guidance, and finding our own training to prepare for the year. I feel we've been cheated out of our break and still asked to report to duty with no regard for our health and safety and that of our students. With our concerns not being heard, it looks like we're just trying to return with no focus and intent to provide a proper education over just the idea of saying the school is open. Why be open when we're not prepared? Opening up slower and having deliberate plans that provide a safe and effective education should be the priority. Asking us teachers to put our health at risk and provide a meaningless education because of the lack of guidance and support is disheartening. I would hope if we choose to put our life on the line that it would be worth it and asking my 1<sup>st</sup> grade students to be educated like college students with unrealistic expectations is not worth it to me. Please consider delaying the opening of school and allowing teachers to have more input on what is the best model for our students.

Thanks,  
Valerie Robinett

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** James Shire <jrshire@gmail.com> on behalf of James Shire  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:25 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony regarding opening Hawaii's campuses

Dear Hawaii BOW

My sister is a teacher on Oahu. She has taught our island's keiki for over a decade and has made a significant and lasting impact for the lives of many. It is my hope that she will continue to serve and teach for many years to come. Her own career and vocation has been an inspiration to many, including myself and my own work as a clergyperson in the Episcopal Church and as an educator. Though I am not currently residing in Hawai'i, I still consider it my home as my family and sister live there.

The COVID-19 pandemic has upended our entire world. People have lost jobs, our communities have been disrupted, and families have lost loved ones. For many months we have been living in varying degrees of isolation in an attempt to slow the spread of infection so that we do not overwhelm our healthcare system. Hawai'i has been very successful in flattening the curve and not overwhelming hospitals and doctors. However, there is a real cost to this because we are separated from work and our communities and we want to return to a sense of normalcy. One aspect of returning to that normalcy is reopening our schools and allowing our keiki to return to in-person instruction albeit in a modified form that limits class sizes and respects social distancing.

To be blunt, to open Hawai'i's schools right now would be a death sentence to the most vulnerable in our ohana.

COVID-19 is a dangerous and deadly illness. Though the mortality rate for COVID-19 is relatively low, people of all ages can be infected with the coronavirus that causes it and develop severe symptoms and complications that will last for their entire lives. We often assume that a moderate or mild case will be the equivalent to a bad cold or flu, but even people who are not hospitalized, namely people who have moderate or mild cases, can still have lasting lung, heart, and even brain damage as a result of an infection. Additionally, scientists are still studying and researching COVID-19 and the coronavirus to understand the long-term health consequences and complications that an infection can bring. They have discovered much, but there is so much that is still unknown.

There is a common talking point that the mortality rate for young children with COVID-19 is extremely low compared to older populations, and so it is safe for children to return to school because they are less likely to get sick and die from COVID-19. Not only is such thinking morally reprehensible because some of our keiki will die from COVID-19 if we reopen our schools, but it ignores five major things.

First, it ignores that there are students who have things like asthma and other chronic health conditions. Under normal circumstances, they are able to come to school with little to no concern. But with the pandemic occurring, they are likely the keiki that would die from COVID-19. Often this is brushed away by saying that they can just go to classes online and healthy students can come to school. But if we can build an infrastructure that can support online learning to keep some safe, we should then be able to make online learning possible for all to keep everyone safe.

Second, it ignores the teachers and staff who make our schools possible. Many teachers are older and are therefore more susceptible to deadlier infections. We should not be so willing to throw away the lives of teachers and staff just to ensure that we can have some level of perceived normalcy in our lives.



Third, many of our keiki live in multi-generational homes. When they return home, it may not be to just their parents, but their aunties, uncles, and grandparents. If that child contracts the coronavirus from their school they will infect the rest of their ohana and their older relatives will likely experience more severe symptoms and will be at greater risk for hospitalization and death.

Fourth, the pandemic has hit poorer communities harder than more affluent ones. Chronic health issues like asthma, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease are more common in poorer communities. This is often related to the reduced access to healthcare that impacts the lives of our island's poor. Poverty becomes a force multiplier for COVID-19 which is why you see higher infection rates and mortality rates among the poor. Poorer students are at greater risk, and many of these poorer students live in multi-generational homes and communities. The effects will be devastating for the poor in Hawai'i

Fifth, it ignores the basic realities of how children live. These opening plans envision students wearing masks, keeping distance, and washing their hands frequently. This is not going to happen. Within five minutes or less, any attempt to keep order and distance between students will fail. Friends that have not seen each other for months will want to hug and reunite. High schoolers will want to connect with each other before, during, and after school. Elementary school children will touch their faces and then every surface because that is what children do. Even if schools and teachers do everything right, something will go wrong. A person will come in who is asymptomatic and therefore will not be screened out of the school. They will still be shedding the virus despite the lack of symptoms. It will spread to one person and then another. One surface or another may not be properly cleaned, and then someone will touch an infected surface and then touch their face to wipe sweat off of their brow in a warm building. By the time someone shows symptoms, it may be too late because an entire class could be infected because you have people in close quarters for long periods of time. If one class is infected then there is a good chance that the school is infected.

Now, when these points are raised, people may respond in a number of ways.

Some may say that as long as people have proper PPE on, then there is no problem. I currently oversee a meal program for the homeless at my church. When I go out to serve our take-away meals outside, I put on a surgical mask, face shield, and gloves. Some of my colleagues who work inside will also wear surgical gowns, and hair and shoe coverings. We do this for our very brief encounters with people that last for no more than one to two minutes at most. Even with this amount of medical-grade PPE, there is still a risk of infection and I do get tested frequently to ensure that I am safe to keep working especially if I am unsure if I have come into contact with an infected person or not. I am doing front-line work that has to continue to ensure that people are fed. Though teachers are important and education is important, we have the means to ensure that we can still have classes done safely at home where there is little to no risk of infection. Therefore, if you can work and teach at home and online, then do it. Even if the DOE can supply teachers, staff, and students with all the proper PPE for long-term and indoor environments like classrooms (mask, shield, gloves, gown, hair coverings, etc.), there is still risk because PPE is only effective if people are wearing it properly. In addition, there appears to be no mechanism to enforce students to actually wear masks and other forms of PPE, and if that's not present, all of this is for naught. Additionally, it appears there are no plans to provide proper PPE to anyone, and if that is not in place then you cannot even consider opening.

Others keep pushing that online education is less than ideal, especially for students with particular needs, and there is a concern that students may fall behind in their education. I am not unsympathetic to this position. I am an educator, and I do not like online classes that much. I also understand the concern about students falling behind, but an education can always be recovered, a life cannot. It would be better to have an online 2020-2021 school year that is less than ideal that saves lives rather than bringing in students with the high risk for illness that comes from an in-person classroom experience.

Finally, there is the reality that schools are a means for childcare for students of working parents, and a place where students can receive meals they would not normally receive. The logic is that if a student has to stay

home for school, then a parent has to stay home from work, and if the parent has to stay home then there is that loss of income. I am also not unsympathetic to this, but this line of logic reveals the massive gaps in our state's socio and economic conditions. We have created a situation where the cost of living is so high and wages are so low that people have to make that choice between work or family. Though this was already occurring prior to the pandemic, the current crisis has revealed the extent to which we rely on schools to be places for parents to put their kids while they work primarily and education centers secondarily. This is a problem that is easy enough to solve through a universal basic income program that would ensure financial stability to all in Hawai'i and ensure that parents did not have to choose between staying home with their children or going to work and dropping them at school or daycare.

In conclusion, I strongly urge the BOE to not open campuses to students for the 2020-2021 school year. New infections are occurring throughout the US and in Hawai'i and it is therefore not safe to rush into any return to normalcy. We should not make this decision in despair or resignation, but with confidence that we are doing the right thing for our keiki, our ohana, and our islands, and with hope that the scientific community will have viable treatments before too long and a working vaccine developed faster than any in human history. If we can wait a bit longer, we can return to our lives with those whom we love most dearly confident that we have saved as many people as possible.

In turn I would urge the BOE and the DOE to call upon the state government to implement the following to ensure the safety of our students, teachers, and faculty and to ensure the highest quality education possible for the next year.

1. The start of schools should be delayed until September. By delaying the start of the term, this will allow teachers to better plan and organize their curriculums to be fully online for the next academic year. Additionally, the state needs to use this time to quickly build-up Hawai'i's telecommunication network to ensure all students have access to affordable, high-speed, and quality internet.
2. Hawai'i needs to implement a universal basic income for all residents. A UBI will ensure that parents do not have to choose between work or their families. This will allow children to attend online classes and parents to remain home to provide care. This UBI can be funded through an increase in property taxes, especially on secondary properties owned by top-earners and businesses in Hawai'i.
3. Hawai'i needs to continue to require a 14-day quarantine for anyone coming into the state. Discussions are occurring to allow for people to waive that quarantine with a negative test result 72-hours prior to their arrival. Though there is a desire to restart tourism in Hawai'i, infection rates in the US remain far too high to consider this policy at this time. Additionally, the current nasal swab tests have a relatively high false negative rate, so it is better to err on the side of caution until infection rates drop.

My heart goes out to the many ohana who have been impacted by the ongoing pandemic, and I am proud to see so many in Hawai'i taking the crisis seriously. May everyone stay safe and healthy during these times.

Sincerely,

The Rev'd Deacon James Shire, SCP

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Jennifer Rising <jmrising@icloud.com> on behalf of Jennifer Rising  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:25 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony  
**Attachments:** image0.jpeg; Untitled attachment 00983.txt; image1.jpeg; Untitled attachment 00986.txt; image2.jpeg; Untitled attachment 00989.txt

Testimony regarding reopening of schools

I am a high school math teacher on Maui. My classroom was “professionally cleaned” at the end of June, as indicted by this sign on my classroom door:

**Do Not Enter**

# **IMPORTANT NOTICE**

**ACCESS PROHIBITED\***

**AREA DISINFECTED**

**DATE** 6-29-20

**TIME** 10:30 AM

**\*See Principal for Access**

With administrative permission, I entered my classroom on July 21st, to find that absolutely nothing had been cleaned. I am including 2 photos to document my case. The first photo is the floor in the center of the room, with dried piles of gecko poop, from the geckos that live in the rafters. The entire floor is equally filthy.





The next photo is a window sill in my classroom, caked with dirt, dust, and gecko poop. Notice also the chipping paint and stains. All 12 of the windows in the room are like this.







This classroom has obviously not been cleaned anytime recently, and is not ready for students to safely return. Please do not take the word of people paid to prepare classrooms, but check them for yourselves. Our schools are not ready to reopen until every classroom is clean and safe! Every. Single. One.

Sent from my iPad

Sent from my iPad

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Walt Grilho <walt.kawaomusic@gmail.com> on behalf of Walt Grilho  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:26 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Cuts to shortage differentials and the delaying student start date.

To whom it may concern.

I oppose the the state reopening our public schools to students on August 4, 2020. There are still way to many critical unanswered questions that teachers and HSTA are waiting to receive from the state and the DOE superintendent

Such questions consist of:

- When will the State of Hawaii's Department of Health provide written guidance on the reopening of school buildings, which the HDOE 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?

Teachers are the highest at risk when schools reopen on August 4th. We will be in close contact with potentially hundreds of children for various hours a day. Nevertheless the state, superintendent, and health directors seem to overlook this fact for our teacher and student health and safety.

Additionally I oppose the Board of Education wanting to discontinue and not honor the teacher differential pay for hard to fill school and Special Education teachers who committed to filling the shortage of special education teacher positions.

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 HDOE money if state lawmakers did not fund it for next school year.

Lastly, teachers consistently pay out of pocket to increase their pay income rate by seeking and participating higher level education degrees, courses, and professional development programs credits. It is only right and fair that the state, DOE, and superintendent honor their pay increase that was self paid for and earned!

Regards

Walt Grilho

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Jennifer Andres <dnjandres@gmail.com> on behalf of Jennifer Andres  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:26 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Concerns

I have alot of concerns returning to work. I work in the health room. I have 4 asthmatic sons in my family and the thought of COVID affecting my children scare me.

Without having proper training on how to return to work and being the only nurse on campus scares me and gives me so much anxiety.

Please provide proper training and protocol as I do not feel equipped.

Sincerely,  
Jennifer Andres

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Patrick Whalen <patrick.whalen@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Patrick Whalen  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:27 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Aloha,

My name is Patrick Whalen and I am a social studies teacher at Lahaina Intermediate School on Maui. I am emailing you about 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 Respons): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees. I have been following all of the news that I have been able to receive/scrounge up regarding the upcoming school year. I am nervous about the school as an environment suitable for our students to learn in. It is my understanding that not all schools have been provided necessary cleaning materials and I have not heard if we were one of the fortunate schools to have been given these materials. I am also worried for the staff members we have that are more advanced in age as this virus seems to be the worst thing in the world for them. We work with a mostly older-staff population and it could be disastrous if anyone came into the learning environment with it. Finally, and I hope that this doesn't come off as selfish, but I would like to retain our pay differential. It can be challenging when working as a teacher in paradise; rent is ridiculous and it used to take me a paycheck and part of my next one to pay it. Never mind the cost of gas, groceries, and other necessary purchases! All I'm asking is if we can see written statements that promise these (and any other concerns from the community) will be answered and dealt with BEFORE schools open. Thank you for your time.

Mahalo,

Patrick Whalen

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Travis T Masuda <travis.t.masuda@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Travis T Masuda  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:26 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

To whom it may concern,

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 Japanese teacher at Kalani High School. I miss my students dearly and can't wait to get back into the classroom with them, however, it needs to be done when it is safe. I implore you to delay the opening of Hawaii's schools or look at going 100% distance learning until we know more about this disease, how it can be controlled, and how it affects our young students.

Although it is a common belief that young children (0-10 years old) aren't affected severely or cannot spread the disease, there simply is not enough data to prove or disprove this. Children of that age have been kept safe in their households during the lockdown period, so they simply have not been exposed to the disease as much as adults have been. Furthermore, older children (11-18 years old) have been proven to spread the disease just as adults have. I don't want to see any of my students' families or my family go through the horror stories I've heard of what COVID-19 can do to a person.

I am saddened by the fact that I will no longer get to see my family if schools open. I will no longer get to visit my parents, who are in the higher risk category, or any other member of my family because I don't know when I will be exposed to COVID-19 and do not want to risk bringing it to them. I am deeply saddened that I will have to be extra careful around my 2 year old son, because if I do contract the disease at school, I do not want to pass it to him no matter how low the odds are that he will develop "severe symptoms." Even if it is only 1 out of 1,000 children that get "severe symptoms," I do not want to take my chances with my only son.

Finally, there are many examples that have shown, even if precautions are taken, like the 3 teachers in Arizona that shared a classroom, wearing gloves, wearing masks, keeping a 6 foot distance, the disease can still spread; all 3 teachers caught it and one passed away. Look at what happened in Israel, they open their schools while having a lower infection rate than us, 10 infections in a day, but a month after opening schools, infections skyrocketed to 1,400 infections, 47% coming from schools. After that, 2,026 (as of July 14th) infections have been recorded between students, teachers, and staff. Lastly, there is a preschool in Japan where 22 people were infected in a preschool, 20 students and 2 teachers.

I apologize for the long email, but I feel strongly that we are not prepared for the reopening of schools and we need to gather much more data on children and their relationship with COVID-19 as well.

Sincerely,

Travis Masuda

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Margaret Karwiel <margaret.karwiel@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Margaret Karwiel  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:28 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

To Whom it May Concern,

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.](#)

As an FSC teacher who will be working with students with a variety of needs from behavioral concerns to toileting help, I am very concerned about the lack of preparedness of opening schools. I have asked my administration, multiple times, for some clear direction on working with students who need significant support throughout the school day and maintaining 6 ft distance just isn't an option. Those instructions have yet to be provided to me and my support staff in my classroom. How can I ensure the safety of my students and my staff? If we don't have the answers to these questions, how can we say it is safe to open schools? Simple procedures and protocols have yet to be clearly outlined and without that, we should expect chaos as well as an increase in Covid cases. I feel strongly that a delay in allowing students to attend schools will provide teachers and administration much needed time to prepare better for both face to face instruction as well as distance learning in the event schools need to close again. It would be a shame if teachers didn't have a say in when or how schools should be open as we are the frontline and our risk for exposure is much greater than the people who are making these decisions for us.

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** M Pham <thuyenmp@gmail.com> on behalf of M Pham  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:29 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony: Differential for SPED / Hawaiian Immersion / Hard to staff

Hello,

My name is Thuyen Pham and I am a SPED teacher at Wilson Elementary School. I am writing in regards to the differential for SPED teachers, Hawaiian Immersion, and hard to staff positions. The differential has made an impact in my life as it has helped me to reduce the hours I have worked in my 2nd and 3rd job. This enabled me to allow more time for me to plan for my kiddos at school. This differential has also motivated me to stay in the DOE. This has been a motivation to my colleagues as well. Hearing that the differential may be cut is very frustrating and upsets me. It has made me rethink my decision to continue to work for the BOE in Oahu. I am sure this is how it makes the rest of my colleagues in the DOE feel. Ten thousand a year has made a huge impact in my life and receiving it last year has kept me from quitting. I hope that you rethink this decision on cutting this.

Mahalo,  
Thuyen Pham

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Kim Costales <kim.costales@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Kim Costales  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:30 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Pandemic training

Aloha, I'm an EA at Jefferson in the Kaimuki Complex Area.

- who will train us for this pandemic?
- what if someone in a child's family is sick(covid), who will be tested? How will it affect the rest of the people in the class?
- who will get tested of this covid? & who will pay for it?
- what if students we work with don't know or understand 6 ft boundaries?
- how do we work with autistic students with 6ft boundaries?

HOPE we can all work together & for the SAME reasons!!!!

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Jina Thompson <jinathom@hawaii.edu> on behalf of Jina Thompson  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:30 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Please Delay The Reopening of Schools

Aloha,

My name is Jina Thompson and I am sending this testimony as both a mother of DOE students and a recently rehired DOE teacher.

I am extremely concerned about what I have seen and not seen in regards to schools being prepared to reopen in two weeks. I have been told many inconsistencies regarding how my classroom will be disinfected and by whom, the latest is...it's up to me. There are questions about the use of masks, buying my own masks, should we buy our own thermometers to take our students temperatures, the list goes on. I was first told I would only have ten students in my class per day, that number is now up to 11, with additional adults potentially. I know that there will not be 6 feet between us. I also worry about the emotional impact all of this will have on children. Children can sense when adults are fearful, I feel fearful, as do many teachers. Please listen to our pleas. Please consider delaying the opening so that all questions can be answered, and safe environment can truly be created for all.

Mahalo,  
Jina Thompson

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** taryn loo <tarynhatsuko@hotmail.com> on behalf of taryn loo  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:32 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

I do not feel safe returning to school on August 4th. We have received no training whatsoever for the return to school. We have no idea what the new procedures will be and how to enforce them.

Also wondering...

How will the children be able to safely socially distance all day in a classroom, at recess and in the cafeteria?

How will they screen 600 students on campus everyday?

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Samantha Tomori <samanthatomori@gmail.com> on behalf of Samantha Tomori  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:32 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Aloha,

I am testifying as an individual 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 Kea'au Elementary on the island of Hawai'i. I am also the parent of a newly enrolled pre-schooler at the same school. While I commend the school for doing everything they can with the budget cuts, limited resources, and minimal guidance, I am concerned that the state's decision to return students to schools is premature.

The protocols and procedures for what happens when a student or staff member tests positive are too vague. A clearly articulated plan with multiple scenarios considered needs to be developed and communicated to all stakeholders prior to its implementation.

Not only are protocols not established, teachers haven't been trained in how to provide a blended approach to teaching. In a typical school year, the 2-4 teacher/admin work days prior to the students is not nearly enough. Teachers come to school weeks early to set up their classrooms, and that is during a TYPICAL year. It is impossible to expect schools to properly prepare for students returning to campus with all of these additional precautions to consider. Please do not rush to be the first to open our schools without having the plan, training, and resources to successfully do so. Let's take our time and do this right.

In regards to the idea of cutting the newly promised differentials/bonuses. I understand that our nation has fallen on hard times, but I want to caution you about what will happen to our most vulnerable populations of students (special education and those in hard to staff rural areas). Their teachers will either leave the profession, move to another state, or transfer to a school closer to home. How do I know this? I've been working at a hard to staff school my entire 12 years of teaching and the bonus is what is keeping me there. I've been recruited for jobs at the district level as well as the complex that I reside in and I always turn down these offers because if I transfer schools I will lose my bonus. The bonus is effective and those students deserve qualified and experienced teachers as opposed to substitute teachers or emergency hires. Please do everything in your power to fund these positions appropriately.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Samantha Tomori

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Chrystie Cobb <chrystie4salsa@yahoo.com> on behalf of Chrystie Cobb  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:32 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 Chrystie Isaacs. I am a teacher and a parent of two school aged children. Schools are not ready to open on August 4. There is so much that needs to be done. Teachers have been going into the classrooms to prepare for students. Teachers are technically still suppose to be enjoying the rest of our summer break. Many of us are volunteering our time to help prepare our classrooms for our students. As a teacher, I need to be trained to be able to deliver a successful blended model of learning to my students. I also need to know that my working environment will be safe. There are so many factors to consider and everything seems to be rushed.

There are several questions that I would also like addressed as well. Will schools be providing after school care? What happens when a teacher is sick and can't physically go to work? Will teachers have to use their sick leave when we still teach online from home? How will students enter classrooms? What are the procedures? Will students be able to access all materials needed?

Please allow more time for teachers and the school to plan for distance learning, blended learning, face to face instruction, PPE protocols and procedures and sub plans.

We are not ready to open on August 4.

Thank you for your consideration,

Chrystie

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** ellis.leilani@gmail.com  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:33 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Aloha,

My name is Leilani Yamauchi and I am a teacher at Waihe'e School on the island of Maui. Please consider pushing back the start date for schools. We are not prepared!

Teachers are the backbone to making sure rules/regulations are followed. We are the ones required to plan 3 different modeled schedules because we are required to offer them to parents. How are we able to successfully do these things when we don't return to work until July 29th? That gives some of us 5 days of planning time. These 5 days that we have before Aug. 5th is mostly used for going over protocol and we are lucky to have at least 1-2 hours at the end of the day to work in our rooms. Setting up our own classrooms are done on "voluntary" time and I refuse to volunteer anymore of my time and my family's time for planning.

We need more time! Time to plan. Time to work out the logistics of successfully social distancing our students on campus. Time to get a hold of PPE that we desperately need since we will be on the "front lines" exposed to many different house holds of whom we do not know how well they are being safe. I want to return to work but not at the expense of my own babies at home. Please reconsider the start date and give us more time!

Mahalo.

Sent from my iPhone



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Noe <lilinoe001@gmail.com> on behalf of Noe  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:33 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Proper training for returning to school

Hi,

I just wanted to share some of my concerns, what type of PPE will be supplied to us? Will we receive proper training to deal with covid if need be, How will social distance work in SPED/High Need classrooms? Who will be screening Staff, Students, and visitors for signs of illness? Is there a plan if someone should test positive for Covid-19?

Thank you for hearing my concerns.

With great appreciation,  
Lilinoe

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Keoni Chang-Purdy <kchangpurdy@pope.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Keoni Chang-Purdy  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:34 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

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.](#)

Kū‘ē temporary discontinuance: I am in OPPOSITION to the proposed temporary discontinuance.

Auhe‘a ‘oukou e ka po‘e mālama kumu a me nā keiki! He wahi leo kēia e kū‘ē ai i ka palapala e emi ai ka uku o ka po‘e kumu e mālama nei i nā haumāna o ko Hawai‘i pae ‘āina! E kāko‘o mau iā mākou ma kēia wā ma‘i ahulau kolona i hiki iā mākou ke mālama mau i nā keiki o ka ‘āina nei.

Ke aloha,  
Keoni Chang-Purdy  
Kindergarten and First grade kumu  
Ke Kula Kaiapuni o Waimānalo ma Blanche Pope

Let the wild rumpus begin

Confidentiality Notice: This e-mail message, including any attachments, is for the sole use of the intended recipient(s) and may contain confidential and/or privileged information. Any review, use, disclosure, or distribution by unintended recipients is prohibited. If you are not the intended recipient, please contact the sender by reply e-mail and destroy all copies of the original message.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Mr. Kalma <akalma@moanaluahs.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Mr. Kalma  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:35 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

To Whom It May Concern:

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 Adam Kalma, and I'm a teacher at Moanalua High School. I want nothing more than to return to teaching in-person, ensure students receive the best education possible, and allow parents to work rather than watch their keiki. However, I've also learned and taught that safety is number one, and unfortunately, in-person education isn't safe for anyone right now.

Covid carriers can be unidentifiable, and covid diagnoses and deaths are still happening daily on Oahu. I live with my girlfriend's elderly mother, who is also a teacher, and know that she fears for her life. I know that kupuna are not the only ones getting covid as well: it doesn't discriminate by age or any other demographic. I also know families, students, and staff are currently grieving due to loved ones lost already.

I fear that this is an experiment waiting to see how the numbers change. I must remind you that each and every number is a life (or was), and those lives (or deaths) could be anyone's (yours, mine, ...) if you don't take proper precautions and practice patience. I urge you to learn from history; do not experiment with people's lives in the present, but rather fight for the living and a better future.

Sincerely,

Adam Kalma

--

Teacher | Moanalua High School

"Get up. Stand up. Don't give up the fight." - The Wailers

This user is a staff member at  
Moanalua High School  
2825 Ala Ilima Street  
Honolulu, HI 96818  
[www.moanaluahs.org](http://www.moanaluahs.org)

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Jessie Garcia <melenah@gmail.com> on behalf of Jessie Garcia  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:38 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Dear Members of the Board of Education,

I am writing about 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): 20-17-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

My name is Jessica Lee Loy and I am a teacher at Holualoa Elementary School on the Kona side of Hawaii Island. I am writing to you about my concerns about health and safety and overall underpreparedness of our schools to open by August 4, 2020. I do not have confidence that returning to school will be safe for our students, staff, and greater community. Two days to completely restructure a classroom and two days to get minimal training around all the new protocol, curriculum, and distance learning platforms is not enough time. This is not a normal school year, and we need more time to make sure we are setting the teachers, and in turn the students, up for success.

Without clear and concise guidance from the state how are we supposed to keep our students safe? How are we supposed to keep their families safe? How am I supposed to keep myself and my family safe? People keep saying things like "only .0016% of children die." In Hawaii we have about 180,000 students; .0016% of 180,000 is 288. 288 students could die if exposed to COVID 19. HOW MUCH IS A LIFE WORTH? This is not even taking into account those teachers, staff and other adults who interact with students who are a high risk of serious illness, complications and even death. How many students are you willing to risk dying? How many teachers? How many members of our communities? I do not feel any amount of death from reopening schools is acceptable.

The only way we can ensure our students, their families, and our communities safety is to continue to work 100% remotely. They said last quarter was not successful but teachers had no training, we were given no time to plan or prepare and we were directed to only review previous content; no new content. Students and families were told it was not mandatory and would not count for a grade. If given training, time, and families were given devices and support for internet access, it could be a completely different story this time.

Thank you,

Jessica Lee Loy  
teacher  
Holualoa Elementary School

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Jasmine Elisara <jasmineelisara@gmail.com> on behalf of Jasmine Elisara  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:36 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** POSTPONE THE START DATE

Aloha All,

Please consider postponing the August 4th start date for our schools. Our schools are not properly equipped to keep our keiki safe at this time and it is ridiculously irresponsible for you to open schools and expose our keiki to this while our state cases are still on the rise.

You are risking our kids lives as well as the lives of their family members. Hawaii has the highest number of multi generational homes in the nation and you are putting all of us at risk by allowing these schools to open without taking the proper precautions or safety measures in place.

Please reconsider the start date and give these schools the proper time and resources before opening back up.

Mahalo,  
**Jasmine Elisara**

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** B Barawis <bbarawis@gmail.com> on behalf of B Barawis  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:38 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** How do Educational assistants bee ready for back to school with thecorona virus and how do we stay safe and well with no training

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Emilio Macalalad <egmacalalad@gmail.com> on behalf of Emilio Macalalad  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:38 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Differentials and delay opening

Aloha,

I am writing because I'm truly concerned about opening schools so soon. I have heard that LA unified and San Diego unified school districts are opening schools virtually for fall semester only. Why can't Hawai'i do that? I've attended a lot of workshops and meetings this summer and feel much more prepared to teach through distance learning than through face to face class sessions.

I teach science at Molokai High School and it's overwhelming to think about all the variables to consider in keeping everyone safe when everything is shared. Science supplies and equipment has to be shared. Laboratory activities and hands-on activities are essential for understanding difficult science concepts. We don't have enough funding to cover purchasing more equipment and supplies to accommodate for safety against the virus.

I understand that there were summer sessions that have taken place over the summer but that was for much smaller groups of students. We are sending back all our students.

In addition to this, teachers in hard to staff, special education, and Hawaiian Immersion programs will no longer get the salary differential. This decision is forcing people out of the profession and making it worse for teachers that are already struggling.

Mahalo,  
Emilio Macalalad  
Science Teacher

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Matt Dillon <matt.dillon@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Matt Dillon  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:38 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimonial for 7/23 BOE meeting

BOE,

Please consider the following testimonial.

I believe that we are not ready to reopen school for the following reasons.

- Guidance and curriculum for training teachers on distance and virtual learning has not been provided. Time to develop teachers is also not sufficient for this shift.
- Safety and health concerns of families, teachers, and administrators have not been sufficiently addressed.
- Student tech needs including laptops and wifi have not been provided in sufficient amounts.
- Some required PPE ordered by the school, including hand sanitizer, has not arrived.
- Being asked to create multiple, and unfamiliar, blended learning models has left us with insufficient time to address safety concerns.

Please consider delaying the start of instruction to allow time for staff to address these items.

Respectfully,

--

Matt Dillon  
Principal

‘Īao Intermediate School  
*Connected - Capable - Contributing*

260 South Market St.  
Wailuku, HI 96793  
808-727-5200

‘Īao School and the Hawaii State Department of Education (HIDOE) do not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, color, national origin, religion or disability in it's programs and activities.

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** j <junko@boyd-ritari.com> on behalf of j  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:38 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

BOE,

Please do not send our Keiki, our at risk teachers and staff back to school at this juncture. If need be push back the school days to make up the 180 days mandated by the law. It is worth being ready and patient. Every life we can save with our choices is worth it.

Junko Boyd- Ritari  
Waikiki School  
Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Amy Masaoka <amy.masaoka@gmail.com> on behalf of Amy Masaoka  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:38 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 sister lives in Florida, where they have one of the highest rates of infection. More recent news states that thousands of children are now testing positive. My sister has two elementary school-aged children and I have urged her to keep the children home from this school year. Yes, it's Florida. And yes, the numbers are extremely higher than Hawaii. But the reason to keep her children home from school in Florida and delaying the opening of our Hawaii schools remains the same: WE ARE SIMPLY NOT READY.

As one of our School-Level Leaders, I am the point person for my teachers. Since HSTA reached an agreement (MOU) with the HDOE regarding the reopening of schools, I have been in countless meetings with teachers, administrators, and HSTA representatives in an attempt to answer questions and make sense of things. Our teachers are concerned about many things, including the health and safety of our students, themselves, and those they care for. Questions about maintaining social distancing guidelines, the wearing of face masks and temperature checks, cleaning of rooms, etc. These questions continue to arise and it seems never ending. Once we think we've answered a question, another question pops up, and the cycle continues. The number of people involved sends mixed messages...it becomes a "he said/she said" game and social media is reigning right now.

The lack of guidance being provided is highly concerning. There are no clear protocols and messages are being left for individuals to interpret in their own way. Schools are NOT prepared to reopen. Teachers have not had enough time to address the changes and unpack the information they have been given. We don't have a single clue as to *what* we are going to do, let alone *how* we are going to do it. Although we have many "tech-savvy" teachers, we have received no training on distance learning...and we NEED it. Teachers need the time to collaborate with each other and receive training on distance learning. We need time to figure out how we are going to go from a 5-day in-person school week, to a 2-day (or 1-day or not at all) school week. How do we make sure the students are receiving the education they deserve but making sure we are all safe at the same time? Clearly, many important questions remain unanswered and this needs to happen before school buildings can safely reopen.

My school recently offered a voluntary, stipend day for teachers to come in and start planning. Although I chose to go in, I was still highly uncomfortable being around others. If I am uncomfortable being around 20-30 other adults, can you imagine how I will feel when I'm surrounded by hundreds of others for multiple hours a day? My anxiety has already sky-rocketed just typing this! And just to throw this in....after spending the day with fellow teachers attempting to "plan" for the unknown, not a single teacher left feeling confident in what they were doing. Needless to say, plans were not made because questions are not being answered.

As stated in my previous testimony regarding following social distancing guidelines, I am outraged that there does not seem to be clear direction and it seems the safety of our students and ourselves are not being taken seriously. Unless the state wants another shutdown, let's not rush things. I urge you to take this testimony seriously, along with all other testimonies and consider delaying the reopening of schools so that we can have a better idea of how to ensure everyone's needs are being met.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my comments. I am looking forward to your positive response in support of those relying on you.

Sincerely,

Amy Masaoka  
Pahoa Elementary School  
Special Education Teacher

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** SherriAnn Wakui <stweety68@gmail.com> on behalf of SherriAnn Wakui  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:38 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Training before the reopening

Dear Board of Education ,

I am an Educational Assistant who works in a multitrack school. My fellow Educational Assistant co worker's have been asking for more training to reopening the new school year. We are concerned about our safety issues while having contact with teachers and students while in the classroom. We play an important role in the school and if we had contracted COVID19 from work , who will be supporting students and assist the teachers in the classroom?

Will we receive COVID19 leave and not exhaust our sick leave ?

Are the schools providing ALL safety precautions if ever the COVID19 does happen in the classroom . I will be working with 4 different color track of students and rotation of cohort teachers in the assigned classroom I am in 5 days a week in a 6 hour day. Will my employer have trainings to handling a situation of someone who may be infected ? There some questions of concerns raised to my employer similar to the teachers of reopening of the school year. Will these trainings help the Educational Assistant in any situation that arises? My employer will give trainings but will it work two days before the reopening of the school.

Thank you,  
SherriAnn

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Aaron Bronson <aarondbronson@gmail.com> on behalf of Aaron Bronson  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:39 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Training needed

Aloha

I work as a EA III with kids who are on the severe end of the autism spectrum. I do not feel prepared to return to classes knowing that the population I work with is unable to Express how they feel physically or mentally if they are feeling sick. We are not doctors who can determine what to do. Also what happens if the teacher feels if student is okay but I as a ea feel student is ill.

I do not think we have a adequate system in place at this time to return to campus. Where I feel safe. I work in a neighborhood that we have other issues to deal with and safety just walking onto campus with illness unknown should not be one of them

Thank you  
Aaron

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Cynthia Nagamine <rcfarleyn@gmail.com> on behalf of Cynthia Nagamine  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:40 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

To our Board of Education,

As a third grade classroom teacher at Manana Elementary School in Pearl City & as a mother to an eight grader at Moanalua Middle School, I am writing this testimony to voice my concerns about schools opening up to students on August 4, 2020.

Over the course of my 26 years as a public school teacher, I can say without a doubt that teachers are resilient. We work hard & go above & beyond what is possible to make our students' experience & learning in our schools & classrooms happen. Preparing to teach in the midst of these unprecedented times is no different.

This time however, I have to say that I am at a loss for words & vision. While it was not the best of times, working through the teacher strike, teacher furlough, and making the best of all of the DOE's mandates, I always viewed each as a challenge & one that we worked hard to get through.

I feel as though my grade level teaching partner and I are left to figure out how we will conduct face to face instruction while doing distance learning. We both have never received any type of training nor have we been offered any type of training on how to conduct distance learning, much less distance learning combined with face to face instruction.

I am unsure & upset that the Superintendent seems to not be aware of this.

On top of this, from what we understand, we will be asked to monitor & grade those students who will be choosing the option of taking 100% distance learning.

I am not sure how to do three very different jobs well.

We are being offered a 3 hour training during the first few days of school for the teachers. This truly boggles my mind. I cannot see how this is acceptable in any way.

This is on top of our state not having a clear plan on how to address health concerns as well. The lists of unanswered questions grows.

I want to get back to school. I want for my sons & my students to resume their education. I want for us to however, do so in a safe & effective way & at this time, with the opening of schools just a few days away, I do not feel confident that we are prepared.

Please consider the concerns that are being brought up with an open heart & mind.

Thank you,  
Cynthia Nagamine

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** M Pham <thuyenmp@gmail.com> on behalf of M Pham  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:40 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony: Reopening schools

Hello,

My name is Thuyen Pham and I am a SPED teacher at Wilson Elementary. I am writing to express my concern in reopening schools on August 4. It has been a huge concern to me keeping not only me and my family safe, but my students. I have called my students' parents and told them that although we are attempting to keep the 6ft between their child and other children in the school, there are no real other guidelines and protocols if something happens. I have spoken to parents who send their kids to school in the DOE in Hawaii and they are all frustrated that schools do NOT know what they are doing. They all understand that schools are trying their best but they are also concerned about their child's safety.

As a teacher, I do not feel prepared to open my doors under these circumstances. The numbers of cases are rising. Did we not say we would not open until the numbers were at zero? I know that is unrealistic but there is NO guidance of what to do if a teacher or student contracts COVID and what the protocol is. If you cannot answer these questions, why are you risking and rushing to open the doors?

The safety of all parties involved should be thought about. For schools to reopen, there should be protocol for every "what if". I hope you reconsider the start date and allow teachers, schools, and staff to be better prepared to welcome the keiki back into the schools.

We all love our keiki. We all love our families. Let's take care of them and do what's right.

Sincerely,  
Thuyen Pham

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** johnfranks@usa.com  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:40 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Action item H:

Schools are not prepared to prevent rampant spread of Covid 19 on school campuses. Visit any 2 schools and compare the actual implementation let alone articulated and communicated plan to faculty, students, and parents. Interview the teachers, parents, or students. You will see there is no clear plan or effective implementation of any plan. You will see there is no way to meet CDC or DOH recommendations to prevent the spread of Covid 19 on school campuses. There will be no way to implement "social bubbles", social distancing, mask wearing, or any critical hygiene requirements to prevent spreading the disease across all grade levels. That is why there is no BOE approved state wide DOE plan with steps toward implementation taken. They kicked it down to individual schools under the guise of "you know your students best" as if Covid 19 discriminates. Across the world is example after example, unless community spread controlled, schools spread the virus.

Why delay till Sept? Continue with reopening plan and see if we have the policies in place to control the community spread tourism will inevitably cause, then look at reopening schools. It was backwards and a thinly veiled attempt to open schools before the rising numbers due to reopening the economy caused community outcry to provide "childcare" to encourage parents back to work. Shame on you for treating our institutions of education tasked with arguably the most critical and incredibly difficult job of educating our children, as a daycare center.

Second major issue. It is a fact, Covid will spread in the schools causing the need for quarantine or outright closure. As an educational professional, I am telling you, point blank, teachers are not prepared to provide effective instruction via online learning. You do realize after 20 years of underpaying teachers, under funding schools, recruiting from the mainland knowing turnover rates, ignoring cost of living to salary models, etc... our teaching force is decimated. Don't believe me, talk to teacher recruitment, interview principals, look at the number of classrooms with unqualified teachers. On top of this, many families are woefully unprepared to support student learning in the home. If you don't believe me, again, walk onto any campus, ask for there evidence based distance learning curriculum in any subject area and compare it to that grade levels common core standards. Ask for pacing guides. Ask for formative and normed data collection procedures for evaluating progress and informing instruction. Ask for there online model allowing for differentiation or implementation of evidence based interventions. Ask to see the actual technology, programs, materials, etc... needed for implementation. If you know anything about teaching and learning, you will immediately see the problem. For gods sake, before the virus as a state we are not even getting 50% of our students to meet math and ELA grade level standards. Now think about what that means when we have no clear plan for moving to an online based learning model? The tax is coming due for failing to attract skilled professionals to our teaching force and implementing the failed policies of incompetent leaders.

Third major problem. We are completely unprepared to service our identified or ELL population and are so far out of compliance, with NOTHING articulated by the BOE/DOE to even attempt to get into compliance, you are begging for a lawsuit and the Feds to pull critical funding. Can we really afford to wait for another FELIX? So no plan, but the few, and I mean handful across the state, of qualified SPED teachers the recent emergency stipend package kept on the front lines, will have the stipend cancelled?

Our leaders should be ashamed our teachers have to beg for leadership. Beg for guidance. Beg for support. Maybe the BOE/DOE can sit in committees and bullshit our politicians and the general public, but you can't bullshit the employees on the front line actually doing the work.

Delay opening and work with HSTA. If you don't, the virus will spread causing the devastation we can see in other states and around the world, students won't learn, precious's resources will be wasted, and your dwindling teaching force stands no chance of holding back the flood waters as our education system collapses. When did childcare, a warm meal, and welfare checks on children supersede our educational systems task of educating our children for the future?

Sent using the free mail.com iPhone App



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Lisa Gualdarama <lisagualdarama@gmail.com> on behalf of Lisa Gualdarama  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:40 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Coved train

We didn't receive any training. Also want to know if students are coughing and sneezing spreading germs what is going to happen

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Ellie Kantar <eliannakantar@gmail.com> on behalf of Ellie Kantar  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:43 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 2020-21 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

My name is Elianna Kantar and I am an ELL teacher serving 9-12 grade students at Farrington High School. My students have been designated by my school as "most vulnerable" so I will be seeing them face to face Monday-Friday every week.

Students return to school in only 14 days and all I have been told is to maintain a 6-foot distance when possible. I have been given no information on PPE for my students or for myself, on how or when my classroom is going to be sanitized, or on what actually happens during the 2 weeks both my students and I are required to be quarantined if a student in class tests positive.

Every time I see Superintendent Kishimoto speak, I feel less safe about returning to school. In the press conference on Monday, July 20, for the first time, I heard her say that teachers will be expected to visually diagnose students. I am not a doctor. I do not have the qualifications or the ability to diagnose whether or not a student should be sent home with a suspected case of COVID-19. Multiple times she has said that thousands of teachers have been provided summer training. I have not been provided training. Instead, I have been sent training recordings that occurred for other teachers. She keeps insisting that we have protocols in place for health and safety. I have not seen any information about what needs to occur for instruction to move fully online or for our school to close due to spread in the building.

We are told that it is fine, our students will be in "ohana bubbles." My students live with siblings and cousins that attend other schools and with adults that are essential workers that do not have the option of working from home. Is it still safe when each person these adults and family members inevitably interact with become part of the "ohana bubble?"

Usually, at this time of the year, I feel excited to return to work and energized to meet my new students and begin learning with them once again. This year I do not feel excited, instead, I feel fear for my students, my colleagues, all of their families, and for myself and my own family. We do not have enough of a plan to start school with students on August 4. Please delay the return of students so teachers have time to plan, be properly trained, and prepare for this school year.

Thank you for taking the time to read and consider my testimony.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Jaimie Jenkins <jaimiekuikahi@gmail.com> on behalf of Jaimie Jenkins  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:43 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony: School Opening Guidelines

Aloha BOE Board Members,

I am both a DOE teacher and a parent of two DOE students. Here are my concerns for the reopening of schools on August 4:

-Allowing each school to choose their own schedules is creating confusion for parents. Parents/Teachers with young children on different modified schedules will need to take up to 3-4 days of leave PER WEEK to stay home and supervise their own childrens' virtual learning.

-Substitute teachers will be in short demand. Teachers will need to take off when sick as well as to care for their own children for illness and their modified schedules. How will this work if there is a mass shortage of subs?

-Teachers have zero training on how to handle COVID exposure in a classroom.

-Temperature check's should be mandatory each day.

- PPE is already in short supply for hospitals. How will schools compete to get supplies?

-If schools can not provide PPE and cleaning supplies, who is required to purchase these things? Teachers?

- All schools should have a mandatory DOE mask policy that will help to protect our students, children, and staff. Giving students an option will create issues in the classroom and with parents.

-Each school needs to provide a device as well as help to access the internet for online learning for every student who does not have these available to them.

If a school can not provide these things, than a safe place on campus should be made available to them (ie. comuter lab).

Mahalo for listening to my concerns,

Jaimie Yonemoto  
Teacher  
Parent

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Taryn K <tarynkk21@gmail.com> on behalf of Taryn K  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:43 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 Taryn Tongg and I am a school counselor at Moanalua High School. What I will write here will be very similar, if not the same, as what I wrote in my testimony to the BOE earlier this month. As I stated in that testimony, I am currently pregnant with my first child. As difficult as it is to try to prepare for motherhood, it's been overshadowed with anxiety and nerves brought on with the reopening of school. I had all intentions of working for as long as possible until my early September due date, however, I'm highly reconsidering. As I'm sure you've heard many teachers and educators say, we WANT to go back to school. We want to see our students again, but at what cost? I am not willing to put myself or my unborn child at risk to be able to do my job. When my friend who lives in San Diego told me last week that schools in her district were not reopening, I had hope that a domino effect would happen across the nation, and more importantly, here. That clearly did not follow in Hawaii. I do not feel comfortable or safe enough to return to school under such unknown conditions. The amount of anxiety that has come over me tells me that it is not worth it to return for one month prior to giving birth. I have looked into what options I have to take leave or get ADA accommodations to be able to make this happen. This is not what I want but what I feel I must do for my health and safety. You have no idea how torn I and many other educators must feel about the reopening of school. I was very disappointed watching Governor Ige's news conference yesterday when he said that schools would reopen prior to the state. I felt like there was no hope left and that I would need to use leave to be able to keep myself safe. I was so happy to hear in HSTA's conference today that they will advocate on our educators' and students' behalf for the delay in reopening schools. I truly hope that the BOE can reconsider the August 4 start of school. We want to be able to provide the best education to our students and cannot do so when ill prepared and in harmful conditions.

Taryn Tongg

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Hanalei conda <hanaleiconda@gmail.com> on behalf of Hanalei conda  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:44 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Unprepared for school opening

Aloha

I am a first grade at Pahoa elementary on the big island of Hawaii. I am very concerned about the reopening of school for many reasons. Some of my reasons include What is being said about schools being prepared. We are not being allowed back on campus until july29 and the first two days we are in meetings. We are given the standard two days to not only get ready for this mess but we also now have to get everything out of our room in order to social distance the desks. We are usually trying to get in prior to our meetings and some of us get lucky and have the week before our meetings to prep our class allowing for an easier opening ( this is on a regular year) now we are limited already and we also have to prep for in class lessons Half distance learning as well as provide lessons for those students that request 100% distance learning.

It also being said that we have received training. I check

My email everyday and the only training I got was for coding and cyber safety. I've been at a stipend dayS for the past two days and we have been leaning on each other for expertise in online learning. We just learned about seesaw today and spent a good amount of time trying to feel

Confident enough in teaching it to kids. By the way we learned about this from a teachers on campus using it with her child.

I know that parents need child care I get it, I'm have 6 to care, however this split week doesn't make it easier for parents if we at least went, one week on one week off I feel

This would be more doable for parents.

There are many other concerns like bathroom use, hand washing, substitute usage, and how we have so many other adults on campus that work with kids , it is definitely not keeping the kids in a bubble, However the ones described above weigh heavy on my heart.

I would like to finish this letter with just a short saying that I do not think the pay should be cut at all . We have been working tirelessly during the fourth quarter and during this time to continue to try and educate our school Keiki as well as our own at the same time. This is my opinion. I really appreciate you reading this and taking this in to consideration.

Mahalo nui

Hanalei conda

GR.1 Pahoa Elementary

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Lynn Loveman <lynn.loveman@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Lynn Loveman  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:45 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Lack of preparedness for Aug 4. start

Attention: Hawaii Board of Education

This testimony is in support of the HSTA's request to delay the start of school set to start on August 4th. I am a school counselor at Waikiki Elementary School, and co-chairing our school's Health and Safety committee as part of our Covid-19 Pandemic Response team. The overwhelming tasks necessary in order to ensure the safety of our school community will require more time, support and attention from the HI DOE as well as our organizations like the BOE/DOH and government and healthcare agencies. I do not feel like our Hawaii infrastructure is working together to ensure readiness in EVERY school. Dr. Kishimoto proclaims all these measures that are being taken, as well as levels of communication and training that have taken place throughout the summer. I assure you this has NOT been the case across the board, and how can it be when most faculty and staff are not even on duty right now as it is summer break. Of course, many of us are trying our best to plan, prepare, communicate, develop digital solutions for our students, procure PPE, etc. But all of this is out of pocket, and unpaid time and personal expenses NOT covered in our teaching contracts. This is completely unfair. We know the private schools have had the resources, manpower and connections in order to open their schools face-to-face or via preferred virtual solutions, but even the private schools are not opening as early as Aug 4th! I strongly believe we should delay students start on August 4, and instead start TOGETHER as a TEACHER/STAFF FORCE on August 4th and use the next 2-4 weeks to prepare safety equipment, retrofit our campuses, train our teachers/parents on digital platforms, as well as make sure we all understand the exact protocol for when people fall ill, have fever, how/who to report, what "isolation" looks like on a campus, etc. This is a pandemic and we should treat this just as if it were a "disaster plan" with a systemic and multi-tiered approach in order to ensure the safety of all in our community.

I think we are all accepting the "risk" with opening our schools, but with more time at least we can address the deeper issues with a sense of public and community confidence, rather than a "every school for themselves" approach, which turns out to be divisive, and leaves many gaps and areas where we will find ourselves in situations where we may be found negligent and liable.

Please consider this request to delay the school year start. If we have to extend school days through June 2021, that's better than starting too early with unsafe and unprepared practices. Governor Ige, Dr. Kishimoto and the DOH are promoting SAFE schools and the highest levels of safety when they speak in public. But the boots on the ground and in the trenches are telling you, "that is not the reality." Need more time in order to do what they are saying we do.

Mahalo for your consideration.  
Lynn Loveman  
School Counselor  
Waikiki Elementary

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.

July 21, 2020

**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.**

Dear Sir,

I would like to give 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.** My name is Lisa Shimabukuro. I am a special education teacher at Kaimiloa Elementary School in Ewa Beach.

I am worried about public schools' reopening plan. Rather, the lack of a safe and responsible plan is what I would like to give testimony on. Even if we ask to students and staff to wear masks, open windows for good ventilation and keep a distance of 6 feet apart from each other, the fact that we are coming in to contact with so many others in a day is a serious concern for me. Students will go in and out of class to the bathroom possibly meeting others as they do so. Students will also go to special classes such as art, Hawaiian studies, physical education and so on and will meet various teachers who themselves have been in contact with students from other classes on campus.

Furthermore, they will play at recess without masks. Imagine the heavy breathing, touching, talking up close not to mention coughing or sneezing that may take place with peers as they do so. In the cafeteria, they will be seated 6 feet apart, but will students not be talking, eating and touching things and others in doing so. How can we be sure they aren't? Even with a cafeteria staff to monitor students, can the staff make sure no one coughs, sneezes, touches others, etc at all times? So many opportunities abound for the spread of covid that I feel we are terribly unprepared for the opening of schools.

When school was in session before covid, I would catch a cold every other month. Since staying at home or going out with a mask and constant hand washing, disinfecting shopping carts or using hand sanitizer going in and out of my car, etc., I have not had a cold since March. It's very telling then that even the influenza or cold virus can be spread so easily at school. Does the DOE really think schools are so different now just because they require 6 feet distance between us and the wearing of masks? Elementary school students are not very careful especially those in grades K-2 and may not tolerate wearing masks the whole day. What then?



In conclusion, I think the Department of Education in Hawaii hasn't thought out how much danger and risk to our health they are putting us teachers in by being exposed to students and other staff members who may seem healthy, but may be asymptomatic. Thus, they may be spreading the virus unknowingly and I don't think that is a safe way to work by having so many people together in one place without a well thought out and planned environment. We need more assurance that our work environment is safe before my colleagues and I go back to work.

Mahalo,  
Lisa Shimabukuro  
(808)781-5120

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Iwalani <iwalanif@yahoo.com> on behalf of Iwalani  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:46 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Pay cuts for Hawaiian Immersion and pushing back start dates...

Aloha e ka BOE,

I am a Hawaiian Immersion teacher on O'ahu. Hours and hours of extra work are done every week by us to ensure our students have a solid Hawaiian Language curriculum to learn from. Differential pay received last semester was long over due. Our moral was lifted, and we felt like we were finally seen for all the extra tasks we need to do in curriculum creation. Now, with the added threat of COVID to our health, we feel like we are being kicked while we are down. We are not ready to open up our classrooms at this time. There has been no training on distance learning, even though we are expected to offer it on top of teaching full time. Today is the 21st of July, and we were just notified last week that we need to figure out how to offer distance learning. Technology is not a strength of mine, yet I am expected to all of a sudden know how to implement a curriculum that students are now accountable for, long distance. We need more time and more training to be ready. I have not even touched upon the safety of everyone on campus. We are less than 2 weeks to opening up our doors for students, and I have no training or direction on safety protocol for myself and my students. This is not right, and it is not safe.

Please pay us what we have already been promised, and give us more time to prepare for a healthy opening of schools.

Me ka 'oia'i'o,

Iwalani Foster

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Shelly Wamar <slwamar1967@gmail.com> on behalf of Shelly Wamar  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:47 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Training for Covid

My name is Michelle wamar.

I work at waiakea complex schools on the big island. Waiakea Waena elem to be exact. I would like training first with the proper protocol concerning Covid and students/ staff returning.

Thank you .

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Shannon Hirai <hirai21@icloud.com> on behalf of Shannon Hirai  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:47 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** School opening

I'm a school security attendant at a High school and have not gotten any info on what changes are being made to my job. Also we have not gotten any training for up coming year. I really don't know what's going on at our school. I know we report on July 30,20 and that's about all I know.

Sent from my iPad

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Grace Chen-Ellis <gracechenellis@gmail.com> on behalf of Grace Chen-Ellis  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:48 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov; Grace Chen-Ellis  
**Subject:** REJECT the proposal to TAKE AWAY the teacher shortage differentials

Aloha BOE,

I write to respectfully request that you reconsider the deferral of shortage differentials. Statistics have shown these differentials to have been quite successful in bolstering Hawaii's teaching workforce. You already know that, with the differentials, more teachers are staying on.

Deferrals will not pay our rent or buy our food. Teachers are struggling in Hawaii and are truly on the frontlines of helping our Keiki get through the pandemic. This difficult time is not the time to take action that could result in an exodus of teachers from our schools when we need them most.

While I fully understand the stress on the state and school budget, I urge you to find ways to reduce spending without directly harming the most important cohort in our school system -- classroom teachers.

Mahalo for your consideration. Grace C. Chen-Ellis, PhD.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Miri Sumida <sumidahilo@gmail.com> on behalf of Miri Sumida  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:48 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony to delay reopening of schools

I am testifying on 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.](#)

My name is Miri Sumida, have taught both elementary and high school level students for over 25 years. My child is enrolled in Kindergarten this year. I am forced to make a decision that none of which I am comfortable with.

In any case, I feel that the community is not ready to commit to providing a SAFE environment for our children in the school systems both public and private. No matter what measures are taken by the schools, we cannot control outside forces at this time. One of the major concerns is what families, teachers, administrators, etc. do on their own time when out of school to keep from getting infected. The community, as a whole has not taken this COVID 19 as seriously as they should. Another concern is having children use their masks all day long in school. Masks do help, but it is hard for the children to keep them on at all times, as well as ensure that they are able to keep cool and breathe properly. As far as online courses, some children do well and others do not. Online courses will also require parental supervision and time away from work, as well as being able to supply the proper technology required. As a former teacher who developed and worked with online courses, I know how much time, knowledge and effort is needed for a teacher to develop an online curriculum to suit the classroom. I also know the amount of work needed to follow-up with each student online is intense. Cooperation from home is necessary to be successful. Not all teachers are equipped with the experience and knowledge, as well as the parents/guardians at home.

Personally, if schools open on August 4, 2020, I have chosen the online course, stay at home option. This is not what I want to do, but feel forced to choose this option. I feel it was my only choice to ensure my child's safety at this time. Having a lot of background in technology, I feel I could support my child until it is safe for him to go to school. I feel for others who are not able to support their child at home with the proper knowledge and technology needed.

I would feel more confident to allow my child to go to school if there is a vaccine that works, if the community continues to improve and work together to follow COVID 19 guidelines, numbers of infected cases drop, etc. In other words, I am not convinced that we are ready to set our children free into the community.

I understand that COVID 19 will be here for a long time. But I feel that we need to delay the reopening of schools and be more prepared as well. I hear that many teachers are losing their jobs and wonder what type of staffing would be available to support the education so needed by our students?

Please reconsider mandating the opening of all schools at this time until we are more ready to do so.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Shelly Wamar <slwamar1967@gmail.com> on behalf of Shelly Wamar  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:48 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Pandemic

Schools should not open yet. We are not prepared at all for handling the various situations and conditions we are going to be faced with on a daily basis.

Waiakea complex .. big island

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Miri Sumida <sumidahilo@gmail.com> on behalf of Miri Sumida  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:49 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Re: Testimony to delay reopening of schools

In addition to my testimony, I'd like to reiterate that we don't have a definite guideline in place from the DOE as to how and what the children will be learning. Where is the curriculum? What are your procedures?

On Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 5:47 PM Miri Sumida <[sumidahilo@gmail.com](mailto:sumidahilo@gmail.com)> wrote:

I am testifying on 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.](#)

My name is Miri Sumida, have taught both elementary and high school level students for over 25 years. My child is enrolled in Kindergarten this year. I am forced to make a decision that none of which I am comfortable with.

In any case, I feel that the community is not ready to commit to providing a SAFE environment for our children in the school systems both public and private. No matter what measures are taken by the schools, we cannot control outside forces at this time. One of the major concerns is what families, teachers, administrators, etc. do on their own time when out of school to keep from getting infected. The community, as a whole has not taken this COVID 19 as seriously as they should. Another concern is having children use their masks all day long in school. Masks do help, but it is hard for the children to keep them on at all times, as well as ensure that they are able to keep cool and breathe properly. As far as online courses, some children do well and others do not. Online courses will also require parental supervision and time away from work, as well as being able to supply the proper technology required. As a former teacher who developed and worked with online courses, I know how much time, knowledge and effort is needed for a teacher to develop an online curriculum to suit the classroom. I also know the amount of work needed to follow-up with each student online is intense. Cooperation from home is necessary to be successful. Not all teachers are equipped with the experience and knowledge, as well as the parents/guardians at home.

Personally, if schools open on August 4, 2020, I have chosen the online course, stay at home option. This is not what I want to do, but feel forced to choose this option. I feel it was my only choice to ensure my child's safety at this time. Having a lot of background in technology, I feel I could support my child until it is safe for him to go to school. I feel for others who are not able to support their child at home with the proper knowledge and technology needed.

I would feel more confident to allow my child to go to school if there is a vaccine that works, if the community continues to improve and work together to follow COVID 19 guidelines, numbers of infected cases drop, etc. In other words, I am not convinced that we are ready to set our children free into the community.

I understand that COVID 19 will be here for a long time. But I feel that we need to delay the reopening of schools and be more prepared as well. I hear that many teachers are losing their jobs and wonder what type of staffing would be available to support the education so needed by our students?

Please reconsider mandating the opening of all schools at this time until we are more ready to do so.



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** kim <kimapali444@gmail.com> on behalf of kim  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:49 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** TESTIMONY

To whom it may concern:

I'm a teacher at Aiea Elementary. Our school consists of about 95% of Halawa housing children. On a daily basis we already have many problems with hygiene (bed bugs, lice, pink eye, etc.) and parents send them to school when they are sick all the time because they don't want to watch them at home. They don't understand the seriousness of the situation and even before this pandemic, we had to teach them to wash their hands and cover their mouth when coughing or sneezing, and I teach upper elementary kids!

I ran into a student at the beach who said her Dad just took the Coronavirus test because 2 of his coworkers had it and he was feeling sick with a cough and fever. When I asked her if he had it, her response was, "We don't know, he didn't get the results yet " I explained to her that they should quarantine until they get the results. When I questioned where her Dad was, she pointed to a group of about 30 people bbq-ing. I immediately contacted my school and declined to teach summer school. I'm extremely afraid to step foot on campus due to our population we work with. I have elderly parents (who I will need to isolate from if I go back to work) and in-laws who we see regularly, not to mention we have 3 young children at home. My biggest fear is contracting the virus and giving it to one of them. I have seen my lawyer twice to write up a will, which is uncommon for people my age. I can't sleep at night thinking about going back to work, I average about 3 hours a night. Since I heard about the August 4th return date, I've seen a therapist for anxieties, I'm on prescribed medication, I pay \$110/week for acupuncture for my stress and migraine headaches, and I am in total fear of what's to come. I have thought about taking a year off, moving to somewhere cheaper, quitting teaching altogether, or facing the challenges and going in and risking my life as well as my family's. It's a total nightmare.

How will our school and other schools in our same situation be handled? Will there be extra guidelines for us? Majority of our students do not bring in school supplies, nor cleaning supplies, and I usually end up picking up the slack, which I'm unable to do this year. I know you mentioned reimbursement, but do high risk schools get a higher budget? And it will be nearly impossible to house all our kids in our classroom. I don't think it makes sense that the entire nation has 6 feet distance guidelines, but when we're put in a high risk situation, we have to fight for our rights. I am still social distancing at home and when I do go out, I make sure I'm at least 12 feet from the next person.

I find it odd that Ige and Kishimoto are the major decision makers, but they've never stepped foot in a classroom (full of kids during a pandemic!). If they both go into a different classroom everyday and spend a full day with the students (for an entire school year) under our conditions, I might have a little respect for them. However, that will never happen, and they have the power to make the call that could end up disastrous. They haven't taken into consideration any of our pleas to hold off until we can find a vaccine. If a student or employee contracts the Coronavirus and it is traced back to campus, will the BOE take full responsibility for all medical bills? And will they take responsibility for all the ongoing health issues related to the virus? I don't think so. We're just a dime a dozen and can be replaced, right?

I can guarantee that many teachers will be leaving the DOE, especially after hearing plans of cutting our pay! Have you not heard all the comments from parents and how much they value teachers after trying to homeschool their own kids for 2 months? Our job isn't easy to begin with, these conditions only make it worse.

Bottom line, I'm just really concerned and have fear and anxieties when thinking about August 4th, so much that I'm developing health issues that may only get worse as time goes on.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Natalie Dotseth <nataliedotseth@gmail.com> on behalf of Natalie Dotseth  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:49 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Aloha, My name is Natalie Dotseth. I am an educator at Voyager Public Charter School. I am submitting testimony regarding the 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 would like to urge the Board of Education to delay the return of students to campus in order for schools, including teachers and staff, to prepare for the students' safe return to schooling for the 2020-2021 school year. Over the summer, I have attended many few voluntary staff meetings, to help create a possible plan for how to begin the 2020-2021 school year. The goal has been to keep up to date with DOH, DOE, and HSTA guidelines and MOUs to find a way to create a system that will best support the health and safety of our keiki, staff, and community. In addition, I have volunteered my time this summer to attend Professional Development (PD) online to learn about Project Based Learning, and another PD to learn about pandemics in relation to Hawaii. All of this professional development was voluntary and did not focus on the method of which to actually deliver instruction. I have not been able to plan out what a hybrid model, or fully distanced model of teaching would look like. This is for two main reasons: 1) the information about returning to school has been piecemeal and inconsistent across the state and 2) I refuse to work for free trying to determine how to teach, when I do not know the mode of teaching that will inevitably be how my school will reopen.

As an educator, my number one concern for my students is their health and safety. Only when students have security in their health and safety, can they truly begin to learn in a way that is optimal to their well being. I want to have time with my fellow teachers to learn about how best to provide a nurturing environment, through distance learning. Many of the people I speak to imply that it is only a matter of time until we need to close schools again. I truly believe that at some point in the school year, we will end up having to do remote learning for at least a while. Please consider providing teachers the time we need to ensure that we can adequately learn how to provide both a safe environment and quality instruction through distance learning. Many of the school reopening plans have at least a portion of the week where students are distance learning. Let's not rush to start school on the arbitrary date of August 4. This date was set up before COVID-19. We need to delay this student start date in order to ensure that teachers are trained to provide quality instruction and relationship building with our students through distance learning.

In addition, this time, will ensure that the safety measures and protocols in schools are consistent. Schools need to have protocols in place for what happens if our students, staff, or families test positive or are exposed to the virus. Schools need to make sure that all teachers and staff understand those protocols, and families need to be made aware of them as well. There needs to be greater transparency in communication about what is being done at schools to keep kids safe, and what families need to do to keep their kids safe, as well. We need to be working as a community to ensure that we minimize the risk of exposure to any individual on our school campuses. We need the time to make this happen.

“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,” Rosenlee said.

*Natalie Dotseth*

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Daniel Slattery <dpslatt@gmail.com> on behalf of Daniel Slattery  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:55 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Teacher Differential

To whom it may concern:

My name is Daniel Slattery and I have worked as a special education teacher for five years at Mountain View Elementary on the big island of Hawaii. One year in fifth grade and four years supporting Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten.

Last school year, I attained dual certification with the intention of switching to a general education role for the 2020-21 school year. Following the introduction of the SPED differential, I turned down a general education position for the upcoming school year and agreed to work as a special education teacher for one more year. It is unfair to defer the teacher differential at this point in the school year when I am unable to accept a different role. Many special education teachers are in the same situation, only agreeing to work as a SPED teacher with a promise of the differential. I know of teachers who left other roles to return to the role of a special education teacher. Please honor the commitment that you made to teachers. In doing so, you are investing in our keiki.

I understand that these are difficult times for everyone, but the differential would never have been introduced and successful if the salary adequately equated to the work required to do the job well. The limited funding and resources in the complex within which I work mean that I am required to support multiple grade levels and manage a significant number of cases. In addition, I work in a hard to staff school with students who may have additional needs associated with impoverished communities. The work is challenging. The differential was the one impetus for continuing in the special education role.

Please honor the commitment made to teachers who receive a pay differential! In doing so, you will enhance teacher commitment to the Hawaii Department of Education. In doing so, you will improve the education of our most susceptible students. In doing so, you will improve the education of **all** students! Thank you!

Sincerely,  
Daniel Slattery

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Colby Kihoi <ckihoi@gmail.com> on behalf of Colby Kihoi  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:50 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Do not open schools august 4

Opening schools on august 4 would be a terrible mistake and on a life-dangering scale. It is too early to be opening up a massive institution like Hawaii public schools. My girlfriend is a public school teacher with immuno-compromised health issues. I don't want her to get sick. I don't want her to bring It home to our multi-generational home and get my parents over age 65 sick. We have done so much to stay safe and protect our health these last few months only to throw it all away starting august 4. It's interesting that as the world continues to social distance when possible and work remotely when possible, HIDOE is willing to risk the safety of students and staff in order to boast that Hawaii was one of the first districts to open on campus classes. But at what costs ? We don't know what for sure yet, but we do know that lives are on the line unnecessarily. Yes, distance learning was not perfect, but it was much better than risking catching COVID and dying. If it is possible to social distance, we should. Do not open Hawaii public schools on august 4 if you don't want to see COVID related deaths rise.

-CK

--

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** yamauchi@hawaiiantel.net  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:50 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Pay differential and delay school reopening

To whom it may concern,

I have been a special education teacher for 22 years and have contemplated many many times on quitting because of the unfair amount of personal time the job takes away from my own children. There are several reasons that I have stayed. The obvious being my love of working with children. The other two being financial need, but most importantly that I have the same vacation time as my own children. The thought of quitting has crossed my mind so many times during COVID-19, but those reasons have yet again kept me from quitting.

During COVID-19, the enormous amount of extra responsibilities that we now have and the numerous hours that it takes for meetings, have me herring on the side of quitting. The stress has not only taken a toll on my family, but my health. We are taking a lot more responsibilities and sacrificing our family time and our health. Decreasing the differential pay shows that we are under-appreciated. For many there will be no incentive to stay. Although the differential does not lessen our workload and stress or solve any special education problems, it is one small reason that some of us will stay - financial need.

Furthermore, COVID-19 has taken away, more than usual, some of my summer days because of planning at the end of the year and for the beginning of the year. Again, taking away my time with my own children. Summer break is not really a break for many teachers, it's a time to catch up on the work that we didn't get to finish during the year. So, if you think about it, the differential is not enough for the amount of overtime hours we put into our jobs.

Finally, please consider delaying the reopening of schools to students until we are confident that health and safety procedures will be successfully in place, that school staff are equipped with safety materials (ie PPEs), and that teachers are ready to receive students either face-to-face and/or virtually. Having 4 teacher workdays prior to students returning is not nearly enough time to prepare for a whole year of face-to-face and virtual teaching. As a parent, I know that bus transportation registration is not well organized and safety precautions (ie seating 2 to a seat is not social distancing 6 ft apart or even 3 feet apart) are not well thought out. As a teacher and parent, knowing that schools are not equipped and bus transportation is not organized, makes me worry about our health and safety. Remember that teachers and students go home to our families not in the school system (grandparents, aunts, uncles, babies), exposing them to every single person we came into contact with at school. Being unprepared can cost so many lives if the virus spreads, so why rush to reopen?

Cutting the differential, increased work load without more time to plan/prep, and unsafe work conditions...will those reasons make any of us want to stay?

Thank you,  
Carrie Y.  
Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** rosesuemoto@hawaii.rr.com  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:50 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony - Action item H

**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 Bargaining Unit 5 Employees.

My husband and I are grandparents of a second grader who is scheduled to go back to school Aug. 4. His father is also a teacher and his mother (who is diabetic) works, full time. Living in the household, is his mom's very elderly father who has dementia. His parents have arranged adult daycare for the father when school starts, but he will be home in the evening with the family. My husband and I are healthy for now, though we are very careful and wear masks whenever we leave the house for groceries or the like. But the fact is that we both have some cardiac issues that make us a higher risk.

Our grandchild will be attending school two days a week, and will be distance learning the other three days. Since both parents will be at work all five days, our grandson will be with us on his off days. We understand that when children get the virus, they generally will not have a severe case. But of course, this is not guaranteed. And if our grandson goes back to school prematurely and gets infected, he will expose three grandparents and a diabetic mom.

We love our grandchild with all our hearts, and we are willing to take the risk. But at the same time, I keep wondering if we should need to. If the grandchild was with us for the entire week, he would not be exposed to the virus from other kids, teachers, A+ workers, cafeteria workers and more. There is the possibility that the grandparent in adult daycare or our grandchild's parents could bring home the virus, but the overall chance of exposure to our grandchild, and ultimately us, would be significantly reduced.

I encourage the DOE to postpone the opening of school until all the contingencies are addressed. We are taxpayers, as well as grandparents, and we believe that sufficient training of teachers and administrators has not yet been done. Written plans from the DOE and DOH are crucial. Hawaii is a state that is all about family. Extended family living in a single household is very common in Hawaii, and this needs to be considered when making such crucial decisions. We can't think about restoring our economy without being sensitive to our cultural mores. Children can learn in other environments. Hundreds of thousands of kids are being homeschooled in this country, and they are doing so successfully.

Rose Suemoto  
Ewa Beach



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Kihoi Builders <kihoibuildershi@gmail.com> on behalf of Kihoi Builders  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:51 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Do not open schools august 4

Opening schools on august 4 would be a terrible mistake and on a life-dangering scale. It is too early to be opening up a massive institution like Hawaii public schools. My girlfriend is a public school teacher with immuno-compromised health issues. I don't want her to get sick. I don't want her to bring It home to our multi-generational home and get my parents over age 65 sick. We have done so much to stay safe and protect our health these last few months only to throw it all away starting august 4. It's interesting that as the world continues to social distance when possible and work remotely when possible, HIDOE is willing to risk the safety of students and staff in order to boast that Hawaii was one of the first districts to open on campus classes. But at what costs ? We don't know what for sure yet, but we do know that lives are on the line unnecessarily. Yes, distance learning was not perfect, but it was much better than risking catching COVID and dying. If it is possible to social distance, we should. Do not open Hawaii public schools on august 4 if you don't want to see COVID related deaths rise.

-CK

--

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** casey bautista <casey\_hulten@yahoo.com> on behalf of casey bautista  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:51 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Hear our plea

In this uncertain time it is unfair to put our health and safety at risk. School reopening should be postponed. Health and safety protocol need to be put in place prior to reopening. Staff need training and proper cleaning supplies provided. I am scared as a teacher and parent. Our keiki or our future we must assure they are protected. Please postpone school reopening...

Aloha

Casey Hulten

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Rose Glad <missgladiator@gmail.com> on behalf of Rose Glad  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:51 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony on action item H

My name is Rose Glad and I am a math teacher at Konawaena Middle School on Hawaii Island. I agree that we are facing unprecedented challenges, but opening school at this time fails to meet the safety needs of our community. The so-called Ohana Bubble is a fabricated idea based on nothing. The truth is that we are bringing random groups of students together to sit and breathe near each other in our classrooms, eat all at the same time, break for bathroom use all at the same time. We are not immune to each other and are not ohana; we are crossing paths with myriad others by traveling to and from school, meeting other family members, and whatever other activities that may happen along the way. We are exposing our teachers to dangerous amounts of social contact by holding in-person school even in a modified manner. There are better ways, and other places are doing them. We can do them too. We can open online only for the first quarter and then ease into in-person school as the danger dissipates. But to jump in now, with minimal protections, opening school in just two weeks, is a failure to plan. Please reconsider and do more to protect our students and our teachers.

Sincerely,  
Rose Glad

Tuesday, July 20, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Tara Spencer and I am a special education teacher here on Oahu.

As a Special Education teacher, I have to wear many hats. I have been a teacher for many years and had to accept that this job will require many hours outside of my paid work hours, to complete paperwork, data sheets, assessments, planning, etc. I have spent countless hours, unpaid, working on IEP paperwork, holding meetings and being in compliance with laws supporting special education. It was not until January, when I felt like I was being treated fairly and equally for my time that was spent outside of work hours. Once I was being paid the Special Education differential, I finally felt valued as a teacher.

Also, this differential meant that I could continue to afford to live in Hawai'i. I am living on this income solely, and it would be devastating to lose. I would potentially have to work a second job after school and on the weekends. This means less of my time spent preparing lessons, collaborating with my colleagues, running IEP meetings, and putting my heart and soul into my instruction of the keiki. My teaching career in itself is two jobs. Not only do I manage a caseload and every IEP goal and accommodation on a daily basis, I also teach standards just like other teachers. I also have to be in compliance with the IEP paperwork, which includes data and evaluations prior to IEP meetings, which are usually held after school during unpaid time.

In the fourth quarter, the schools, teachers, administration, students and families were hit hard with the Covid-19 closures. The amount of work that was required from Special Education teachers was substantial and overwhelming. Not only were we figuring out distance learning models without any training, we also had to hold IEP meetings through WebEx, a new platform to many teachers. I personally had to hold a meeting within the first week via WebEx without any practice or training. Being flexible is a part of being a teacher, but we were all asked to go above and beyond during the Covid-19 building closures.

Now, the superintendent wants to take away the pay differentials. This is sincere disrespect for the people in the profession. The amount of work and energy that we put into the job to prepare our young students for future success cannot be unseen or unnoticed any longer.

The differential showed significant success in its first semester alone. How could anyone possibly take this away from our keiki and teachers? Does it not matter that quality education is provided to these young people in our society here in Hawai'i? When is this going to stop? Playing with teacher paychecks and livelihoods is a direct insult and will result in poorer education for the keiki. That is all that this comes down to. It is not the teacher's fault that finances are strained currently.

Please do not take this out on the people who work diligently, day in and day out for the keiki. We are the educators of these people who will command the future!

Sincerely,

Tara Spencer  
Special Education Teacher

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Tara Lindsey <tlindsey@kiheicharter.org> on behalf of Tara Lindsey  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:55 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony for Virtual Education

Aloha,

I am a high school teacher at Kihei Charter School and parent of a 2nd grader at Wailuku Elementary, and would like to submit written testimony in favor of 100% virtual education for at least the first half, if not all, of school year 2020-21.

Due to rising cases of Covid-19 on both the mainland and state of Hawaii, I believe the safest option for our teachers and keiki is a virtual program this upcoming school year. As of now, the school I work for is planning a face-to-face/virtual hybrid model, with students attending face-to-face every other week. However, because of the small size of our K-12 school and limited staffing, teachers are frequently interacting with multiple groups of students in a single day and also asked to work in groups of three in small offices during the weeks when students are virtual. Because I am a single parent, I will also be bringing my child to work with me on his three virtual days each week, increasing his risk of exposure and by extension, the exposure of the children and teachers he encounters on his face-to-face days at Wailuku Elementary.

As of now, our class sizes are about 15-17 students, and even when spaced according to CDC guidelines, this is still a lot of people to have in a room at a time. I'm sure you have read about the case in Arizona from this summer about three teachers sharing a large classroom to teach virtual summer classes. It was only these three teachers in the classroom, as they taught their students virtually, wearing both masks and gloves, and yet all three of these individuals contracted Covid and one of them died. It is simply unsafe to attempt face-to-face learning in the face of a pandemic we are only beginning to understand.

I have also read that while elementary school age children are less contagious, middle and high school age children are just as contagious as adults.

While I see that schools are doing their best to ensure a safe return with face-to-face options, the actual execution of these plans are simply unrealistic and unsafe for all involved.

I ask that you consider an across the board virtual option for all schools in the state of Hawaii to drastically reduce the spread of Covid in our small communities.

Thank you for your time and hard work during this unprecedented time.

Tara Lindsey  
Academic Dean  
Kihei Charter School  
tlindsey@kiheicharter.org  
808-283-1770

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Melanie Nakashima <mn2018@hawaii.edu> on behalf of Melanie Nakashima  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:55 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony - we need more time to plan for reopening with teachers

Aloha mai kakou,

These are unprecedented times and administrators and 12 month employees have been working hard to prepare for reopening with all the challenges and guidelines.

Next week, teachers return, they are scared and many haven't been back to school yet. We are asking them to accept their fears, get on board in a short time and open doors to classes in a few short days. Teacher and staff have questions and admin is busy supporting teachers and our school community who is also reaching out with their fears. We want teacher voice, yet we are asking administrators to make decisions without the teachers present. We aren't ready. This isn't a normal school year. We need time with our staff returning to work to make these plans and to give teachers time to set up their classroom. We can't do that simultaneously when students are on campus. We are concerned about:

- \*Safety and Healthy concerns not addressed
- \*Lack of PPEs/Supplies not provided as stated
- \*Training promised has not been provided
- \*when will we be able to create staff videos and training for our students on safety measures.

Postponing the opening of schools is not what I'm asking. Postponing the date students arrive on campus is what we're asking, in order to create a safer environment and support staff members also. This will also allow time for students to quarantine returning from trips since the governor extended the quarantine order and many families have reached out saying the first two weeks of school their child will be quarantined at home. How is this equitable for schools already loosing funding and losing dozens of students for student counts?

Please consider delaying students returning by a couple weeks to allow our staff adequate time to prepare. Let's do this right!

Melanie Nakashima  
BKM Complex administrator

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Eric Iwasaki <erici@hawaiiintel.net> on behalf of Eric Iwasaki  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:56 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 Eric Iwasaki and I am a 7th grade social studies teacher at Kalama Intermediate on the island of Maui.

In addition to being a teacher, I am also a School Leader for my union, HSTA.

As we try to move forward with opening schools for 2020-21, I have had many conversations with teachers at my school and through their voices I can feel their fear about opening our school in an unsafe environment. In the back of our minds has always been the phrase at our school, safety first.

These voices and fears are being told by teachers young and old. Teachers fear of getting the virus at school and their life taking a possible turn for the worse and even worse than that, giving this virus to an elderly parent that lives with them. Also, teachers with children who fear leaving their child at home due to the learning model at their child's school is different than ours and/or their child not being able to play with grandma or grandpa at home in fear of giving the virus to them.

As a School Leader, I have learned that the Department of Health is a critical part of the reopening of schools and to see no guidance from them at this point in the game makes me fearful that schools may not be up to par to ensure safety first.

I understand that protection and cleaning supplies will be supplied to teachers but when I return to school next week if there is a lack of supplies, there is a part in the MOU on reopening schools that I can be reimbursed. I am not completely confident that I can buy all that is needed at my local stores and/or order online and have the supplies be ready to go on August 5 when my students start the year.

As I listened into two of our voluntary meeting this month and have emailed the administration with no response, the administration hasn't written protocols for related to Covid-19 issues like how do students get off the bus, where is the designated conference site, how to deal with a student or any person on campus with a temperature, and how we would close the school and transition to 100% distance learning. Fortunately or unfortunately, many of the staff at my school haven't even thought of these steps necessary to ensure safety but this critical part of written protocols is definitely on my checklist of things to look for when I return to school next week.

Moving onto 100% distance learning, yes, the MOU on reopening schools gives teachers an hour of teacher-initiated planning time for the first 9 school days of the year. What about the rest of the year?



I just today had a conversation with two of my fellow teachers on the topic of planning time for in-person lesson plans while at the same time, planning for distance learning lessons and possibly keeping track of students who are 100% distance learning. Like I used say to my mother when I was little, I am not an octopus that can do everything at once<hope you get that>.

My suggestion is to slow the boat and figure out where we are, where we need to go, and what we need to do for everyone on the boat to makes it home at the end of the school day.

Sincerely,  
Eric Iwasaki

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Tanya Florin <tanya.florin@gmail.com> on behalf of Tanya Florin  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:56 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** delay reopening of school

To whom this may concern,

I am writing this email to express my concern for the reopening of public schools on August 4th. Because there seems to be a lack of specific, organized and necessary planning in order to protect my children AND their teachers from the effects of COVID, there should be a delay in starting.

Unfortunately, there seems to have been AMPLE time to prepare for these logistics. But, as of yet, there has been no consensus on how the DOE plans to care for our children and the adults that instruct and care for their safety.

There are less than two weeks before school is to start and there is still a lack of information on how many feet my school has decided upon, if there will be temperature checks, if masks are mandatory, etc. It seems that every other organization in Hawaii has CLEAR and CONCISE information on what their policy and procedures are in order to protect themselves and the public.

Until you, I, federal government employees and or Zippy's patrons will accept 3 feet as an acceptable distance I will NOT send my most valuable possession back to public school.

The response and action during this time by the DOE and the state of Hawaii is nothing short of shameful and embarrassing.

Once again, our only hope for a prosperous and successful future (our children) seems to be getting the shortest end of the stick.

I have a choice where to send my children to school. I desperately wanted to believe in the public school system. But, the lack of preparedness and the seemingly disregard for their and their teachers safety has painfully illustrated that my beliefs were unfounded.

I'm not sure that ANY amount of time will get the schools system ready for the safety of our children and their teachers. But, they ARE NOT READY now.

-Tanya Florin

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** hotcorner A <hotcorner3bdive@gmail.com> on behalf of hotcorner A  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:56 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Re-opening of School

Aloha,

I am speaking as both a parent and public school administrator. Simply put, we are not ready to open. There are many questions that Mr. Rosenlee presented that have not been answered. It is difficult to lead teachers, support parents, and keep students safe when inconsistent messages come from the DOE, DOH, and CDC. We need to come up with a long term plan. Currently, we are holding our breath and jumping into untested waters. We can do better than this. Schools are in the middle of planning and are nowhere close to being done. If we open prematurely, an inevitable breakout would cause us to start from square one again, this time with possible casualties. We are not ready to open.

-Liz A.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Darryl Munetake <dmunetake77@gmail.com> on behalf of Darryl Munetake  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:57 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** School year

Aloha,

I am wondering if opening schools on August 4 is a wise idea.

As an educator for over 30 years I can honestly say that it not a very good idea.

With the uncertainties surrounding Covid 19 and the intricacies that make it such a difficult virus to understand, how can you subject the students and staff of our public schools to such an unpredictable and potentially dangerous situation?

There are many schools that are old and the facilities may not be able to accommodate the guidelines set forth by the CDC and the MOU between the HSTA and the DOE.

I was really insulted when there was a picture of Superintendent Kishimoto standing in a classroom in Kapolei and basically implying that the distance between students can be accommodated in all schools.

Kapolei is a fairly new school but this is not the case in many schools that have very old infrastructure and simply cannot compare.

So it's about the have and the have nots. We have a lot of portables that are split into two classrooms at our school. How are we supposed to fit our students in there at 6ft apart? So we've applied for a waiver so that they are 4ft apart.. is this safe? We really don't know because isn't it supposed to be 6ft?

The bottom line is are we really ready to face the unknown by opening schools? Are we going to be the Guinea pigs for the nation? Are we ready for online learning? Have all the teachers been trained and do we have the necessary equipment to be effective?

These things should have been addressed at lest two months ago and now it seems like we are in a rush to go into this situation blindfolded to the the potential risk of infections and possibly deaths of the stakeholders in education.

I know that eduction is very important for our keiki but it it worth risking the health and welfare of everyone associated with the school population?

We should crating a effective means of online learning. Train the teachers and ensure that our students receive the best. Don't have all these ideas about blended learning and let the teachers wing it because we will have many students falling through the cracks of our educational system.

Take the time to prepare for success because our students deserve it..

Mahalo

Darryl K Munetake

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Donna Montalvo <donna.montalvo@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Donna Montalvo  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:56 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Re opening Schools

I feel that we should delay the opening of the schools, I am a teacher of 35 years and everything I have asked for, to get my classroom ready is not available. I love being a teacher and working with the students, but I don't think I have to put my life on the line, to serve as a babysitter for parents that will be put out, for our delaying the opening. We need to do this right and make sure we as teachers, are trained and prepared, and our classroom meets all the CoVid 19 guidelines. I ask you to do the right thing! Protect the Teachers, Staff and most important our students of Hawaii.

Sincerely,  
Donna Montalvo

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Ann Brandman <annbrandman@gmail.com> on behalf of Ann Brandman  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:57 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

I am testifying on Action Item H Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between the Hawaii State BOE and the HSTA regarding COVID and the return to school on August 4. I am not a teacher, but my partner is, and we live in the same home.

I am in an at-risk population for COVID-19. We are both worried about the lack of clear, written health care planning as well as a surge in cases on Oahu.

I believe the planning overall is not complete, nor is the guidance for teachers, who are asked to carry the burden for safety in their classrooms. Opening up after school activities also breaks the so-called bubble.

Today, a sentinel testing report indicated 10% of samples tested positive for COVID. Clearly, the number of cases here is under-reported. We don't have adequate testing to even make the testing possible.

It seems likely that schools will open only to be shut again -- which causes more chaos than waiting until protocols are clearly in place.

I urge you to hold off on opening on August 4. We are not ready, and our teachers, custodial staff, children and their families are too precious to be put at risk.

Thank you,  
Ann Brandman

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Kimberly Pico <alkp05@yahoo.com> on behalf of Kimberly Pico  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:58 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Aloha,

I'm an EA at Kekaulike High School on Maui and I'm wondering how now with the cases being higher then it was back in April when you decided to close the school for the remainder of the year, is it now SAFE? Back in April it was said that there needed to be 4 weeks of no cases, why is it okay now? How do you think when you know little about the this virus do you feel our children, our staff & our families are safe? We the EA's work closely with the kids that are most vulnerable. How is it that you think they may not possibly be exposed to Covid and pass it on to their families or the staff at the school and we take it home to our families? How many people need to get sick or worse, die before we'll need to close the schools again? I have 3 children at home that will be doing distance learning because they have bad asthma. I also have asthma & my husband has underlined health conditions as well. How will I feel safe when no one is telling us how we're going to stop the spread, or how we're gonna clean surfaces, or if we'll even have the proper PPE to work with these vulnerable children. Please consider your staff & the people of Hawaii & slow down a bit and try to figure out the SAFE & RIGHT way to open up. We the staff need training, we the staff need supplies to clean & we the staff need to know that when these children come to school they will be healthy & also wearing a mask to protect us. I'm going to wear a mask to protect them, I need to know that I'm being protected as well. Just think how many families could get sick from just 1 sick child. Is it worth rushing? It's always better to be safe then sorry. I thank you for your time & hope that everything works out for the safety & well being of the people of Hawaii.

Mahalo,  
Kimberly Pico

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Kaipo Crouch <kaipogirl@gmail.com> on behalf of Kaipo Crouch  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:58 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Aloha,

As a parent and middle teacher at Ke Kula 'O 'Ehunuikaimalino, I believe that schools are NOT prepared to reopen. Administrators and teachers alike are confused. This I believe is a reflection on our state leadership. I am testifying on Action Item H. Board Action on MOU between State of Hawai'i BOE and HSTA (SY 2020-21): COVID-19 Response: 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees

To keep this as short and sweet as possible, schools are sorely underprepared to open for these reasons:

1. The Superintendent misled people by saying that teachers have received training for distance learning over the summer. Teachers did NOT receive any training for distance learning. If they did, it was very few. This statement leads people to believe that teachers are prepared which is an extremely false statement.
2. Expecting children to keep a 6 ft (even 3 ft) distance between each other is an impossible expectation. Schools are a breeding ground for germs. In Hawai'i, we live in multi-family situations, grandma, grandpa, aunty, and uncle, etc. Guarantee, there is someone in majority of the Hawai'i households who is vulnerable to COVID-19.
3. The lack of facilities. Our school is the only Hawaiian immersion school in West Hawai'i. How does our school adhere to the 6 ft (even 3 ft) distance when there isn't enough space? Even with the exception to the 6ft social distancing, there is still not enough room.
4. According to the MOU made, the state was to provide from the DOH written guidance of reopening schools. This has still not been provided.
5. HDOE claims students have 100% access to DL. That is a lie.

There are many, MANY more reasons to the incapacibilities of the schools reopening. There are many unanswered questions as well such as, what is the protocol for if/when a teacher or student (or both) has COVID-19? Or what happens if a student's family member has COVID-19? What then?

It is unfair for the state to require teachers as well as students to go back to school without fully thinking this through. Reopening schools with a half-cocked plan will only prolong the existence of COVID-19 as well as prolong the closure of our economy. Rather than setting up teachers and students for success, as we are trained to do for our students, we are being set up for failure. It has been made very apparent by the DOH that COVID-19 cases WILL spike when school starts again on August 4th, 2020.

Please reconsider your decision to reopen schools and to have a more thorough, well thought out plan prepared.

Me ka ha'aha'a,





## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Shirley Mori <morisa@hawaii.edu> on behalf of Shirley Mori  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:58 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Opening of schools

Hi my name is Shirley Mori and I teach at Wheeler Middle School. I teach woodshop and grades 6-8. Although our students will be coming back in an A & B schedule and staying with their homeroom class, they will be going to electives. This is where it is a little scary. We will be getting up to 12 different students from several different classrooms. Here is where they have left their bubble. These students love to socialize with their friends. How do we keep them or tell them to keep their distance? When they leave and the next group of students comes in who cleans the things that they have touched. They will be using different tools and supplies. There is also not enough time between classes to do the cleaning that the DOE wants us to do. There is also the restroom, who controls how many students are allowed to go at any given time. We have it where it is one student at a time. What happens if ten teachers let one student go at the same time. That's 10 students going to the restroom at the same time. Also the water fountain, children do get thirsty and need water. If you close down the water fountain where do students get water? It would be really nice to get some training on how we are going to do this. Please consider giving teachers a plan and training on what to do. We want our students back and learning. We just do not want to get the whole school sick because of one person and we as teachers did not know what to do.

Thank you for hearing me out. I love my job and love the students. I am thinking of safety first.

Shirley Mori

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Shannon Tanabe-Clark <shtanabe@msn.com> on behalf of Shannon Tanabe-Clark  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:59 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

To Whom This May Concern,

I just wanted to let you know that I am writing this letter to let you know that I strongly disagree with opening schools to children on August 4th/5th. As hard as my principal and staff have been working extended hours over the summer to plan for the changes, I know we are not fully ready to teach or keep the students safe from this scary virus. Yes, we have heard all of the ways we can be safe and keep the numbers low, but I honestly cannot see keeping "ohana bubbles" the way they speak of them, and I also have been to an endless amount of meetings with unanswered questions. How can we possibly open a school with so many unknowns? For example, what is going to happen when I cannot fit incoming students 6 feet apart and our school budget does not have money for an additional teacher/the space for another classroom? Do we just try and get an approval/fill out a waiver knowing we are putting everyone at a greater risk? We are at a military feeder school and may have an influx of students come September due to the delay. I want so badly to purchase the sneeze guard plexi glass, but at almost \$200 out of pocket, I am having a hard time swallowing the fact that I have to do that to protect my students and I on our already small paycheck. I am extremely exhausted mentally after being in so many long meetings, and can only imagine this is not going to be good for students to be taught by burnt out teachers who are also worried for their life too. Yes, parents need to go back to work, but sending our children back so soon could mean they end up getting sick and parents having to take off work even longer. We need more time to really understand how to deal with so many issues at hand. Why do we have to be the state who is laughed at when we will most likely have to close down soon due to cases in the school? Last but not least, there will NOT be enough substitutes to cover all of the teachers who may be sick this year!!!! Imagine all of the classes of children sitting there with no one to teach their class. I really feel that all of the people who made the decision for us to return so soon must agree to be on the substitute list. If they are so sure it is safe to return, put your money where your mouth is and get on that list. Thank you for hearing my cry to return at a later date.

Sincerely, Shannon Tanabe-Clark  
Current 6th Grade Teacher at Aikahi Elementary Children attending Aikahi and University Laboratory School

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Jackiline Dela Cruz <jackilinedelacruz77@gmail.com> on behalf of Jackiline Dela Cruz  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:59 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Do not open schools Aug 4

With support of the HSTA voice, I support in not reopening schools on August 4th. Thank you.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Amelia Keefe <ameliak@hawaii.edu> on behalf of Amelia Keefe  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:00 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Hello,

My name is Amelia Keefe, I am an English Language Arts teacher at Ilima Intermediate. I am emailing to testify on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association.

As a teacher I care about my students' education. I feel that, while everyone is working very hard, we will not be fully prepared once the school year begins to teach students whose parent opt to keep them at home or if we had to close school and return to distance learning due to COVID-19. Teachers that are taking the voluntary professional developments offered are learning and prepping but not all teachers have chosen to come or are able to. Those teachers who are not taking the PD will need time as well to be prepared and the four teacher days do not feel like enough time, as I have chosen to attend the voluntary training and still feel like I need more time. Additionally, there needs to be more time for teachers to prepare for providing education while social distancing, and when we go back online. In order to socially distance in the classroom we will have to transition many teaching methods, which are low tech, to previously unused online modes. Many ways we engage students or accommodate students are fairly low tech, for example using movement and small group discussion, and we as teachers need to have the time to adjust to a high tech setting.

As well as caring about my students' education I care about about their health. Students' will likely get sick. If students' do get sick it could effect beyond just the school to their family and the community. I would heartbroken if I was to lose a student or if a student lost a loved one. I want all teachers to have enough time to prepare their classrooms for student and teacher safety. I want us to be sure that those teachers who do need to be in a closer proximity than six feet, such as those who care for medically fragile or very young students, are going to be able to do so in a safe way. I also want teacher who may have health condition to be able to be sure that they will be safe. I want us, as a community, to have enough time to ensure that should all the student be physically in school we can keep them safe with distancing and face coverings.

I know that these are unprecedented times and that everyone is working their hardest to ensue that students will be able to learn and teachers will be able to teach in a safe environment. As a teacher I do think that it is important we continue educating students but during these times we need to make adjustments to ensure the health and safety of everyone at our school, in our community, and on our island.

Thank you for your time and and energy,

Amelia Keefe

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** dawn akiona <dawn\_akiona@yahoo.com> on behalf of dawn akiona  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:00 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Proper Training / Proper Equipments Needed

I am writing to the BOE regarding training before re-opening SY 20/21 and something in writing of do's/must. I truly believe it is important for the Safety for student, my co-workers as well as self. I have a underline illness. I come from a very big school. We need to make sure everyone involve should have the same training. Mask should be mandatory, every class should be equipped with (mask, temperature gun, hand sanitizer)and sanitized every class after each period and not after we had two classes. Every class should have uniform stickers saying the same thing of the must do on entrance of each classroom. Parents should not be the one to determine if there child is okay to attend school. I do know that a lot of parents give there child medicine just so that they can send them off for us to care for. Student will feel/look good for four hours then the fever return. By then it can be to late, everyone can catch what ever. Please I urge you to get us proper Training and equipped us with the proper necessities to keep everyone Safe.

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Cynthia Cruse <cynthia.cruse@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Cynthia Cruse  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:59 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony  
**Attachments:** Testimony.docx

Please see attached.

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.

July 21, 2020

School opening: Oppose  
Differential Cut in Pay: Oppose

Aloha,

First, I want to thank you all for your hard work and for diligently trying to do what is right for our students and teachers alike. I know that this is a trying time for everyone including teachers, staff, admin, and the BOE. We all want to do what is right while protecting our families, students, and communities. Because of this, I am writing to encourage our Board to push back the opening of our schools.

This will be my first year teaching Kindergarten and I am super excited to get into the classroom with my babies. My desire as a teacher is that my students have an awesome first year and to get the whole school experience. However, due to Covid 19, my students will not get the opportunity to have a year interacting freely or with their whole class. This breaks my heart as Kindergarten is when most social skills are learned and without interaction, this will be difficult to teach things like sharing and taking turns.

My concern as a staff member is that we have not had time for adequate planning, preparation, and training. We haven't determined what standards need to be focused on, how we are going to enforce playground procedures, or better yet, what the playground procedures are. What if we start school only to turn around and postpone it after a few weeks? This will be traumatic for little ones and older students as well. Some have already experienced the feeling of uncertainty and confusion last year.

Another concern is that parents have not been given adequate support, information, or assurance that we are ready for their children. Many parents are curious about distance learning and there have been multiple different answers given as to whether it is available or not. There hasn't been any training completed by teachers to even ensure that we are ready for this option nor has the opportunity to choose your preference for delivery been given to teachers. Will it be teachers that are high risk and need to teach from home or will this be placed on the classroom teacher who already has a class list full of students? We have not been allowed in our classrooms to even know how many students our rooms will accommodate. Not to mention, we are not allowed to remove any furniture that is already in the classroom to free up space to accommodate students.



There are also so many questions that have been left unanswered or tabled. What do we do if someone becomes sick with the virus in our classroom? Does the whole classroom have to quarantine? Does the whole school have to quarantine? Who is liable if a student gets sick from a teacher or vice versa? Can we be held liable personally or is it the school? If we move a student on our A list to our B list, is that going to affect the "Ohana Bubble" since students are divided due to geographical area? The questions go on and on... We simply just aren't ready.

My last concern is that any kind of differential cuts to pay will cause teachers to leave either through retirement or because they can no longer afford to live here. Teachers make plenty of sacrifices including working through the summer on their own time to prepare for the next year. We are always striving to get better, to learn more, and to change what didn't work well the previous year. We use hundreds of dollars from our own pocket to ensure that our students have what they need, that they have a beautiful clean learning environment, and that every child has equal access to all manipulatives and supplies, etc. We simply can't afford a cut when other family income has already been reduced.

Thank you for your time and for taking my concerns into consideration. I love my job and I love my students, but I don't want to be responsible for one of them getting sick and I certainly do not want my high-risk family to be potentially exposed either.

Mahalo,  
Cindy Cruse  
Kindergarten Teacher  
Kapa'a Elementary

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Maureen Burnham <mrb4@hawaii.edu> on behalf of Maureen Burnham  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:01 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony  
**Attachments:** Letter to BOE.docx

Aloha BOE,

Please see my letter attached.

Mahalo nui,  
Maureen Burnham  
KHS Teacher

**Subject: 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**

Aloha BOE,

I'm a new Special Education and Science teacher at Kalani High. I enjoy teaching my students face to face and I'm eager to return to school for my first full year of teaching. However, I want to do it safely so as not to compromise my health and create difficulties in other areas of my life. As the saying goes an ounce of preventive is worth more than a pound of cure. If I should contract Covid-19, I won't be able to provide my students the quality of education they need and deserve and the last thing I want is to bring the virus home and infect my husband who is part of the vulnerable population. With this in mind, I'll appreciate your answers to HSTA and teachers' questions and detailed guidelines concerning how our schools will operate under these new conditions before the start of the new school year.

Also, I don't agree with the plan to cut the shortage differential because my net pay is already so low it's barely enough to pay for food, rent and other basic necessities of life. I like Honolulu and want to continue my teaching career here but a pay cut will create financial problems that would most likely cause me to leave Hawaii for higher pay and a lower cost of living on the mainland and my students with special needs would also suffer because of the shortage of Special Education teachers.

Mahalo for listening to my concerns and for all that you're doing during this difficult time.

Sincerely,



Maureen R. Burnham

KHS Teacher

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** A BD <asia.botelho@gmail.com> on behalf of A BD  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:01 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony to Postpone Return Date

Hello,

My name is Asia Botelho and I'm a School Counselor.

I began my counseling career at Waianae High School and recently moved to a charter school, to be closer and more available for my family. Like many other teachers, counselors, and educational professionals, I am extremely concerned over returning to school at this point.

I am currently pregnant with my first child and my husband is urging me to search for a different profession. As much as I LOVE my job and my students, am I really not comfortable putting my unborn child and family at risk. For the first time in my 7 years of counseling, I am seriously considering leaving the profession I love. In addition to being 5 months pregnant, I also live next door to my 95 year-old grandfather who is in the at-risk category for Covid. My mother, my stepfather (who suffers from Asthma and Atrial fibrillation), and I are his sole caretakers. If I have to return to work, while cases are spiking, I will not be able to provide the care I need to for my family.

I know my situation is not special, as there are hundreds of other teachers debating the same thing. Which is why I plead and urge you to reconsider opening this Fall. We are not asking for the world. Teachers will still work. We will still educate and do the best we can for our students. We just want to do it in an environment that is safe. I am still in communication with many of our students, who also do not want to return this early in the year. Although they want to return to 'normal' and see their friends, they do NOT want to put their families at risk. They do NOT want to be the reason their grandparents or parents get sick.

We closed in March because the state had 7 active Covid cases... yet here we are reopening now at 350 active cases. Please, please, please consider postponing our opening date. Give us more time to plan. Give us more guidance and answers. Give us a space to feel comfortable enough to do our jobs. I really don't want to leave counseling, but at this point I see no other option. The state, the DOE, and the BOE are not listening to us and for the first time I feel helpless and scared to do my job.

Thank you,  
Asia

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Lucky McCullough <beth\_mccullough@baldwin.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Lucky McCullough  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:01 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.](#)

No cuts should be made. Cuts would hurt students' education.

Beth McCullough

Teacher at Baldwin High School on Maui

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Jackson Coley <jcoley\_93@yahoo.com> on behalf of Jackson Coley  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:02 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony regarding schools reopening too soon and not safely

Aloha, this is my personal testimony regarding Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association:

I am opposed to opening schools at this time with in-person and virtual students. My partner is a teacher and I do not feel that they have been provided with the resources necessary to safely teach in-person. Frankly I don't think they can safely teach in-person until we are at zero Covid-19 cases. Cases are increasing again and if schools open then the keiki will likely catch it and spread it to their teachers who will unfortunately spread it to their loved ones.

I believe school should not resume until funding has been secured to provide every child with tools for virtual teaching, like laptops and WiFi hotspots.

Please delay reopening schools until these tools can be provided to our keiki and our teachers can safely teach. It will hurt all of us if our future generations and their instructors die to Covid-19.

Mahalo for taking the time to read my testimony.

Sincerely Jackson Coley, romantic partner to one teacher and supporter of all teachers.

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** E Gray <erikkam@yahoo.com> on behalf of E Gray  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:03 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Please delay the start of school.

Hello there,

I am a middle school teacher on Kauai. I have three sons who will go to public school here soon. I have a minimal idea of what to expect. We don't know their teachers, their schedule, their supplies needed, their electives. I don't know if they, or I, are required to wear a mask. All I know is that we have adopted an AB schedule, so that there will be half of the students on campus at once.

When I tuned into watch Paul Zina explain what to expect, the answers were extremely vague. If someone is diagnosed with Covid, then they will decide what to do. This gives me no comfort as a teacher. My students and children need a clear plan, so that we can feel safe. Students like structure and predictability. We need to give this to them in these uncertain times.

What will happen if I get sick? Sometimes, it takes months to recover. Will my school be able to find a sub? Will a sub be willing to teach in a class which contained a contagious teacher? Will all of my students be tested? Will my students be quarantined? How will their families care for them? What will happen with the loss of education during quarantine?

There are so many unknowns, that I am not comfortable going back to school.

Some things that would make me comfortable going back to school:  
(an incomplete list)

- 1) frequent testing for Covid and antibodies
- 2) **A clear plan with multiple contingencies for multiple scenarios.**
- 3) A vaccine
- 4) the travel quarantine from the mainland remains in place
- 5) the travel quarantine from the other islands is reinstated
- 6) uniform education materials for students and teachers regarding COVID
- 7) Monetary support for families that are struggling with the loss of jobs due to COVID

Thank you very much for your consideration,

Erikka Gray

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Tara Lindsey <tlindsey@kiheicharter.org> on behalf of Tara Lindsey  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:03 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Re: Testimony for Virtual Education

To clarify my last sentence, I ask you to consider an across the board \*mandate\* (not option) for virtual education—with teachers ideally working from home for safety reasons—for all public schools in the state of Hawaii.

Thank you again for receiving my testimony.

Tara Lindsey  
Kihei Charter School  
Academic Dean  
tlindsey@kiheicharter.org  
808-283-1770

> On Jul 21, 2020, at 5:54 PM, Tara Lindsey <tlindsey@kiheicharter.org> wrote:

>

> Aloha,

>

> I am a high school teacher at Kihei Charter School and parent of a 2nd grader at Wailuku Elementary, and would like to submit written testimony in favor of 100% virtual education for at least the first half, if not all, of school year 2020-21.

>

> Due to rising cases of Covid-19 on both the mainland and state of Hawaii, I believe the safest option for our teachers and keiki is a virtual program this upcoming school year. As of now, the school I work for is planning a face-to-face/virtual hybrid model, with students attending face-to-face every other week. However, because of the small size of our K-12 school and limited staffing, teachers are frequently interacting with multiple groups of students in a single day and also asked to work in groups of three in small offices during the weeks when students are virtual. Because I am a single parent, I will also be bringing my child to work with me on his three virtual days each week, increasing his risk of exposure and by extension, the exposure of the children and teachers he encounters on his face-to-face days at Wailuku Elementary.

>

> As of now, our class sizes are about 15-17 students, and even when spaced according to CDC guidelines, this is still a lot of people to have in a room at a time. I'm sure you have read about the case in Arizona from this summer about three teachers sharing a large classroom to teach virtual summer classes. It was only these three teachers in the classroom, as they taught their students virtually, wearing both masks and gloves, and yet all three of these individuals contracted Covid and one of them died. It is simply unsafe to attempt face-to-face learning in the face of a pandemic we are only beginning to understand.

>

> I have also read that while elementary school age children are less contagious, middle and high school age children are just as contagious as adults.

>

> While I see that schools are doing their best to ensure a safe return with face-to-face options, the actual execution of these plans are simply unrealistic and unsafe for all involved.

>

> I ask that you consider an across the board virtual option for all schools in the state of Hawaii to drastically reduce the spread of Covid in our small communities.

>

> Thank you for your time and hard work during this unprecedented time.



>  
> Tara Lindsey  
> Academic Dean  
> Kihei Charter School  
> tlindsey@kiheicharter.org  
> 808-283-1770  
>  
>  
> Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Lorna Gomes <lornalgomes@gmail.com> on behalf of Lorna Gomes  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:06 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 responses for Bargaining Unit 5 employees. My name is Lorna Gomes, a Peer Mentor with the Windward District who is worried that teachers are not adequately protected in classrooms yet from COVID-19. There are no plexiglass dividers to separate the students from each other and the teacher. Is PPE available and will be provided to teachers on the first day of class? What happens to students or adults who test positive for COVID-19?

I believe that these precautions should be in place with clear protocols before school is opened on a face to face basis. Give teachers and principals time to get these safeguards in place before schools reopen. Teachers will be most at risk when schools reopen. They will be in close contact with dozens, and potentially hundreds (middle/high school) of students for multiple hours per day. I propose 100% virtual learning until PPE can be acquired and plexiglass installed in classrooms. Thank you for your consideration.

--

Aloha and Mahalo, Lorna Gomes

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Melissa Kreutner <mauimelissa@aol.com> on behalf of Melissa Kreutner  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:06 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

To Whom it May Concern,

I recently returned to teaching this coming week after adding a Special Education License when I saw the opportunity to work just one job like I did when I taught in New Zealand last year. I am now concerned about the lack of organization around protecting all of us from the virus as well as a pay cut. Administrators, teachers, and most parents are in no position to be making up the rules as they go with no medical background. The widespread beliefs that the virus is not deadly makes me feel unsafe. I am awaiting an appointment with a pulmonologist to determine my risk level and if it necessitates me to take leave. My children will be safe at home doing distance learning as it is not right to throw them into the fire in a mismanaged pandemic response.

Thank you,

Melissa Kreutner  
Special Education, Waialua ES

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** daholtohana <daholtohana@yahoo.com> on behalf of daholtohana  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:07 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Delay Opening of Schools

Aloha,

I am a teacher in Hawaii schools as well as a grandparent of school age kids. I strongly feel the state should delay the reopening of schools due to increase in Covid-19 cases and lack of training and preparedness of schools. I may retire early after exhausting sick/personal leave.

I also think special education, kaiaipuni, and teachers in hard to place schools deserve their already agreed upon pay differentials!

Mahalo,

Nancy Peterson-Holt

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Tammy Holt <tammyholt@waikikischool.org> on behalf of Tammy Holt  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:07 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Dear Board of Education,

I am writing this testimony to ask that you please look at the situation at hand in a realistic manner. We understand that you have done your best to create mandates to schools that look great on paper but the fact remains, you looked at the COVID-19 pandemic as a situation that would just go away soon. It is not and your lack of practical foresight is disappointing.

1. Hybrid school - if you really knew your community you would understand that most households are multi generational. Therefore, is sending our children to school two days a week worth it? Is it worth the exposure? Only to come home and expose the family? That's not safe socialization. Not at the expense of elderly family. Many of us have stayed safe and stayed home.
2. Using outdated data to base your decisions is not a fair representation of the public. Your basing decisions on data that was taken from the public when COVID-19 numbers were low, school was "optional" and having a "choice board" was the assignment. Numbers have gone up and they will continue to do so as we open the state to tourism. Take a new survey and move faster. These are unprecedented times that call for thorough plans and accountability. Adjust, just as we did. Overnight.
3. By treating this as a temporary situation you have not paid any attention to a statewide distance learning plan. We need curriculum, devices and a coherent learning plan. We need a loaner plan. There are decisions that the Board and Department of Education should be making. Please stop asking the schools to make independent decisions. It's inequitable.
4. Teachers need training, we've been asking all summer. The lack of training shows a lack of planning on your part. You must realize the inevitable. If your plan is to contact trace cases as they arise -THE STATE NEEDS ADEQUATE TESTING AND CONTACT TRACERS WHICH WE DO NOT HAVE. WE NEED A PLAN THAT WILL ALLOW FOR REPEATED EXPOSURES IN CLASSROOMS. WHAT SICK LEAVE WILL BE USED AS WE QUARANTINE? WHAT PLATFORM WILL STUDENTS AND TEACHERS USE? WHAT CURRICULUM SHOULD WE NEED TO CLOSE MORE THAN ONCE. These are valid questions! What will families do as they now have to readjust at any given moment? Teachers too? Are teachers supposed to reinvent the wheel overnight at will again? Is that equitable? The answer is no. You need to be asking the department of health the hard questions instead of letting them lead you down the road. You are education. You need to advocate for students, families and teachers. Remember who you represent.
5. Please stop sending our superintendent out to senate meetings and news conferences. Take care of the matters above so she can answer the questions with confidence and honesty.
5. K-2 in highly restrictive environments where children will have to remain socially distanced at every moment is cruel. So please stop using socialization as your reason for face to face instruction. It's not a valid point.

6. Summer school was not a realistic indicator of the school year. That's as not an appropriate model. Numbers were extremely low and they were HOMOGENEOUS groupings, meaning instruction was leveled to a group of similar abilities. Classroom numbers are considerably higher than ten in k-12 as of now and they are not grouped of similar abilities.

7. Finally, the public hears all of you loud and clear. We need Federal money. But all we are hearing is "just let us open and the DOE and DOH will handle it as the situations arise. THIS IS A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH. Playing the numbers and taking chances on children, teachers, faculty is unacceptable. One life lost due to COVID -19 exposure is unacceptable. This state is not ready.

8. I'm tired of hearing the myths about children and how they do not get sick, are not carriers etc. schools shut down worldwide. Children were sent home before it became an issue. There is not enough data On children in full time in person school to support any argument one way or the other. It's a disgrace to use our community as guinea pigs. We are one of the first districts to go back. For what? The senate already told you they could adjust your requirements in regards to number of mandatory school days. They also told you they could adjust the start date of school. What is your rush?

Please, I urge you to look very carefully at the situation at hand, the questions the public is answering and I urge you to really look at what lies ahead and how you will keep the public safe. Hawaii is not prepared to handle what NY, Arizona, Florida and other states are dealing with. We do not have the equipment, the hospital space or the testing and tracing. Do not use your community this way.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Troy Freitas <troyfreitas@icloud.com> on behalf of Troy Freitas  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:08 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Opening of Public School

I believe teachers need more days to talk and figure out how things are going to work instead of trial and error. Teacher need extra time to discuss all the question and training need before kids come.

Questions:

Can we have student group discussions?

What if someone gets sick?

Do we do temperature checks?

Cleaning after class?

Online issues?

Sincerely,  
Troy Freitas

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Claire Kawagishi <clairekawagishi@gmail.com> on behalf of Claire Kawagishi  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:09 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Delay the opening of school date

I do not personally feel ready to open class on August 4. August 5 is Ala Wai's official student start date. I am still unclear as to what room I need to prep and without extra assistance, will probably not be ready. Furthermore, I did not receive any training over the summer besides what I voluntarily learned on my own. I was not even aware of any formalized training over the summer. I know many emails were sent to me. However, the trainings I did try to sign up for were 6 hours ahead of Hawaii time making it very difficult to register for.

Please delay the opening or allow us to continue with distance learning only.

Thank you,

Claire Kawagishi, M.Ed Special Education-Severe Disabilities, M.B.A.



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Roberta Kupo-lonoae'a <roberta.kupo-lonoae'a@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Roberta Kupo-lonoae'a  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:10 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Reopening School w/COVID-19

Aloha,

My name is Roberta Kupo-Lonoae'a and I am an EA III in a Fully-Self-Contained (FSC) Special Education classroom.

I do NOT believe DOE is ready to open public schools since NO ONE has been trained on "How to deal with a pandemic" in a public school setting.

We have NOT been given adequate hygiene supplies to disinfect our classrooms nor proper steps and protocol to provide a safe and healthy educational setting when everyone will be too concerned with the possibility of contracting COVID-19. This will cause a great deal of stress and anxiety for STAFF. Parents and Administration are leaving it up to teachers and support staff to care for these children and THAT in itself, is a HUGE burden to expect of us.

We deal with a sensitive and fragile population that includes but not limited to toileting, (changing diapers, wiping private areas) regular contact with bodily fluids such urine saliva, runny nose, menstrual cycles, etc. We also have to deal with physical aggression such as biting, striking, pushing, pinching, kicking, spitting and so forth. How is DOE prepared to deal with this, should these students fail to practice social distancing, wear a mask (a possible trigger?!) have a tantrum or are just having a "bad day?"

There are so many "what if's?" that it is literally PREMATURE to think that each and every public school will be ready for opening on 8/4/20 when there could be a potential for outbreaks and clusters.

I STRONGLY encourage and recommend that ALL DOE STAFF have several days of training and scenario practices with the help and support of the Dept. of Health and Center for Disease Control (CDC) BEFORE even considering to open public schools on 8/4/20.

Thank you for your time in this important matter and for allowing DOE staff input and feedback.

Respectfully,  
Roberta Kupo-Lonoae'a

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Hinano Lewis <mhinano.lewis5@gmail.com> on behalf of Hinano Lewis  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:12 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Hawaii School Reopen

Aloha my name is Michelle Lewis I work at Kohala High School as an Education Assistant. As of today I have not heard from our admin regarding any update or plan in motion or any training regarding for work. Even tho we are not technically working we still can come in or virtual meetings. Why are we gonna wait for the first day work and get the information. We need to know now so we can prepare ourselves. Everything is HSTA Teachers what about other STAFFS that also are involved with students. We are left out! We all know that not all but some teachers will only do what they need to do regarding their contract. What does that leave us to do things that is not in the HSTA contract. If we need to use mask that means ALL TEACHERS AND STAFF NEED TO USE MASK. What are the consequences of Teachers or Staff members that refuse to use mask?. What happend if teacher let their students don't use mask and I as an Education Assistant don't feel comfortable going into that classroom?. There is many more concerns and questions that we as Educational Support team and Staff have. We can't wait Three days before school to have them answered. We need time school needs to be push back. Do I feel our school is ready to open?. NO I DON'T we don't have a plan we don't have communication with our school. Even tho Admin doesn't have answers well they at least can come up with a plan B C D and so forth.

Thank you

Michelle Lewis

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** rsw <robinwaxman@gmail.com> on behalf of rsw  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:12 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Good afternoon,

I am a special education teacher on Maui and have just completed my third year of teaching in Hawai'i, but have 20+ years of teaching experience. I am not in a position to retire, but am considering resigning my position for the following reason: Schools on Maui are not prepared to open.

I base this one statement on the following:

- In ESY, I asked for a shield for a student who vomits and was told no because, "...you will be wearing a mask as much as possible." I said I did not want vomit in my eyes or getting through the mask. Still no. I asked for disposable masks and was told there was none.
- I was given a ziplock baggie with 4 pairs of gloves and a baggie with 10 Clorox wipes. For the entire 6 weeks. Bought my own stuff.
- I was refused further PPE and only got a bottle of Clorox bleach spray to use when I threatened to quit ESY.
- The room I had to use, and the three classrooms being used next to mine were filthy. Not dirty, filthy. Each of us spent hours cleaning, using our own materials, prior to letting students in.
- What is said by the DOE and Superintendent not reality. For example, the devices given out at my current school for quarter 4 did not have cameras. How are students expected to do online learning and participate with no camera?
- Deep cleaning? The majority of schools are understaffed to begin with and many are lucky to have their trash collected and floors swept. Deep cleaning, how? Who?
- Bubble? What good is a class bubble when that bubble bursts as soon as the students step out that door, and then that bubble explodes when they go home, or to who-knows-where, as well as mixing with their friends from other supposed class bubbles.
- There are no protocols for bathrooms (who will sanitize?), lunch, or the other 20-100 things that need to be addressed.

I could go on, but it has all been said many, many times, and it is quite frustrating that the people making the decisions are not the ones who have to walk into UNPREPARED and potentially dangerous classrooms.

Regarding the differentials: I understand that budgets are a nightmare and money is a problem, but to take away the sped differential is not ok, and actually insulting. I base this statement on the following:

- The majority of sped teachers do not get their duty-free lunch and often have to call someone to cover their class simply to use the restroom.
- The 45 minutes of prep time before/after school is virtually non-existent due to early/late student bus arrivals with no staff to watch them, for example. With zero prep time during the day, this means that every IEP has to be done outside of contract time. and this can take 2-5 hours for each IEP.
- Given the lack of assistants, I am frequently alone with 2-3 students who are supposed to have 1:1 paraprofessionals due to their medical and violent needs.

Again, I could go on and on, but you have heard it all many, many times. I would like to recommend that you each spend one day with a special education teacher and then discuss the differential. I was bullied by my

administration and SSC this school year, so I am transferring to a different school, but now I am feeling like a lamb being led to slaughter and seriously considering resigning. I am in no position to retire, but I know I will be able to work with students from families refusing to send their children to school in a prepared environment.

Please understand, I want to return to school very much, but HI schools are not ready, and to be honest, I find it a bit outrageous that anyone does not believe the reality of this.

Respectfully,  
Robin S. Waxman, M.Ed.  
Learning/Language Disabilities Specialist

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Kristine Donahue <donahuekristinem@gmail.com> on behalf of Kristine Donahue  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:13 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Please delay the opening of schools until the schools are prepared to safely reopen. Schools should not be open during the pandemic, especially when they do not have proper safety measures, Including changes to school infrastructure, how classes are taught, and PPE for the staff, teachers, and students. Underprepared schools create both a hazardous work environment, as well as stressful and disruptive learning environment. Having schools open is an unnecessary risk to both the teachers and students unless serious safety measures are put in place.

Sincerely,

Kristine Donahue

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Kristina De Witt <kristinakauai@gmail.com> on behalf of Kristina De Witt  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:14 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony for SPED Differential

Aloha BOE,

My name is Kristina. I am a special education teacher at Pearl Harbor Elementary School. I teach in a fully self contained/Medically fragile classroom. I strongly urge you to keep the differentials for hard to staff, Hawaiian language immersion teachers, and special education teachers.

This differential has made a huge impact not only personally but for my students. Before the differential, I had to get a second job and exhausted myself working from 6am-6pm to make ends meet. This very quickly took a toll on my mental and physical health as well as my ability to be the kind of teacher I wanted to be for my students. After receiving the differential and quitting my second job, I can give 100% to my students. I can arrive full of energy and ready to support my students and meet their extensive individual needs. Instead of rushing to my afternoon job, I am using that time to plan fun and engaging activities, differentiate instruction, and meet my students individual learning needs by researching new ways of instruction. I feel I am a better teacher and an overall happier person. I have not had to stress about living paycheck to paycheck barely making ends meet. Please, don't make the decision that will force me to get a second job, and be less present and available for my students.

I hope that this does not paint a picture that because of the differential I am enjoying my afternoons relaxing. SPED teachers spend an extensive amount of extra time planning individualized programs, communicating with parents, scheduling and leading meetings, writing IEPs, evaluation summaries, IEP progress reports *and* general education grades just to name a few of the extra tasks we work hard to do with accuracy, for our students that deserve nothing less than the best.

As a result of all this extra work (not to mention the contingency of the profession and all of the extra pressure from higher up), most aspiring or current teachers do not want to be SPED teachers. There is a huge need for SPED teachers, and we need to close this gap by creating an incentive to teach SPED and accept the extra loads of work with open and willing arms.

Why would you do a job that has twice as much the work but the same amount of pay as the other position? You may not. Unless you have the heart and passion for the students. Which is why SPED teachers are doing what they do. However, they can only do it for so long before getting burnt out, moving to gen ed, or quitting the profession all together. Please consider this when you think about taking away the differentials.

Thank you for your time,  
Kristina De Witt

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Claire Kawagishi <clairekawagishi@gmail.com> on behalf of Claire Kawagishi  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:15 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** No cuts to shortage differentials

As a special education teacher, I was finally rewarded this past January with an adjustment to my income. I felt that I could did myself out of my financial crisis. As a single mother of 3 school age children, I was constantly living on credit cards and from paycheck to paycheck. I have only been able to contribute \$100 a paycheck to my retirement-pitiful. Please do not cut the differential-I will most likely have to claim bankruptcy. I have already been denied my regular summer job due to COVID 10 which allowed me to make up for all of my debts. The summer ESY position is helpful but not comparable to what I would have been able to earn had there not been COVID-19. Please I need the \$.

Sincerely,  
Claire Kawagishi, M.Ed. Special Education-Severe Disabilities, M.B.A.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** crissymahiai <crissymahiai@gmail.com> on behalf of crissymahiai  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:16 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Training

As a Educational Assistant it's so hard for me to go back to work. I feel like we are being used as Guinea Pigs. First our union screws us on our contract and now we have to go back to work with this pandemic. When does it stop???



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Deenie <deeniemorales@yahoo.com> on behalf of Deenie  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:16 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

I don't know if I'll make a difference BUT I do miss the children. However I'm scared not only for them but for myself and my own family. I don't know what kind of training there is but I don't think we are ready to open up on August 4th. Why are we risking it? Please someone listen to us!!!!

Thank you!!

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Tonya Baybayan <tonya.baybayan@gmail.com> on behalf of Tonya Baybayan  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:17 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I work as an EA at Keaau Middle School my question is...  
how will social distancing be enforced in the school?

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Jade Santos <santosjade06@gmail.com> on behalf of Jade Santos  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:18 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Pls give us more time to prepare for the new year.

We need time to learn how to keep our students, their families, ourselves, and our families safe!

We need time to prepare for both face to face lessons and virtual lessons.

We need time to procure all the PPE that we need.

We need more time so that we can receive clear guidance from you folks.

Pls give us more time!

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Kelsey Kinavey <kelsey.kinavey@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Kelsey Kinavey  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:18 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)

To whom it may concern,

My name is Kelsey Kinavey. I am an English teacher and yearbook adviser at Kaua'i High School.

I want schools to open back up because I believe it is in the best interest of our students. However, I do not think we should do so until we can open up safely and have had adequate time to prepare and train.

I would like to echo the questions that the HSTA has been asking the DOE ([linked here](#)).

We are returning to school with the same amount of prep days as non-pandemic years, and yet we have not received information about cleaning and safety procedures or how we will handle confirmed cases within schools and households of students. We have also not yet received comprehensive training and support for online teaching should we have to go fully online again. I believe that if we had more time to prepare we could set up robust online learning and spend time ensuring that our students who experience institutional oppression and need extra support have it. If we do not adequately prepare for online learning, we will continue to widen the achievement gap for our students.

I hope that you seriously consider teacher input in making further decisions regarding the 20-21 school year. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,  
Kelsey Kinavey

--

Kelsey Kinavey  
Teacher, English Language Arts  
Yearbook Advisor  
Kauai High School

~~~~~  
Confidentiality Notice: This e-mail message, including my attachments, is for the sole use of the intended recipients(s) and may contain confidential and/or privileged information. Any review, use, disclosure or distribution by unintended recipients is prohibited. If you are not the intended recipient(s), please contact the sender by e-mail and destroy all copies of the original message.

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Donna Okita <donnaokita@gmail.com> on behalf of Donna Okita  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:18 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Aloha,

My name is Donna Okita and I am a teacher at Olomana School. This is my 3rd year of teaching at current school, however I have been a Special Education teacher in Hawaii for the past 18 years.

In January 2020 I was very fortunate and great full to receive the teaching differential as a SPEDTeacher and as a school with hard to fill teachers. In the 3 years at current school I have seen at least 5 teachers come and go, because of the cost of living In Hawai'i. Some of the teachers that left were great teachers.

Students need to have teachers that care about them and willing to build relationships with students. At Olomana School, we get a lot of your non traditional students and these types of students need consistency and teachers that care. If the STATE takes away the differential for SPED Teachers, Hard to Fill school areas and Hawaiian immersion teachers, we may start the already "new Normal" school year with substitute teachers or teachers that are not trained with Distant Learning and I feel that this will cause more harm to our students.

I love teaching, I love working with students and families, however it is getting harder and harder to do my job. Taking away the differential will definitely make me rethink about my career options.

Please, I ask that you reconsider paying teachers what they deserve with the differential pay.

Mahalo,

Donna Okita  
Olomana School  
Concerned Teacher

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Denise Yamada <asiansky330@gmail.com> on behalf of Denise Yamada  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:18 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

My name is Denise Yamada and I am a Grade 2 Teacher at Salt Lake 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 am 55 years old, married with 2 children, and a teacher for the HIDOE for the past 29 years.

I value my life and I am NOT WILLING to risk my life by going into a situation that is NOT SAFE. The DOE has put me in an unsafe and life-threatening position and left me with no choice. I am up against a wall. They are forcing me to go onto school campus on Aug. 4 and interact with students, parents, and staff...a situation that will endanger my life.

I am infuriated that the DOE is choosing to dismiss important questions dealing with the reopening of schools. Their utter ignorance could mean life or death for me and I am not willing to be put in that situation!!! With this current and ever changing COVID-19 situation, how dare they think that returning on Aug. 4 is a smart move. FOR WHO?!? For THEM to look good at our expense?!? NO THANK YOU!!! I am not going to be anyone's guinea pig like that! I do not have "STUPID" written on my forehead! I already called ERS and may plan to leave the DOE if my life is going to be put on the line like that. When it's fight or flee, I'm going to flee. I do not think the DOE has our best interest in mind! Their haste shows that they are not interested in the health and safety of the children and the teachers.

Having said that, with the degree of fear and anger that I have is greatly affecting my attitude and my willingness to plan for the upcoming school year. My attitude will directly affect my teaching effectiveness, impacting my students' ability to learn.

If the DOE would be more thoughtful and more strategic in their planning, and SHOW a vested interest in those involved, I would definitely be more confident in returning to campus because I would know that they have our best interest at heart.

Right now, I do not feel valued. I feel like an animal being thrown into a cage left to suffer and die.

Like Corey Rosenlee said, "This is a process we cannot afford to rush."

Please hear my plea...

Think about this very carefully. There are many lives at stake.

## **Testimony BOE**

---

**From:** Guy Kusumoto <guyki04@gmail.com> on behalf of Guy Kusumoto  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:19 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

### **Testifying on Action Item H: Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and HSTA (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response)**

To Whom It May Concern,

Please consider delaying the opening of our schools until there is better communication and clarification regarding the safety measures that will be put in place to protect the students and staff. Rushing the students back to school will only increase the likelihood of a COVID-19 outbreak occurring not only within the school but within our communities as well.

The delay will also give the teachers and staff extra time to prepare their schools for PROPER social distancing (6 feet) measures.

We understand that these are unprecedented times and that educating our children has never been more challenging, but the health of our children, families and communities MUST be the top priority in any decisions made going forward.

Thank you for taking the time to read and consider our concerns.

Sincerely,

Guy Kusumoto



July 21, 2020

**Re: Testimony 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.**

---

Hawaii State Board of Education Members,

Administrators across Hawaii have been giving answers in print that are becoming public evidence that teachers across the state should have no confidence that our school buildings and classrooms can safely reopen.

Administrators are also proving in their own written evidence they are not prepared to properly guide all stakeholders in various administrative processes.

The DOE is choosing to move forward with intentional violation of the MOU contractual agreement and is risking the lives of teachers, students, school employees, and the families of Hawaii.

Please consider the following points and delay the reopening Hawaii Schools.

- I once wanted to return to a normal re-opening and not have virtual learning, but with the COVID-19 increase, I am very much in favor of delaying school reopening and saving teachers' lives.
- I am a high-risk individual because I have a recent broken ankle that is healing. If I catch COVID-19 at school, I will not be able to continue my rehab and heal properly.
- No considerations are being given to high-risk teachers, though parents are being given the right to hold students at home for virtual learning. Teachers are not being given the same right.

Where's the Aloha?

- Six feet is the recommended distance from the CDC, but school administrators are not showing evidence that this policy will be successful, but rather by their own written statements, they are foreshadowing they are woefully unprepared to implement and enforce the policy and more infections are certain to occur.

- Cases are rising in Hawaii, and the schools will serve as a super spreader to families throughout Hawaii, especially to our large elderly population. In American States and foreign countries, schools have had to be shut down after they reopened. In Texas, staff is contracting the virus at twice the rates of students.
- There is a high potential that the State of Hawaii could face a class action lawsuit from employees that contract the COVID-19 Virus. 40 percent of our members are in high-risk categories. Not following proper guidelines and violating a contract that was brought forth from a standpoint of employee safety is solid evidence of reckless endangerment on behalf of DOE Management.
- As I type this, the COVID-19 Curve is increasing in Hawaii, and by August 4<sup>th</sup> it could be much worse.
- One COVID-19 Student will go through a full day of classes and possibly infect students and teachers in every class. This is before we even know the student has COVID-19, and one school is closed.
- Hawaii does not have enough contact tracers and school clusters will only exacerbate the problem of contact tracing.
- The coming impact of tourists on September 1<sup>st</sup> is yet another catalyst of which we have no way of measuring its impact on our current situation that we are beginning to lose control of on a statewide basis with local residents.
- Tourists are finding loopholes in the quarantine policy and going undetected, therefore silent spreading is certain to exist.
- Are you willing to send teachers to die this year? If so, the blood is on your hands once you vote tonight.
- Teachers are making out their wills.
- As demonstrated by administrator comments, many principals have no plan on how to assign distance learning students to a specific teacher and how to differentiate the learning and grading process. All students would be better served if they were on the same teacher assignment process, so delaying the start of schools and implementing distance

learning for everyone would compensate for inadequate or incomplete administrative planning.

\*Hawaii School Administrators are providing evidence in the form of printed answers to teacher questions that they are not prepared to open schools.

- **Parents have asked:** Will desks-tables-rooms be disinfected between classes on the same day?

**Administration's Answer:** "As much as possible".

This is not an acceptable answer to comply with safety for all teachers and students.

- **Teachers have asked:** What happens if a student does not wear a mask?

**Administration's Answer:** If a student refuses to wear a face mask or face covering, we need to understand "why" they are making that choice before instituting any type of referral or admin follow up.

This is another example of school administration that is not prepared for the "what if." No student should be allowed to not wear a mask.

If a student can't wear a mask, then they should receive instruction through distance learning, as the entire state should as well.

- **Teachers have asked:** After DOH informs school of positive COVID-19 students/teachers, will teachers be informed who it was that was tested positive? Or will we be informed if the person was in our class or building?

**Administration's Answer:** Unsure at this time.

While we muddle through HIPAA applications to COVID-19, how many people will go untested and unidentified as silent spreaders of COVID-19 because of keeping things quiet? Again, no plan.

- There is not enough security staff to monitor students at lunch or respond to discipline issues relating to COVID 19 Violations and distancing protocols.
- How close do we get to a student while we're asking them why they don't want to comply with a state mask rule?

- Schools are not ready to implement sound discipline and classroom management plans.
- The HDOE agreed contractually in the MOU that the State of Hawaii's Department of Health would provide written guidance on the reopening of school buildings. The DOE is currently in violation of this contractual agreement, and school administrators across the state are now providing a woeful record of complete incompetence as they go on printed record to respond to teacher questions.
- The DOE will not be able to deal with a teacher shortage created by older at-risk teachers who retire at the last minute.
- Schools have not provided adequate training for various administrative and safety processes.
- The DOE can't prove there are enough substitutes to handle in person learning if a mass of teachers become sick one day.

Again, it is imperative that the State Board of Education conclude that the DOE is unprepared to begin in-class instruction in terms of legal and contractual, administratively, and most importantly – from a safety standpoint.

Failure to delay school reopening is a fatal mistake and will result in the loss of human lives while having permanent lifelong effects on the State of Hawaii.

Sincerely,

David Wright, Masters Ed. Leadership / K-12 Adm

10th Grade US History / AP Psychology / HQ SS

Kapolei High School

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Nina Rista <10123530@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Nina Pathammavong  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:21 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

I'm testifying on Action Item Board Action 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.

Teachers need extra time to plan to teach students using technology in order to minimize physical interactions and promote social distancing. With the hybrid plan we're going with, I'm only seeing my students 2-3 times a week, which means plans need to be in place for students who are at home doing distance learning during that time.

I'm asking to push back the start date for students returning on campus in order to better plan for reopening of the school.

Nina Rista  
Kailua High School

--

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** ipo kaupu <ipo.kaupu@yahoo.com> on behalf of ipo kaupu  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:21 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Aloha my name is Ku'uipo Kaleohano and I work for Konawaena High School Complex. Within the high school I work special needs students in the FSC Class. I don't think we are fully trained to protect ourselves let alone our students safety. And with the kinds of students I work with will be very hard to have them keep the mask on at school. Please reconsider on opening in August. Our teachers and staff should be fully trained and know the protocols that need to be done first before we come back with students.  
Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Kathryn Young <kathryn.young@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Kathryn Young  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:22 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** To Whom it May Concern

Aloha! My name is Kathryn Young, I teach at Kalama Intermediate School on Maui. First, I would like to say that I truly believe everyone who has been making decisions has had all of the teachers, staff and students' best interest at heart. I understand the dilemma of opening school. We want to protect our schools and communities but the state must open back up, the kids must be around their peers and get a great education as always.

I love teaching, more than anything! I have spent the last two weeks working 40 hours creating an amazing virtual classroom! I only say it is amazing because I have learned so much on youtube and the internet on how to make fabulous virtual classrooms from teachers around the country who are not permitted to go back to school.

These interactive classrooms that they have made, and now I have created are wonderful, I can do almost EVERYTHING I could do in my classroom, virtually. There is 100% no substitute for a highly qualified teacher in the classroom, but since we have so many highly qualified teachers here in Hawaii, they will rise to the occasion and, like me, create fabulous online curriculum. It isn't ideal, but it is worth keeping everyone safe and alive. [This article was interesting](#), Regarding online learning.

I want to go back to school so bad, but I also want to have a family and keep them safe. This is just my story but there are so many teachers who want to keep their families safe, many live with vulnerable adults and children.

A recent study states ["Teens and Tweens Are Fastest COVID-19 Spreaders, New Study Finds"](#) I work in a middle school so this is very concerning.

Going online DOES NOT mean a poor education! I believe in it and I personally will do my very best! I love my students and want nothing more than for them to have an amazing education and I will do whatever I can to make that so! Please trust your teachers, they are on the front lines. We love the kids, but we also value our lives!  
Mahalo for your ears!

--

Kathryn Young  
7th/8th grade Mathematics  
Samuel E. Kalama Intermediate School  
(808) 573 - 8735

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** janelle P <jsettsu@gmail.com> on behalf of janelle P  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:23 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Please delay student in person start date

Aloha,

My name is Janelle Perreira. I am a teacher, graduate, and mom of 3 children all in our public school system.

I understand our children need the structure schools provide, however I do not believe it is safe. Coming back to school with daily corona virus positive tested numbers higher than when schools closed down.

Numbers weren't even this high when the decision to close schools and go to distance learning during the last quarter. Teachers did all they could with what they could for our students. Even teachers who were not tech savvy ended up taking classes on their own time just to be there for the students.

I've had 5 teachers retire from my school. I have 2 new teachers in my grade level who have no idea what to do when they finally get pulled and get into their classrooms. Giving us a little more time to stay at a distance or come back face to face at a later time will help control the virus and keep our families safe.

I understand for many it will be hard to take charge of their child's learning when they also have to work, maybe this is the time when we can increase wages everywhere so 1 parent can stay home and help, or at least give more time off for people to be an advocate and partner in their child's education.

Again, please consider pushing back the start date or only have distance learning available until our states numbers of positive daily covid cases come back much lower.

Mahalo,  
Janelle Perreira

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Daniel Munter <munterdj@gmail.com> on behalf of Daniel Munter  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:23 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** No to In-person Classes

Aloha, I'm a parent of two public school elementary age boys and we have opted for 100% online learning and we STRONGLY encourage the BOE to push back or eliminate in-person schooling for the following reasons:

1. The long term affects of covid on children is still unknown
2. No person's life — staff, teacher, parent, child — is worth the risk
3. Teachers do not (and should not) have proper training to navigate new school set ups with only two weeks prior to suggested re-open date.
4. Other countries who have opened schools have done so with different data; lower, decreasing rates of covid and after nationwide mask initiatives and TESTING, none of which are presently found on Hawaii or the mainland.

Please take this points into consideration — we value our ohana of teachers, their lives, the lives of their families, and the lives of our community. It's for this reason we've opted for online school and, in the spirit of aloha, we urge you to reconsider in-person classes.

Mahalo,

Dan Munter

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Kevin Matsunaga <kmatsunaga808@gmail.com> on behalf of Kevin Matsunaga  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:23 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Reopening of Schools

Dear Hawaii Board of Education,

My name is Kevin Matsunaga and I am a 27 year veteran teacher with our Hawaii Department of Education. I am the digital media and yearbook teacher as well as the technology coordinator at Chiefess Kamakahelei Middle School on Kaua'i. I am writing to you today to ask you to consider the health and safety of our students and school staff around the state. I know there is a lot of pressure to open schools back up and believe me when I say that I would much rather be teaching in person in front of students. However I want to go back to in-person teaching only if we can do that safely. Right now I do not feel the leaders at the HIDOE and our State are thinking about our safety and well-being. When we first closed schools in March, the positive Covid-19 cases were still very low across the nation. Today, several months later, our country is in way worse shape with over 140,000 people dead and that is just in the US. How are we even considering opening schools right now? While the chance that students can transmit the virus is lower for our very young students, they can still transmit the disease to their much older teacher, bus driver, cafeteria worker, or custodial staff. Our schools are staffed by older people such as myself and I personally do not feel comfortable going back to a room full of students, even if it is half of what I normally see. My mom's sister just passed away from Covid-19 last week and I personally know helpless it feels to see your loved one slowly slipping away. The threat of this virus is very real and we should not be forced to go back into our classrooms in a few short weeks. If meetings are still being held via Zoom because people are afraid of catching this virus, how can we even think about bringing in all of our students back to schools that are staffed with people who are very susceptible to this virus? I beg you to put the health and safety of our students and staff above all else and halt the opening of the new school year and move us into a fully online learning environment.

Teachers also need more time to prepare for this new school year. Our HIDOE has not done much of anything to get our teachers ready and I am afraid that if we open in a few weeks, it's going to be a mess that will be worse than moving to an online only curriculum.

Please halt the opening of our schools to protect the health and safety of everyone in it.

Sincerely,

Kevin Matsunaga

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Sandy Ramiscal <sandynamiscal@gmail.com> on behalf of Sandy Ramiscal  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:24 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Are we really ready?

Dear Hawai'i Board of Education,

I am writing to you representing two groups. My first role is as a dedicated public school teacher at Farrington High School for 24 years. Current board chair Catherine Payne was the principal who hired me and she is someone who respect. My second role is the parent of two children in the public school system.

I do not think we are really ready to open I'm August 4. Teachers have not received enough training. I attended webinars ON MY OWN, but it was not offered to all as suggested by Supt. Kishimoto. The ones I attended were not hosted by the HDOE. They were offered by teachers willing to give up their time and expertise without receiving extra pay. I was fortunate to attend a training offered by Mid Pacific Institute (paid for by my school). If this was not paid for, I would not have been able to participate.

We do not have the supplies (PPE, cleaning supplies). I am PERSONALLY BUYING shields and wipes to be safe. When I heard Supt. Kishimoto say there will be mask breaks, I asked, "When and how can we do this safely?" I heard the Governor say he has three children, but they never had to worry about going to school during a worldwide pandemic.

As a parent of TWO CHILDREN WHO ATTEND PUBLIC SCHOOLS, I fear that they will be exposed. There are news stories that I've read that young teens are showing signs of the virus and dying, but have negative test results. THAT scares me. My kids are pretty self-directed and can manage the school work, but we are choosing to go to school because I feel that they need the social emotional support. I worry about the kids who I teach who have so many needs and limited access. I do know that students need to have the support, BUT testing in the first days of school is NOT the way to help them — those kids who have been away from school since March 13.

You know what hit me today? I should spend time with my parents because once we start back, I will not be able to sit with them because there is no 14-day break (even counting the winter break). I won't be the person who could potentially pass on the virus to my 80 year old dad and 74 year old mom.

Please come up with a safe plan with ALL safety measures in place, laid out in writing, and make sure supplies are provided for.

Respectfully,  
Sandy Ramiscal

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Cheryl Goo <cgoo@kanoelanie.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Cheryl Goo  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:25 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Hi, my name is Cheryl Goo. I am writing to express my concerns about the potential discontinuance of the shortage differentials and to request state consideration for delaying school start dates to ensure that all proper measures are in place for our staff and our keiki. I am a Special Education Teacher at Kanoelani Elementary School. I am also a parent of two children that attend public schools in the State of Hawaii. I love my job, and honestly, I have come to depend on the differential to support my family, especially during this very challenging financial time. I am aware of many teachers considering retiring or even changing professions due to this potential loss of much-needed income. By eliminating the differentials, what is keeping these specialized teachers in these classroom positions? More than ever, we need to make sure that we have qualified staff available to support our students most in need.

Additionally, we need to make sure we have a proactive plan to ensure that there is clarity in the expectations before rolling out the new year. I taught this summer in the in-person instructional program, and although safety measures were in place, students consistently struggled to socially distance. As a mother of two children that attend schools that I do not teach at, I worry a lot about what actions are being put into place to ensure they are safe. It requires an immense amount of trust for parents like myself to send their children to school. Please consider my letter as just one voice of many that want what is best for our students and staff. Thank you.  
Sincerely, Cheryl Goo

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Susan Suzuki <susukona@yahoo.com> on behalf of Susan Suzuki  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:21 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony  
**Attachments:** Testimony for BOE Opening Schools.docx

To Whom it May Concern:

I have attached my 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.](#)

Aloha,  
Susan Suzuki

To the Esteemed members of the Board of Education:

I'm submitting testimony 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 Susan Suzuki, a teacher at Konawaena Elementary School on the Island of Hawaii. I have been a teacher for 31 years. Please consider delaying the opening of school campuses to students since schools are not ready to open in a manner that minimizes the risk of COVID-19 spreading. August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020 is just too early since much needs to be done to prepare.

Teachers all over the state are looking forward to going back to school and educating the youth of Hawai'i. Children are anxious to return to school to learn and go back to some normalcy. Unfortunately, the HDOE 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. There are also many important questions that go unanswered:

- In the MOU that HDOE agreed to, the State of Hawaii's Department of Health is supposed to provide written guidance before schools reopen. Where is this guidance?
- Where is the money and resources to make sure that we are safe to reopen? What is being done so that all students have internet access? We don't have enough custodians to sanitize each classroom frequently and there is a lack of teachers to implement the various plans. I still don't know what I will be teaching because of this so my personal planning has not happened yet.
- What are the clear protocols for requesting and receiving approvals for an exception to wearing face coverings at schools? Teachers believe that everyone must be required to wear face coverings at schools, especially within six feet of each other.
- 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?
- Will classroom teachers have to provide 100-percent distance learning instruction in addition to the model they're currently expected to teach? That would be 2 full-time jobs.
- 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?
- 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?

I understand that the economy needs a boost and parents need to return to work, but it needs to be done right. The health and well-being of our faculty, staff, students and all the other residents of the State of Hawaii are at risk. If we are not careful, COVID-19 cases will spike and we may have to close schools down soon after we open as was the case with Beijing, Israel, and South Korea.

We are all in this together.  
Mahalo for your time,

Susan K. Suzuki  
Konawaena Elementary School  
Island of Hawaii

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Jacqueline Seaquist <jjseaq@gmail.com> on behalf of Jacqueline Seaquist  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:25 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Aloha Board of Education members,

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.](#)

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding the opening of schools. I teach performing arts at Hilo High School. As you might imagine, teaching acting, dance, and music presents challenges beyond a lecture-oriented classroom. Is it safe for my students to practice voice projection? Would it be safer to use face shields rather than masks? As of this writing, I have yet to receive guidelines for how to safely conduct instruction for the curriculum I teach. This is just one of several reasons I advocate delaying schools opening.

Teachers are expected to return next week, students on August 4, yet parents in our community haven't been given time to weigh the options of virtual vs. in person instruction. Will I have 10 students? 5? 1? I don't know how many students will actually be in my classes, making it quite difficult to plan classroom activities. If we delay opening, parents and teachers will have more time to make informed choices and plans.

To date, there has been no reported plan regarding procedures when a student or teacher contract Covid-19. What is the plan for covering classes for teachers who are ill and there's no substitute available? What will be the protocol for transitioning to distance learning for all if the school must shut down? Our Administrators need more time to formulate safety plans that address their populations and circumstances.

Some schools are still waiting for deliveries of PPE that teachers need to be safe. No one should have to worry whether there will be enough equipment to protect them from infection. Until a steady supply of PPE is secured for all schools, opening should be delayed.

It's been announced that tourism will resume in September. This is sure to have an impact on the number of Covid-19 cases we'll see in Hawaii. Wouldn't it be prudent to delay opening schools until that impact is known? Perhaps we could begin in October and extend the school year into the summer. In that time of delay, teachers, administrators, and the community would be able to craft plans that are of true benefit, that provide secure and safe operations for all.

On a personal note, I am undergoing tests for an issue with my sinuses and throat. I don't yet have a diagnosis, but I'm deeply worried about returning to school until more is known. I am 65 and at risk for severe illness should I contract Covid-19. I need more time to discern the level of risk I might be facing while teaching in a classroom.

In the rush to open schools, teachers like me are looking at leaving the profession rather than risk our health and the health of those we love. We can't afford to lose teachers when we already have a shortage. Delaying the opening of schools will assure teachers that they will be safe when returning to the classroom.



We are all concerned for the well being of our keiki. We teachers prove time and again our dedication to students and their families. All we're asking in return is that the DOE and the State delay schools opening and use that time to develop action plans that honor our commitment and service. Again, mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Malama pono,  
Jacqueline Seaquist

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Tess Ellis-Elgart <tess.elgart@gmail.com> on behalf of Tess Ellis-Elgart  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:26 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Concerns regarding training before school reopens

Dear BOE,

As a Speech-Language Pathologist, I am concerned about the very limited training that is being offered for related service providers prior to the reopening of schools. I provide services for at least 50 students on one campus, most of whole are in different classes and will be in different "school bubbles." Therefore, I could potentially be exposing myself, my students and my family to at least 50 different school bubbles. Our guidance has been to primarily do telepractice. Telepractice is a very significant shift in methodology compared to service delivery pre-pandemic. While telepractice is being offered as the safest way for us to deliver services, there is currently no plan as to how to train us to do so. We have been asking for training in telepractice since the end of the 2019-2020 school year, and have been told that the state and district are just now starting to think about trainings. It is very unlikely that the needed trainings will be available prior to the August 4 return of students. Our superintendent has stated repeatedly that quality trainings are being developed for teachers. Related service personnel deserve the same opportunity and should not be expected to self-train for a completely different way to deliver our services.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Theresa Ellis-Elgart, M.A., CCC-SLP  
Kaua'i District

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Daniel Slattery <dpslatt@gmail.com> on behalf of Daniel Slattery  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:34 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Delay of School Opening

To whom it may concern:

My name is Daniel Slattery and I currently work as a special education teacher at Mountain View Elementary School on the big island of Hawaii. I will be supporting Pre-Kindergarten and First Grade this year. This role requires me to support young children in their development academically, cognitively, physically, socially and emotionally.

At this point in time, I have not received any training to ensure that I am able to practice safety guidelines while fulfilling my role. I have not even received the safety guidelines. I am unclear as to how to maintain the safety of students, families, staff, and self during the Covid-19 pandemic. I do not feel as though I am able to maintain the safety of students, families, staff, and self when schools reopen next week. Please delay the opening of schools until teachers are able to receive the appropriate information and training that is necessary for the safe reopening of schools!

As a Pre-Kindergarten special education teacher, I support students with communication, social, emotional, cognitive and social delays. These students do not always have the skills to follow and maintain safety guidelines. These students may require instruction, supports, and accommodations during the pandemic that I have not been trained on nor am prepared to implement.

A large number of families in the community live in multi-generational homes. Occupants of the homes may be more susceptible to contracting Covid-19. I am not comfortable potentially exposing susceptible members of the community to the virus as a result of not being properly trained by the Department of Education.

Please delay the opening of schools until schools and teachers are able to be prepared for the return of students. Please consider the safety of the members of our community and ensure that the reopening of schools is a success story and not a mistake! Thank you.

Sincerely,  
Daniel Slattery

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Jerome Crisostomo <romirome808@gmail.com> on behalf of Jerome Crisostomo  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:29 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

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 Jerome Crisostomo, I am a first year Special Education Math Teacher at Farrington High School. As a grad student finishing up my teaching degree in special education as a student teacher last fall without no pay for the last five months; the differential could not have come at a better time. It was a dream come true to be hired as a teacher from my alumni in January as my teaching journey began. The differential was the icing on the cake. It has been truly a blessing and an extra incentive in becoming a special education teacher. Our keiki need the consistency and highly qualified teachers in the classroom teaching them year after year. Not emergency hires or long-term substitutes that are constantly changing. Especially during this difficult time, our most vulnerable students need experienced and highly qualified teachers.

We are moving in the right direction towards filling vacant teaching positions with highly qualified teachers in helping aid Hawaii's critical teacher shortage. There was an increase of 29 percent teachers transferring to special education and 57 percent decrease in teachers leaving special education. Hard-to-staff schools nearly doubled in teachers transferring and a 41 percent decrease in teachers leaving hard-to-staff locations.

I humbly ask to keep your pledge of keeping the shortage differentials for the upcoming 20-21 school year for special education, hard-to-staff locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs.

Mahalo,  
Jerome Crisostomo

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Amanda Seymore <hstaseymore@gmail.com> on behalf of Amanda Seymore  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:29 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Amanda Lacar - Teacher  
General Board Meeting  
Agenda Item G - Oppose  
Agenda Item - Oppose

Aloha,

I am starting my 9th year of teaching in Hawai'i. I am a Special Education teacher and I have been all 9 years of my career. I am submitting testimony on two parts of your agenda: the Differentials and the HSTA/DOE MOU.

### Differentials:

I switched schools this year, to get a small change and I decided to remain in Special Education because we were promised the differential for this upcoming school. I know we didn't know what COVID would do to our economy & I do realize we are in a tough situation but there are several teachers that went back into Special Education this school year because of the differential. I don't want us to lose this. An idea could be that we get half and if we can open our economy, we get the remaining half as soon as the budget. I know you are in a tough situation for this agenda item but for some teachers, this differential meant they didn't have to live paycheck to paycheck. My true fear is that IF the Governor does a 20% pay cut, we will have the shortage of our lives, so many teachers will leave. Please don't take away the entire differential.

### MOU:

The DOE has not provided the principals the plan of action if a student or adult either contracts COVID at school or comes to school positive. The principals have their hands tied and I know they are doing their best, so there is nothing against them, this is solely on the Superintendent.

If she isn't sitting in meetings with 12+ adults, why does she think it is safe for 14 high schoolers and one adult? If BOE is meeting virtually, why do you think that it is safe for our keiki to go back.

Please push the STUDENT START date so that Administrators and Teachers can work on their school plan, teachers can get trained and we can be prepared to teach. I want to teach in my new school but we aren't ready.

There has been no mandatory training for all teachers on distance learning, COVID prepping or anything. It has all been voluntary or by stipend. Teachers are still spending time with their families, we shouldn't have to choose between that and getting ready for school.

The first two Admin Days - principals have stated they have more to cover this year and no additional time. THEY NEED THE TIME. They have enough on their plate, give them time to think and breath!

Please delay the student start date so that WE (teachers) can ensure our school buildings are ready for them. Teachers want to work but if everyone is still virtual then we aren't ready!!!!

To think about: How is the DOE going to train and prepare the subs? Is it the schools responsibility? They aren't part of a bubble since they go to different schools daily. We are starting after school activities August 19 - how can they still be in the same bubble when in school? How are buses going to work out?

There are SOOOOO many questions that the DOE isn't ready to answer and until they are ready, we shouldn't mess it up. Please understand we want what is best for our students - the DOE doesn't! Superintendent just wants to be the first one to start school, she doesn't care about the teachers, staff and student lives. If she did, her children would be the first ones ready to be for face to face instruction in the public school setting.

Future side note - any future Superintendent should (or should have sent) send their child to the public school system and be prepared to school records. If they are making public school decisions, those decisions should have an impact on their own child's education and lives.

Amanda Lacar  
Special Education Teacher

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** sihu@hawaii.rr.com  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:29 PM  
**To:** 'testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov'  
**Subject:** Testimony - Teacher Shortage Differential and Delay Start of School

Aloha

I am writing to you to urge you to pay the teacher shortage differential. We are at a crossroad right now in terms of teaching in our state and our country. This pandemic will push teachers into a direction we are not ready to handle at this time. For far too long teachers are looked down upon. We are not given the pay we deserve and the respect we need to continue to teach. When the union speaks of a teacher shortage, they are not making up stories. At my own school I have seen the waiting game being played until a new, qualified teacher is hired. The pool from which to choose from is dwindling. Why would anyone want to be a teacher? A child overhears their parents complaining about their teachers at the dinner table and the soccer field. They hear parents in the stores asking "Who is \_\_\_\_\_'s teacher?" Or "Who'd they get?" and the commentary that follows. These teachers who chose to teach in hard to teach sections are heroes. I could not do what they do. They deserve to be paid.

I am also writing to delay the start of school. We simply are not ready to begin. COVID is a beast of a virus. Still many unanswered questions and new concerns that pop up as scientists and doctors are studying this virus. Yet, we are to return to school to supposedly show the public that we do not live in fear and that the state of the economy rests upon the teachers' shoulders? Dr. Kishimoto spoke of the many trainings that were provided. I did not get any training this summer. I would like to know what was provided so that I can get trained. Do you hear the concerns of the parents in the community? It is not only the teachers who are concerned, parents and members of the community are just as worried. We are not afraid of hard work. We do need to know the plans and have something in place before we begin. This is not something we can do as we go along. We need the help of everyone to move forward. Schools shared their plans with their communities early this month. Some schools the plans changed and then changed again, for some. Did Dr. Kishimoto ask her principals how they are feeling? If teachers are stressed, I can only imagine principals. We are not ready to skydive into the great beyond just yet. There are many unanswered questions: where are we headed? have we been trained properly? will our parachute open? how will we land?

Please, teachers want to teach but not in fear. We need a solid plan and that plan needs more time to be developed. Delay the start of school for at least another month.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Dana Allen <dani2or@yahoo.com> on behalf of Dana Allen  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:29 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Dear members of the Hawaii Board of Education,  
My name is Daniella Allen. I am starting my 15<sup>th</sup> year teaching and my 3<sup>rd</sup> year as a Preschool Special Education Teacher at Pa'auilo Elementary and Intermediate School in the Hamakua District of Big Island. I am writing to testify 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 of all, I want you to know that during distance learning all of my preschoolers with special needs who participated made growth. I met with my students in one on one sessions that included their parents 1-2 times per week. By working with the parents, I was able to model for them the instructional strategies we use at school and answer questions they had about their child's development. It wasn't perfect and, with my own 3 kids at home, it wasn't easy, but it was safe. You see, During the school year I work with the most amazing tiny humans. I also get peed on about once a month and come home daily covered in saliva and mucus. My family refers to them as "my school babies." I love my school babies and I want to keep them safe (I love my home babies and I want to keep them safe, too), but I don't know how.

From 6 feet away

How do I provide hand over hand instruction?

How do I teach kids to walk in a line and stay with the group when they don't even realize there is a group?

How do I toilet train?

How do I stop runners from running?

How do I wipe noses?

How do I comfort a distressed child?

How do I help with clothing/shoes/masks?

How do I offer reinforcement?

From 6 feet away

How do participate in picture communication exchanges?

How do I present Discreet Trial lessons?

How do I provide pressure?

How do I help a child calm their body?

And that's just me as an adult staying back. When it comes to the kids, they pile all over each other like a litter of puppies.

How do I physically keep them apart? at carpet? at recess?

How do I teach kids to make requests and communicate when they can't honor each other's requests?

How do we learn to share?

How ?



The only conclusion I can come to is that I can't. I cannot be distant from my school babies... So, how in the world do I keep myself and all of my babies safe? So many of my teacher groups are full of educators getting their wills and life insurance in order before the school year starts. Summer should be for laminating and back to school shopping and adventures with my kids. We now live in a world where writing a will has replaced writing pacing guides.

I want to meet the needs of my preschoolers, but I need to know how to keep everyone safe. I have been reaching out through all of my professional networks since April and I still don't have any guidance.

What if I comfort a preverbal child who is in distress and I bring covid to my daughter with a heart condition?

What if I go to school with a sore throat and a cough that I am 100% sure is my allergies and I kill somebody's baby?

Teaching isn't just a job for me; it's who I am. I just need time to completely reinvent everything I know about teaching and some guidance on how to do that.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter,

Daniella Allen  
Preschool Special Education Teacher  
Pa'auilo Elementary and Intermediate School

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** John Hoomanawanui <john.hoomanawanui@k12.hi.us> on behalf of John Hoomanawanui  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:30 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Cc:** hoomanaw@hawaii.edu; John Noah Hoomanawanui  
**Subject:** Testimony

Aloha mai kākou! My name is John Noah P. Ho`omanawanui and I am testifying 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.](#)”

As a first time Kumu in the Hawaiian Immersion program at Lāhainaluna High School last year, my haumana can attest of my vigilance on having three sanitizing stations in my classroom along w/ Hand sanitizers, Sanitized wipes & bleach spray. All provided at my own expense throughout the year.

So at the end of our 2019-2020 school year, I submitted a list of essential items to maintain a COVID•19 proof classroom. Such items included were Plexiglass barrier at the Teacher’s desk, additional face masks and gloves. Until today, I have not received any feedback if the request will be followed up on. Therefore, until this

request is addressed I support the delay of reopening our Public school in Hawai'i.

Mahalo for time and consideration.

Best,

Mr. John Noah P. Ho`omanawanui

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Doris Aczon <dorisaczon@gmail.com> on behalf of Doris Aczon  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:31 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Dear Board of Educators:

I am a teacher testifying on Action Item 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.

I have been an Inclusion teacher working closely with our special educational teacher in the hard-to-place geographic location to help all of our kids that have different needs.

Without the special educational teacher I don't think I would have been able to survive all these years of teaching.

Special Educational teachers go above and beyond in what they do.

Discontinuing the extra compensation would definitely hurt our schools.

We already have a teacher shortage please don't let it become even more.

The Hawaiian language immersion programs are very important for all of our kids in Hawaii. There are too many kids that don't even know their own culture.

Please reconsider the discontinuation of the extra compensation in these three areas that will have an impact on our kids and schools.

Thank you,  
Doris Aczon  
2nd grade teacher  
Leihoku Elementary School

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Lisa Kumashiro <lkuma@me.com> on behalf of Lisa Kumashiro  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:31 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Dear Board of Education Members,

The start of this school year is unlike any other. In one week teachers are supposed to report to work. We still have no details about the distance learning option, protocols about what happens if someone on campus has or is exposed to COVID, and a need for professional development . Changes continued to be made up until the end of the week hindering the planning of the start of the year. There are many unknowns to the schools as well as to the families.

Delaying the opening of schools will allow a safer return for all as well as the best learning environment for our students.

Thank you.  
Lisa

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Christine Ogino <cogino2@gmail.com> on behalf of Christine Ogino  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:31 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Do not cut pay from Differentials

Dear BOE members,

You gave us an incentive to continue teaching in our essential schools by rewarding us with a generous salary due to our continued education. We became “experts” in our field to obtain the highest achievement for our students. Why pick on our incentives? That is a repercussion of your own doing. It’s like taking back a reward because you don’t have the funds. Teachers in Hawaii are the lowest paid employees of the USA! We work tirelessly to help our students! Please don’t dip into our lifeline.

I oppose your decision to take our differential pay from us. Please look into other avenues to cut - government officials for example.

Sincerely,  
Christine Ogino

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Soberg19 <soberg19@yahoo.com> on behalf of Soberg19  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:32 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Aloha,

I want to return to teaching in person ASAP. Whatever protective equipment the schools need, please provide them. I do not want to delay opening school, but I want my children, students, and families to feel safe sending their kiddos to school. My entire family will be returning to an elementary campus soon, and want us all safe. This would be so much better than distance learning, so please make it happen.

Mahalo for all the work you do during these difficult times.

Scott Oberg

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Karen Kama <dakamas@gmail.com> on behalf of Karen Kama  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:34 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** COVID Testimony

Dear Board of Education members,

My name is Karen Kama and I'm a Speech-Language Pathologist. As an HGEA member as well as a related service provider I'm deeply concerned with the lack of training, communication and regulations regarding our return.

SLPs are in a unique position where we see many children outside their "ohana bubbles" and provide services to children who require 1:1 care (hands-on, medically fragile and behavioral challenged). We have not been advised on how to adjust our therapy to meet the 6ft. distance between providers and students. We occupy small rooms, often poorly ventilated and nothing more than closets. We cannot fit more than 1-2 students in our room at a time to maintain social distances. With this modification, the number of sessions we need to provide increase, and our exposure to COVID increases .

Now with the introduction to a 100% virtual option for parents, the DOE needs to address how services will be provided or maintained. Would that qualify as a refusal of FAPE? If not, who will provide teletherapy while we have an increase of in person sessions? The DOE has not provided us with training on teletherapy aside from a few powerpoint slides. Compensatory services have not been well defined or addressed. We have a lack of SLPs statewide (due to stagnant pay and increased stress/responsibilities). Many of us cover more than one school and are stretched thin. We need more support, staffing, training and guidelines to ensure a safe, thought out return.

We would like the Board, along with the department to address related service provider concerns too. We are ready to return to work safely for both employees and our students.

Mahalo.



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Megan Guy <megan.guy@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Megan Guy  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:34 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Aloha,

I am sending this email in regards to the temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for teachers in special education.

The SPED differential has made a huge difference in my life as well as our keikis.

This has already proven to work by retaining teachers and attracting others to teach in these hard to staff areas. Our special education students deserve qualified teachers to provide them the services they need. Consider the long term effects on SPED in Hawaii if you promise teachers a differential to attract them and then refuse to pay them. You would be taking away from the children who need it most.

If this differential is discontinued, it will directly impact me, nearly 4,000 teachers and even more students.

Please reconsider discontinuing the special education differential. Keeping it will surely have a profound impact on our keiki and our schools.

Respectfully,

Megan Guy

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** kauakea@hawaii.edu  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:37 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** TESTIMONY

Aloha members of the BOE Hawaii, my name is Kauakea Mata and I am writing against action G as a part of your agenda. I am going on my 8 year of teaching and my 11 year as an employee of the department of education. Since. Wing employed by DOE I have always worked in the special education field. I've started as an Educational assistant, then an autism paraprofessional, and now I am a special education teacher. I absolutely disagree with your proposed motion to suspend the differential pay for hard to fill teaching positions such as special education. It has been too long that special education teachers have been forced to carry a heavy work load which in many cases are 1000% more than our fellow colleagues from writing IEPs, case coordinating, building familial relationships, all the while not only supporting our students but their families as well. When we were told that we were going to receive a differential pay for being SPED teachers it finally felt that the love and passion that I have for my job was actually being appreciated. To hear that you even considered taking that away reminded me why our DOE never really is able to move forward and soar ahead. We continue to move one step forward and 10 step backwards. As our leaders you should be standing up to our government regardless of what they feel, we as teachers should feel that you are our leaders and that you actually care about what happens to us. Our union shouldn't have to be the only ones fighting for us. If the state needs to cut funding maybe you folks should consider fighting to have them cut from other state agencies first. Our future generations will not have a chance if you keep taking away from those who work to help them move forward. Think about it WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF ALL TEACHERS WALK AWAY BECAUSE YOU DID NOT FIGHT FOR US? then what will happen to not only my students but to all students. PLEASE IN YOUR NA'AU SUPPORT AND DO WHAT IS RIGHT!

Mahalo

kauakea Mata

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Lynn Taves <lsstaves@gmail.com> on behalf of Lynn Taves  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:37 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** REOPENING HAWAII SCHOOLS WITH CARE

Aloha!

Mahalo to everyone working to educate Hawaii's keiki. Our collective ohana is interconnected and interdependent.

We are retired kupuna who are concerned that the August 4, 2020 reopening of schools might be happening too soon.

We support our Hawaii teachers and the Hawaii State teachers union who are requesting that date be pushed back to allow for more teacher training and general preparation. Listening to teachers, parents, students, school staff and state administrators we agree that more preopening preparation is needed. The health, safety and collective support of everyone is paramount.

We can do this together.

Mahalo. Malama pono.

Derrick and Lynn Taves

Mililani, HI

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Brian Park <brianji.park@gmail.com> on behalf of Brian Park  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:38 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

### TESTIMONY TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

RE: 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.

TUESDAY, JULY 21, 2020

6:09 p.m.

Board of Education:

My name is Brian Park. I am a Teacher at Moanalua High in the Central District on O'ahu. I am submitting testimony against DOE's action to reopen schools on August 4.

I have been teaching Math at Moanalua High for about a year and a half now, but never experienced this type of fear that I am currently having in my life. And what scares me the most is the fact that our students are being placed in the classroom with their lives on the line. Nothing would be more tragic than the death of a student due to COVID-19, when we knew that better preparation could have saved that student's life. It's just not the right time to bring the students back. We need to have proper training and guidelines to ensure the safety of the students and staff. Furthermore, we truly did not give distance learning any justice in how effective it really was because enrichment learning is not the same as graded learning. To really put distance learning to the test, the semester must be graded to the full, with no option to receive only enrichment. I believe engagement will improve with a graded distance learning platform this school year versus last, which will create better outcomes as far as the effectiveness of student retention of the curriculum. The fourth quarter was not even graded, so how can you evaluate student performance based on that. Complete distance learning must be given a fair chance.

Mahalo,

Brian Park, Central District, O'ahu

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Yvonne Urbas-Leboeuf <yvonneurbas@icloud.com> on behalf of Yvonne Urbas-Leboeuf  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:38 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Teacher salary differential cuts

Dear BOE Members,

Asking that you please help teachers maintain their much needed and deserved salary differential. Teachers have seen so little increase in pay during the 14 years I've been here in Hawai'i. It was such a sigh of relief to learn that we'd be getting the differential increase. As it is, the cost of living increases faster than the teachers' salary, making it tough to remain in Hawaii. We forgo college saving for our son now as the housing and other costs of living are so high. Now is such an incredibly stressful time. Making less does not relieve any of that, rather it totally compounds the already sick feeling in the pit of my stomach.

Please help our teachers. We need something positive now more than ever.

Lastly, I'd note the large raises some public officials saw just as recently as 2018. I heard it was something like 23-32% of an increase. Maybe get some money by cutting those unheard of increases.

Thank you for your consideration.

Mahalo, Yvonne Urbas- Leboeuf  
Teacher at Lana'i High & Elementary School

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Amy C <amym.cullen@yahoo.com> on behalf of Amy C  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:38 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony - Related Services

Dear BOE,

As a Speech-Language Pathologist, I am concerned about the very limited training that is being offered for related service providers prior to the reopening of schools. I provide services for at least 45 students on two different campuses, most of whom are in different classes and will be in different "school bubbles." Therefore, I could potentially be exposing myself, my students and my family to at least 45 different school bubbles.

Our guidance has been to primarily do telepractice. Telepractice is a very significant shift in methodology compared to service delivery pre-pandemic. While telepractice is being offered as the safest way for us to deliver services, there is currently no plan as to how to train us to do so. We have been asking for training in telepractice since the end of the 2019-2020 school year, and have been told that the state and district are just now starting to think about trainings. It is very unlikely that the needed trainings will be available prior to the August 4 return of students. Our superintendent has stated repeatedly that quality trainings are being developed for teachers.

Related service personnel deserve the same opportunity and should not be expected to self-train for a completely different way to deliver our services.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Amy Cullen, M.S., CCC-SLP  
Kaua'i District

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Jennifer Chen <jenniferchen808@gmail.com> on behalf of Jennifer Chen  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:39 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Reconsider opening up schools

To the BOE,

As a healthcare worker and parent, I am VERY concerned about the rise in coronavirus cases on Oahu. I currently reside in Washington state but still have family/love ones (elderly parents, siblings/friends that are educators and nephews that attend schools) that still live on the island.

I urge you to PLEASE reconsider opening schools in Hawaii for in class teaching in August. The health and safety of Hawaii students and staff should be TOP priority. It is NOT safe. The numbers may not be similar to numbers here in the mainland but it could potentially turn out to be if you do not take a PROACTIVE approach. The mainland should be an example of what you don't want the state of Hawaii to become.

The choice to do 100% remote learning is an option for those parents/students that feel its uncomfortable to learn in classroom setting but, that should not be the "selling point" to open up schools. The ULTIMATE goal is to get children back into the classroom and KEEP them there. It is not to start teaching in the classroom when numbers are still going up only to have to close back up.

Positive cases and death numbers continue to rise on the island. The numbers are not rising because of increased availability of testing. It's attributed to the BEHAVIORS of people (lack of social distancing, going to bars, indoor singing, large numbers of people allowed at gatherings, eating in restaurants, etc.). If Hawaii can't get a handle of the current situation, how can the DOH and the DOE reassure families and teachers that it is safe to send and teach their kids in classrooms?

Having children and educators return to the classroom setting will only CONTRIBUTE to the rise in cases. I understand studies claim children only experience mild to moderate symptoms if they become sick with coronavirus but we can't definitively say that will be the situation once schools open up for in class teaching. Majority of Hawaii's children were out of school, learning remotely since March. They were not in class and not in physical contact with their peers and teachers. DOH and DOE are basically using the children and educators as experimental lab rats. A "see what happens" approach. That is NOT fair for the students, staff, their families and even the community.

Residents especially in Hawaii are made of multi-generational families. If children don't experience illness from this virus, they are still potential asymptomatic carriers of this deadly virus. They could bring this virus into the home and transmit it to their parents, grandparents, etc. From there it could possibly spread into the community. With thousands of kids and staff returning to school, I fear Hawaii's hospital system will get flooded with covid cases.

Numbers on the island should be on the DECLINE for X amount of days in order to even consider if in class teaching is safe for students and teachers. Schools should NOT be rushing to open in class teaching in 2 weeks.

Here in Washington State, we currently have tighter restrictions than Hawaii yet we STILL can't get this virus under control. Schools throughout the United States are slowly realizing it is not safe to open up classrooms

and expose more individuals in the community when it can be avoidable. The health and safety of students and staff is their top priority as should yours be too.

It is predicted that a second wave is coming in the Fall. That should also be factored into the decision making. Hawaii hospitals may not be at full capacity right now but when the second wave comes it could get to full capacity with additional covid patients. Especially, if schools are opened for in class learning because of a greater chance of transmission in the community. Also flu season is just around the corner too. Another deadly virus to add into the mix.

It's a relief to hear that summer school sessions in Hawaii were a success but that should not be the reason schools should open up for in class teaching. That was then but Hawaii needs to deal with the now. The CURRENT situation. CURRENT NUMBERS need to be factored into deciding if it's deemed safe. It's NOT safe to open up classrooms yet. Please, I urge you to reconsider opening up the schools in August. The viral surge the mainland is experiencing should be an example of what you don't want Hawaii to experience.

Thank you for your attention in this matter. I do hope you seriously take this suggestion seriously.

Jennifer Chen



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Jennifer Ichiyama-Bangan <20056822@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Jennifer Ichiyama-Bangan  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:40 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Reopening Prematurely

The schools are not ready for the students to return to campus.

Please, rethink the opening on the new SY, especially since the COVID numbers are going up.

I'm on a campus closest to Waikiki, so my students & I are more prone to get infected.

Im nervous for the reopening, I have two other children & a recovering mother from receiving breast cancer & I am the primary caretaker for everyone. If I get infected, it will be a detrimental snowfall effect on my family.

Please, reevaluate..

--

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Cindie McAnish <ohikiguys@gmail.com> on behalf of Cindie McAnish  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:47 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.](#)

Please hold off on opening schools until procedures are complete and we have absolute plans and protocols in place. The safety of our children should be foremost in everyone's mind, especially those of you at the top making all the decisions. Why are you more concerned with blazing forward with an August date to opening schools and putting these children, our most precious resource, at added risk? If the economy is your only answer, then your decisions are not in their best interest and you should be replaced.

Opening up the State of Hawaii to tourism is something that must be done, but why not wait an extra month to see how our COVID-19 numbers are, and then open up schools, if we remain in a "safe" spot? It is logical to delay, especially at the risk of losing even one child to this dreadful virus.

Teachers are scared to return to campus and that will surely affect our ability to teach. Parents are torn between sending their children, or participating in distance learning, but have no choice but to protect their families. I believe that you will see a trend towards online learning, which will become the new normal, unless you try harder to meet the needs of Hawaii's families at this time.

I for one, am appalled that money and concerns over starting the school year are taking precedence over our children!

I work at Kea'au High School as a special education teacher and am facing a possible pay cut and loss of differentials, but you expect me to show up and do the job, under some of the harshest circumstances in my career, or in the history of the world. Broken promises and lack of empathy on the part of the BOE and DOE make for a very intolerable work environment.

My grandchildren have attended Keonepoko Elementary for the last 3 years, but they will participate in 100% distance/online learning this year. When my daughter asked me if it was safe to send them back to school, I was adamant that it was not safe, which made her question

why I would be returning. The only answer I could give was because my principal said we have no other options, unless we were to go on unpaid leave.

I am now looking at an early retirement at the end of this year. You will lose a highly qualified special education teacher with a Masters degree and over 20 years experience in hard to fill schools, as a result of how I am being treated during this crisis.

Please reconsider your decisions to open schools in August!

Mahalo,

Cynthia McAnish

Kea'au High School

Department Head- Special Education

Resource English, Grade 10



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Kris Murali <krismurali59@gmail.com> on behalf of Kris Murali  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:42 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Cc:** Kris Murali  
**Subject:** virtual school option

Aloha: I am a high school teacher at Kihei Charter School. I am 60+ years old with health conditions and am very concerned about my safety and ability to teach face to face or even share small office space to offer virtual school. I would like to offer my past experience with successful online teaching as well as learning as evidence for your consideration. During the 4th quarter of last year, many of my students successfully continued to code for their computer science class and learn complex topics like optics for their physics classes and if we gave grades, then I feel almost all students would have done all their assignments. I also took an online PD course last month for a whole week with zoom session of almost 40 fellow teachers from Hawaii and we collaborated on group sessions, completed homework for grade and had small group help sessions with our tutor(s)!; I have very good set of online materials and feel I would give it 150% effort to reach every student without the fear of covid hanging over my head. I appreciate it if our BOE would seriously consider going online for our schools for the fall semester.

Mahalo,

Kris Murali

Physics/CS/Engineering Teacher  
Kihei Charter School

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** jossef.rasay@gmail.com  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:46 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

My name is Jossefin Rasay, McKinley High School science teacher. I am testifying for the delay of student start date. With the increase and constant high daily covid cases , we really don't know who are infected. Students and their family members maybe asymptomatic and we will be exposed to them having the possibility of getting infected. Im really scared. Unless there's a wide testing for everyone, this pandemic will be out of control. Another thing is there's no assurance that sanitizing supplies will be provided by the school in every classroom, it will be hard for the teacher to provide all of these stuff with expenses from our pocket. Students will be encouraged to bring their own supplies but there will be some who can't afford. I may suggest that teachers and staff may go to school but students must stay home for distance learning.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** pmitsis3@aol.com  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:46 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Aloha and thank you for reading my brief testimony:

Presently I feel nervous and deeply concerned for my returning students, colleagues, and community at Waimea High School where I am a teacher. After teaching 7 years with the DOE and partaking in ongoing changes with professional development and continued efforts to ensure cooperation with state standards and edicts; I feel committed and willing to continue my efforts.

I would only ask that we delay until all measures have been taken to ensure the safety of all during this pandemic. There are questions to be answered and actions that need to be taken for greater security. The DOE should not be required to shoulder the potential risk to the community, nor the teachers when the likelihood of super spread is so possible. Again, I'm asking that we delay until all measures are taken to ensure the safety of all.

Mahalo,

Mr. Pete Mitsis, B.A., M.A

Waimea High School

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Kaitie Miyashiro-Carvalho <k.miyashirocarvalho@gmail.com> on behalf of Kaitie Miyashiro-Carvalho  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:46 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 modification conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 Employees.](#)

My name is Kaitlin Miyashiro-Carvalho and I am a teacher at Highlands Intermediate School. I am **HIGH RISK due to asthma and am VERY SCARED to return to school on August 4. The Board of Education should push back the date of school opening to keep ALL OF US SAFE!**

Although my admin has worked diligently and tirelessly over the summer to prepare for us all to return to school safely, **I do not believe the Department of Education has done enough to keep us safe.** In Dr. Kishimoto's press conference yesterday, she stated "only 16% of our families are seeking full distance learning options." **This is skewed data from the beginning of June!** During the entire month of June, more specifically, the first two weeks of June when this survey was administered, Covid19 cases were at an all-time low, however, since then, we have seen an all-time high of covid19 cases! In this survey, I even suggested a blended learning of face-to-face and online learning! Since then, the covid19 climate in our state has **DRAMATICALLY CHANGED! Dr. Kishimoto and the Board of Education CANNOT use OLD DATA to make decisions that AFFECT OUR HEALTH!**

Additionally, Dr. Kishimoto also stated that our schools will be focusing "the first two weeks to address social emotional learning, to feel safe, to be happy, and to be connected." Although this is ideal, most of us will be using the first two weeks to help students access online content and safety protocols. The first week of lessons have already been provided to my school and none of it includes "social emotional learning." Dr. Kishimoto also mentioned 'ohana bubbles. Although it is a great idea, I will still be seeing and teaching 130 over the span of two days a week. This will not provide an effective way to contact trace and pin-point where it's coming from. The DOE has not told us any action plan to help keep us safe. It is deplorable that Dr. Kishimoto would speak falsely to make parents feel more safe.

**Although I understand that we cannot shelter in place all day, I feel extremely disrespected by the entire Board of Education to acknowledge our fear yet respond with the thought that "August will be a safe month." I do not feel that August will be a safe month because the number of cases keep rising and there is still so much that we as teachers do not know and are not prepared for. The Board and the Department of Education has not done enough to keep us safe. I am afraid for my life and have considered taking unpaid leave to keep me safe.**

Best,  
Kaitlin Miyashiro-Carvalho



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Linda S. <lynnmo@gmail.com> on behalf of Linda S.  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:47 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 parent of a first grader who attends Salt Lake elementary. I do NOT feel that the State of Hawaii BOE is ready to send our kids back to school. There has been very little information available to parents about what to expect when school starts. Some questions I have:

- who will ensure kids will go to school with a mask?
- will kids be turned away for not wearing a mask? (this should be done to protect the kids who are wearing masks, especially since it is mandated that everyone wears a mask)
- will all parents be contacted if a student in the same classroom is suspected or tested positive for Covid?
- will the suspected/positive Covid student be removed immediately from the classroom? (currently students with lice are not required to be picked up from school, will it be the same with Covid?)
- how does the opening of schools on Aug 4th help full-time working parents if the school days end at 12:45pm?
- will kids be fed in their classrooms as part of the "ohana bubble" process?
- will parents be informed of how online learning would work, so we can make the decision if we would like to choose distance learning for our kids.

Sincerely,  
Linda Shimizu  
A concerned parent

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Alyson kent <alyson0627@icloud.com> on behalf of Alyson kent  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:47 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

To whom it may concern,  
Please adhere to the CDC guidelines and have masks requires at every school do a temperature check.

I would like to know what guidelines you are taking for each school if a case of covid come up. I think the whole school should close down for 14 days and go to distance learning. We need to protect our children, our teachers and staff and their families.

I have done my part since March to keep  
My child and family safe and I expect you to do the same. I followed the state guidelines and have not traveled to keep my child safe. I expect the schools to keep our children safe while in your care.

I also feel school should not [start on August 4th](#). Plus, starting on or around in classroom [on August 14](#) will give people who have traveled the opportunity to not send their children to school for the 2 weeks. To many people will traveled up [until July 31](#) and then send their children to school without following guidelines. We should start with online school from [Aug 4-14](#).

For high school students to ensure the "ohana bubble" I feel the students should only travel with the same group of kids or the teachers should just switch classrooms. Also, no sharing of desks or they need to be wiped down between each class and each student to ensure safety.

I want to send my child to school but I also want to know he is safe and that his teachers are safe. I do not feel the teachers were trained enough from March - May to help with virtual learning. Many teachers need more time and I want my child to get a good education if he has to do online learning I expect more out of his teachers for this school year. I want them to be more trained on how to best help our students.

Also, 2 children per bus seat is not 6 feet apart. All seats should be seated with 1 child per seat! It is not following CDC guidelines to have 2 children per seat. It is unsafe for all the students. You are putting them at risk.

Thank you,  
Alyson

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Karyn Harada <karynharada@hotmail.com> on behalf of Karyn Harada  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:47 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Delay the opening of school

Aloha-

No one misses the children more than the teachers. Please delay the opening of school so that we may adequately prepare for our precious keiki. Two teacher work days and 2 administrator days are the NORM for planning for a NORMAL school year opening. This is an UNPRECEDENTED school year due to COVID-19!

Teachers NEED more time to plan accordingly so that we may open our classes to the children safely! I ask you, knowing how dangerous and highly communicable this virus is, would you eagerly want the school year to begin? Would you eagerly show up without adequately planning? PLEASE walk in our shoes! Science and data is on our side. The data is clear and shows how contagious this virus is. Please think of our Kupuna who we have been tirelessly protecting, should we, heaven forbid, bring the virus home.

We have been cooperative and compliant since the start. We did everything to help Hawaii flatten the curve. Please don't let us risk our students' lives, their family's lives, our lives and our family's lives! We want to open schools safely and provide a great education for ALL within a healthy environment!

Thank you for your time.

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Vernon Ashimine <vashimine@wahiawamiddle.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Vernon Ashimine  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:48 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Shortage differentials

Aloha,

I have taught at Wahiawa Intermediate/Middle school for the last twenty-five years. I have been both a regular education teacher and special education teacher during my tenure at Wahiawa.

I have always put the needs of my students before my economic needs. Although I still believe in this, the pay differential for teachers in special education have proven to be a valuable tool. This upcoming school year we will have a qualified teacher in every special education position. This is unheard of and really unprecedented. I truly believe that this is a direct impact of the pay differential for special education teachers.

I urge you to continue to offer pay differentials for special education teachers. Our special education students deserve to be taught by qualified teachers.

Sincerely,  
Vernon Ashimine

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Nadine S <nadineshrivastava@gmail.com> on behalf of Nadine S  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:49 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** A different view

My take is probably a little different then others. I am impressed by how Niu Valley Middle School has structured their schedule and feel content in their efforts. I think it would be helpful for other junior high/highschool schools to follow suit But i don't feel comfortable with their 100%social distancing plan. I think a synchronous scheduled online based learning plan is very difficult as it is too difficult for the kids to follow. Back to back classes online live, is very difficult for children to absorb. So I hope that teachers may get the time they need to be trained in distance learning and form a proper plan. \*\*\*there is a very big chance school will be closed due to this pandemic because so many families are involved. I would like that they have a distance learning plan in place before anything begins.

1. Teachers have not been trained in distance learning tactics
2. Schools are all struggling to provide a safe environment in their classes ... some schools have 15, others have children coming everyday. I really am content with NIU VALLEY MIDDLE SCHOOLS plana and hope all schools can adapt to it.
3. Can we enforce children cleaning their spaces as an added measure of cleanliness and mindfulness.. have children bring wipes to use for their space to clean atleast before use. If they only are on campus 1x a week in that small of a group (8 per class) this is not a difficult endeavor
4. Communities need to be urged to keep their kids at home if they have thw support to do so. Ie a parent is home. This further offers a lessened number of on campua presence.
5. #4 is why we need #1.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Lily Gong <lilycggong@gmail.com> on behalf of Lily Gong  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:49 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Dear 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.

My name is Lily Gong and I am a SPED teacher at Fern Elementary School. When I heard the proposal, I felt discouraged to work for the 2020-2021 school year.

In the last quarter of 2019-2020, we were not able to go back to school. We had to learn how to work with students remotely. Due to the students' needs, I had to basically work with them individually to address their IEP goals. I spent way more than regular work hours to plan, contact parents, Google meet, set up meetings, and prepare individualized packages for my students. I had 8 students and I had to make 8 different paper packages each month. At the same time, I had to attend all the faculty meetings, training, and planning meetings. I had to meet with admin, my SPED department, grade-level colleagues, and parents. My work computer was started at 7 am and didn't get to shut down until 10 pm and sometimes even midnight if I had to do an IEP meeting or eligibility meeting the next day. Plus I had to manage my own school-aged kids to make sure they did their work. Would you like to be in my shoes?

Now I was hoping the new school year would be a little easier. But I guess nope. We have got emails about how much extra work we had to do due to COVID-19. I have to reassess all the student's IEP goals and make a plan to compensate for the missing instruction. I have to collect data for some students and do their annual IEP because the parents weren't available to do IEP meetings in the last quarter. I have to teach the students all the new norms besides assessing them and teaching them academically. I have to establish rapport with the parents quickly because there might be a possibility we might move to remote learning again. Of course, I have to keep learning the strategies to engage my students who are all different. Oh, one more thing, our SPED colleague just resigned because of her health concern. We asked a new general ed teacher who is dual certified to take her position (he might regret taking the position now if the proposal is accepted). I will help him to start in the new environment. Would you like to be in my position?

As I mentioned, I also have 2 kids going to school, one in a public school and the other in a private school. To be honest, I don't feel comfortable sending them to schools. I am afraid that they might get infected and bring home the virus. Or I might get infected from my school. I am afraid the virus will kill my parents who are visiting and get stranded in Hawaii, and they have many underlying health conditions. If I am capable, I would rent an apartment for them but I cannot afford it. Or if there are flights available, I would have them return home right away. But we know there are no flights for them until at least September.

So if the proposal is proved, and the differential is discontinued, I really feel that I should take leave for the 2020-2021 school year. First of all, I don't want the stressful heavy workload anymore and I don't feel our SPED teachers' hard work is appreciated. Second, with the pay drop, I don't think I am able to afford my kid's private school tuition during this pandemic. I have to pull her out of school. Third, I would rather take a leave and homeschool my children until we don't need to worry about safety.

I don't work at a hard-to-staff geographical location or Hawaiian immersion school, but I know how hard they work and how hard to find teachers to teach those schools. I believe there will be a lot of teachers feeling disappointed if the proposal is approved. We are stressed but we keep trying because we know our Keiki need us. But when the promise is broken and when we feel our work is not appreciated, we will consider leaving.

Please continue to fund teacher shortage differentials.

Thank you

Lily Gong

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Michelle Lindsay Lewis <mlindsaylewis@gmail.com> on behalf of Michelle Lindsay Lewis  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:50 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Returning too soon!

Dear Sirs and Madams,

Today we were told by Admins that face shields are not in yet (Aug 31), extra masks for students are not in yet, and that students will have to self identify two symptoms AND have a 100.4 degree fever before being sent home. On top of that our principal will be filing for an exemption to pack even more kids in our rooms. This is not safe! Even if kids dont get Covid as badly as adults, the adults shouldnt be sacrificed! The number of cases on the Big Island continues to rise and now you want to send us back in? None of this makes sense or feels safe. Delay the opening. Work to give the entire island Wifi and do distance learning! I dont want to die or suffer in hospital for months. I dont want our keiki to die or suffer in hoapital for months. I dont want our Kapuna to die or suffer in hospital for months. KEEP US SAFE AND DELAY THE OPENING.



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Wendy Tomita <wendytomita@yahoo.com> on behalf of Wendy Tomita  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:50 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Schools are not ready

I am a elementary classroom teacher. This is my 30th year with the DOE and have started to wonder if retirement would be something to consider, this year, next or the year after. Although, the past 2 years have been very exciting to teach my former Kindergarteners in Third Grade, I am not looking forward to this year. My parents are getting older and have since stopped driving, therefore forcing my sister in law to take on an extra weekly task outside of our immediate family responsibilities.

I have been actively preparing myself for this school year since the closure of SY 2020. During the summer, I wrote up 1 grant for my class. I participated in another grant/workshop/PD in June, which forced me to wake up at 5 am to attend 6 am distance learning workshop that included teachers from other states for two weeks.

As soon as my classroom was cleaned and waxed, I was there to set up my tables at 6 foot distances apart...that was just last week or 7 days ago. Yesterday, I finally was able to enter my second classroom to set up and prepare for my other half of my class.

As of yesterday, I found out that our school will not be doing K-2 face to face and Grades 3-5 blended, but also DL for about 25 students that families do not feel safe attending school in August. We don't even know what that means and how teachers will be impacted.

Since March, my husband and his co workers have been planning for SY 2020-21 for a private school, knowing that DL would probably be needed for the coming Fall/Spring Semester. They have been actively planning via video from about 7:30 am - 6 pm daily. This is not an easy job! Their teachers received some training last week.

I'm writing to you because our school opened up our campus to do summer school for group of students, group 1 mornings and group 2 after lunch, that needed extra help. They have been very busy.

I understand why the state wants to open up the state, however is really worth it at this time. Yes, the state is giving teachers 9 1/2 days from 12:30 pm - 3 or 3:30 or 4 to plan and fix the problems that we encounter at the start of school. This is not enough time. We want training or time to learn how to be a distance learning teacher or the teacher in the other room. My suggestion would be to have teachers work August 4-14 in school to help prepare for SY 2020-21. Get training on whatever DL program state or schools (students) will be using, if we need to help implement along with our classroom responsibilities (in two rooms). Have more planning time with admin. at school, rather than just sending out surveys to get input.

While the HSTA has continued to work in good faith with the state, HIDOE, and public charter schools throughout the summer, I would like to know the answers to these questions:

- 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?

Teachers will be most at risk when schools reopen. They will be in close contact with dozens, and potentially hundreds, of children for multiple hours in a given day. Yet they seem to be more of an afterthought in the health director's overall concern for health and safety. In testimony before lawmakers last week, Anderson admitted, "The disease is far more serious for older people. That doesn't necessarily help the teachers, of course, or the faculty who are worried. But for the kids themselves the risk is relatively low for serious disease."

Aren't teachers just as important as children? Haven't we sacrificed a lot all these years. We have teachers with health conditions too. Getting a sub is not easy either, they or their family have health issues too.

Mahalo,

Wendy Tomita

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Gerald Kimura <22gkimura@gmail.com> on behalf of Gerald Kimura  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:51 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony: School Opening should be delayed

Aloha Chairperson Payne and Members of the Board of Education,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the opening of schools for our keiki on a face-to-face basis at this time. As we are still in the middle of the covid 19 pandemic there is no guarantee that our keiki and school staff will be safe from infections. As long as there is no vaccinated population, the specter of being infected with the covid virus is a significant threat.

The safety guidelines of being masked and keeping distance are the only defenses we have against this virus. The schools are a breeding ground for covid spread due to the limited space and the fact that the students will have a difficult time adhering to keeping their masks on and keeping distance from each other.

As you are aware, many homes consist of multi-generational members as well as multiple family units living together in close quarters. These living conditions have already shown themselves ripe for a cluster spread as seen on Oahu and the Big Island. This scenario could be played out time and time again as our students get exposed and go home to expose their family members who then expose their coworkers and friends. Exponential spread of the virus is not a theory as this already has happened.

I will take exception to the Department of Health's Doctors Anderson and Park as they are missing the point. The point being that we want to prevent our students from getting infected and spreading the virus to their families and our community. Their cavalier statements concerning our learning community's safety and ease of contact tracing are both tone deaf and brain dead. We should expect more and better from them to protect the students and staff in our community.

So in conclusion, the only safe and reasonable method of opening is to have all schools open with "distance learning" as no other alternative can guarantee the safety of our students and staff.

Sincerely,

Gerald Kimura



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Jossefin Rasay <jossefin.rasay@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Jossefin Rasay  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:52 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

My name is Jossefin Rasay, McKinley High School science teacher. I am testifying for the delay of student start date. With the increase and constant high daily covid cases , we really don't know who are infected. Students and their family members maybe asymptomatic and we will be exposed to them having the possibility of getting infected. Im really scared. Unless there's a wide testing for everyone, this pandemic will be out of control. Another thing is there's no assurance that sanitizing supplies will be provided by the school in every classroom, it will be hard for the teacher to provide all of these stuff with expenses from our pocket. Students will be encouraged to bring their own supplies but there will be some who can't afford. I may suggest that teachers and staff may go to school but students must stay home for distance learning, or push back the start date of students to at least no earlier than after quarter one or semester one . Thank you

Mrs. Rasay

Sent from my iPhone

--

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Emily Willis <emily.willis.18@tfacorps.org> on behalf of Emily Willis  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:54 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Objection to Shortage Differential Removal

Dear Board of Education Representatives,

I am writing to you concerning the temporary discontinuance of the shortage differentials. I am a 10th grade teacher at Wai'anae High 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, at an even greater disadvantage. 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, the students at Wai'anae are best served by educators that are willing to commit extra time, effort, and love to their education. The level of dedication that I see around me at Wai'anae High School is unmatched and it deserves to be compensated. That said, increased class sizes with COVID-19 and a lack of adequate resources will require teachers 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,  
Emily Willis

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** megan terry <megterry13@gmail.com> on behalf of megan terry  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:56 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** testimony

Aloha,

I have taught 15 years at the secondary level. Last year my principal nominated me for teacher of the year.

Due to the state's rushed plan to open schools before executing a logical plan to address the state's urgent pandemic crisis, and is instead relying on the honor system of arrivals - both tourist and residents - to keep our students safe, I am currently agonizing over the decision whether to leave my position altogether. It feels like I am being forced to be complicit in a plan that will result in death. Our students look to us to do what's right. There is little faith as it is in leadership these days. What will they think of us when they begin to see friends and teachers dying?

Without clear communication or a clear plan to prevent illness in our school communities, it appears the plan is that we have accepted that students and teachers will become infected. But I am not and I will not participate in such a system, nor will I allow my own children to.

Thank you for your consideration,

Megan Terry  
Kihei Charter School

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Katherine (Katie) Jagger <katie.m.jagger@gmail.com> on behalf of Katherine (Katie) Jagger  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:57 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

To Whom it May Concern:

This testimony is in regards to the school reopening on August 4.

Thank you for advocating for teachers and children when it comes to the DOE's plan to re-open schools. I am a special education teacher for the central district on Oahu. I am also the parent of a rising fifth grader in a DOE school. I would like to share my concerns with you.

Just to be clear, I love my school. I feel that my school administration is doing everything possible to make our school safe. However, I think it's time to face the reality that sometimes our best effort is just NOT GOOD ENOUGH.

Concerns:

1. PPE - As a SPED teacher who comes into close contact with students, it's been recommended that we have n95 masks. However, I've been told they are not available. This tells me that we are being required to work in an unsafe environment according to health and safety standards.
1. Travel bubbles - sounds good in theory, but it is impossible. We can draw a picture and see that as soon as a teacher or child goes home, their bubble has been popped. As soon as one child goes to speech therapy, the bubble has been popped. My admin is going to continue to allow visitors to conduct walk throughs and visits to our campus. This Bubble theory depends on every individual holding the same beliefs about this virus and how to mitigate spread. We know this is not the case. If these travel bubbles are so important to control the virus, but impossible to maintain given the nature of our school community, then how can we keep everyone safe?
1. The DOE has provided no set policy regarding visitors on campus, mask wearing, sanitation, ventilation, or class sizes. School principals are being given the task to draft their own, and they're using their own awareness of the virus to make these decisions. The level of education about COVID varies. I just had to explain why non-essential visitors is prohibitive. I've witnessed inconsistency with mask wearing among faculty and visitors on campus, one incident that directly put my student at risk. DOE needs to set some policies at their level so that it removes any subjectivity. That way, all school staff, parents, construction workers, non-faculty education specialists, delivery drivers, etc. are all following the SAME practices. Additionally, we have not received adequate training to address hygiene practices and sanitizing our classrooms.
1. On Monday 7/13, Gov. Ige admitted that not only will cases increase when schools reopen, that our ability to test will be impacted by the increasing incidence of virus on the mainland. How can we appropriately contact trace to control the virus if we can't test effectively? The answer is WE CANNOT.

While I appreciate "can do" attitude of our administrators in getting us ready to return to school, the amount of considerations required to keep people safe are impossible to meet. Sometimes we just have to recognize that the reason that something is so complicated to figure out is because it JUST CANNOT BE DONE. There are too many variables that we cannot control at this time.



It only takes one infected individual to ruin even the best efforts to keep our school community safe. Without immediate action to resolve the above concerns, we cannot open schools [August 4](#). The DOE is not ready. The state is not ready. Our country is not ready.

Thank you for taking the time to read this and again for being our advocate.

Respectfully,

Katie Jagger

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Jen n Mike Wilson <leilehua20@hotmail.com> on behalf of Jen n Mike Wilson  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:58 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** School safety measures

Aloha,  
I would like to know the following information;

- What type of PPE will be provided for employees and students?
- Who will screen employees, students and visitors for signs of illness?
- Will staff be properly trained by [Aug. 4](#)?
- How will school meals be provided?
- Who will supervise students during meal periods?
- What is the plan when someone at the school tests positive for COVID-19?
- How will physical distancing be enforced?

I recently worked at school & had no information whatsoever about any of these measures! I am hopeful that the schools reconsider their intentions until they can ensure all stakeholders will be safe.

Mahalo for your time,

Jennifer Stiffarm-Wilson  
EA  
MHS  
Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Jeffrey Nishihara <jeffrey.nishihara@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Jeffrey Nishihara  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:58 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Aug 4 Reopening of School

Aloha Board of Education, Hawaii,

I ask that you delay the 4th of August reopening of schools to students. The training and prep necessary to make teachers ready for the dramatic changes needed to ensure that schools will be safe for students and faculty will take more than the four days given. Not just to make sure that schools are safe, but to make sure that all teachers are ready for the rigors of online teaching and the increased need for technology training.

Also, Hawaii is not safe enough yet, we may have low numbers compared to the mainland, and, we may have delayed the return of visitors, however, we are still seeing larger numbers of new cases in our home than we were prior. Until numbers decrease or we can flatten the curve again, it is not safe for our students to be at school. Even with all the precautions all it takes is one sick student.

For that reason I urge you to consider pushing more resources into ensuring that all students are able to connect virtually. And, to make available more training to teachers on how to effectively teach in an online setting.

Again, we need more time to prepare if schools are going to open safely and effectively; protecting the health and safety of all those in school and their families, providing decent online educational service, and preventing sudden school closures.

Mahalo,  
Jeffrey Nishihara  
6th Grade Social Studies  
Washington Middle School

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** dragonhee@gmail.com  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 6:59 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Too soon to reopen schools-phase the school year

Dear Board of Education committees,

My name is Shino Hee and I teach at a high school in Oahu.

I would like to you urge that our schools are not ready to reopen and receive students.  
It is too soon.

I believe we had enough experience over the 4th quarter, the worst part was nothing was counted towards the grade.  
It took away the opportunity to grow from the students and enabled irresponsibility.

I attend so many workshops over the summer, to educate myself to be able to provide efficient instruction online.

I'm personally feeling ready to distance-teach, but DOE's plan is just making teachers feel so expendable. While we are having an alarming shortage of the teachers, DOE, BOE, and the state of Hawaii's pushing this reopening plan is really disappointing. I do not know if I should stay in this industry longer.

I read the documents from DOE so-called "protocols", and I understand many people worked on this really hard,  
but we do not have enough resources on campus.  
I really hope former teachers on BOE remember this fact.

In our campus, I would say less than 10 custodians are working.  
We have 60+ classrooms and I will receive FIVE different groups of students per day, every 45 minutes. HOW would you expect all of the desks on campus will be cleaned before the next group comes in?  
We are not expected to clean the room contractually but what do we do?  
Leave it as is and wait for students to smear COVID19 all over the campus?  
Almost none of the students have the same schedule, which means they will move around the campus from one room to another. This is NOT the "bubble" that Dr. Park mentioned, at all.

As all we know, high school kids can be asymptomatic.  
But what about the teachers and staff who work on campus?  
We are VERY underpaid and still need to risk our lives?

I am not saying we should keep schools closed.  
We should open but we need to distance-teach, especially for middle school and high school.  
I like the idea of phasing-1st quarter distance, 2nd quarter hybrid, etc  
UNTIL THE MEDICATION AND THE VACCINE IS READY.  
I am fine to open it on August 4th, but it needs to be distance teaching.  
Maybe a little bit of training might be necessary, but also we all need to start and learn as well.

Another concern is, school closure upon new COVID19 cases.

If we had a case on campus it will close for 10-14 days and potentially we open and close again and again. Consistency and stability are extremely important in the classroom even it is virtual. You cannot just switch the format around every week. Again, I really hope anyone who is reading this remembers this, by assuming you are former educators.

Lastly, I understand "Giving Hope" "Act with Kindness" "Working toward Togetherness" but when we are having fear, and actually there is no proven safety, I really have to wonder what exactly BOE & DOE are expecting. The classroom will be filled with unstable students and an unhappy, stressed teacher, and tons of chaotic spice sprinkled---you are baking meltdown casserole.

Please consider with your wisdom and experience.  
Send us a survey once again!!

Best regards,  
Shino Hee

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Whitney Dawson <w.dawson@seariders.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Whitney Dawson  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:00 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony : Item G

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 immersions for the 2020-2021 school year.

My name is Whitney Dawson and I am a 9th grade World History teacher at Wai'anae High School. I am asking you to seriously reconsider going back on a promise that the DOE made to some of your state's hardest working teachers during this unprecedented time. With schools planning to open back up in less than two weeks, I have spent a lot of my own money and plan to spend more to buy adequate cleaning supplies, hand sanitizer and masks for my students because I have not seen concrete/stable plans for a safe and structured reopening plan and am not convinced that I am going to be provided this by the DOE. I also worry about the health of my students and their families at Wai'anae High School. Most of these students live in multi-generational homes and some will not have proper access to receive masks and the proper sanitation supplies needed to stay germ free at home and at school. I feel it is my responsibility to do what I can to provide for my students and have only been able to do that because of the shortage differentials we received this past year. If it were not for receiving the hard to fill bonus I would be forced to work two jobs in order to provide adequate cleaning and sanitation supplies to keep my students and myself safe as we go back to school in the COVID-19 era.

There are several reasons that I could list in this email that are valid reasons teachers in these hard to fill areas need to receive extra compensation, but if you take this away from us in the end you are truly hurting students the most. These students need good teachers' and as a teacher who will be forced to work multiple jobs if I lose this differential bonus, this will greatly impact my students because I will no longer be able to give my 100% focus to the classroom and to my students.

I know these are hard times and money is tight everywhere, my family has felt it personally, but this bonus that was promised to us last year also affects my livelihood. Please consider all the sacrifices teachers have made and will be making for this state and our students.

Sincerely,

Whitney Dawson

--

Whitney Dawson  
9th Grade - TTHS & US History  
Wai'anae High School

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Al Perez <mralperez@yahoo.com> on behalf of Al Perez  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:00 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** TESTIMONY

I am afraid... for everyone...students, parents, community, teachers, custodians, office staff - my friends.

If those questions that HSTA has given to DOE are not answered, we are not helping in the fight to beat this pandemic by opening schools now.

Please address HSTA's questions, so a well thought out plan can be made to not only get our education going but get it going SAFELY.

Alejandro Perez  
Moanalua Middle School

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Chadd Engel <chaddwilliamengel@gmail.com> on behalf of Chadd Engel  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:03 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

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." Additionally, we need to reconsider our start date as the state and superintendent have not provided authentic guidance and have simply left it up to the schools to interpret and plan off of general recommendations.

Furthermore, the purpose of the differentials were to address the needs of our students in areas where we were severely lacking qualified staffing as well as anyone who even had an 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.

As for schools reopening, what are we going to do and say once an individual connected to a cluster at a school dies of Covid-19 complications? What difference does it make if we open immediately or at a later date? The only difference I see is us preventing the opportunity for the virus to spread if we decide to postpone students on campuses. We need to value people and their health, and right now, it feels like we are not doing that.

Lastly, there were numerous reports that there is significant by partisan support to provide additional funding for k-12 education. The low end of this funding was set at 70 billion. So, there is absolutely zero reason to reduce pay in any shape or form. Doing so would only result in putting our students further behind as many people would leave the profession in some form and we would replace them with unqualified individuals. Surely, the eventual lawsuits would cost more than the savings you plan on making by cutting pay.

Sincerely,

Chadd Engel  
Kihei Elementary School

Sent from my iPhone--  
Mahalo,

Chadd William Engel



808.250.8027

[ChaddWilliamEngel@gmail.com](mailto:ChaddWilliamEngel@gmail.com)

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Caroline Koa <koacaroline@yahoo.com> on behalf of Caroline Koa  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:04 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Aloha Board Members,

I come to you today with a humble, heart in hand request. Please give our schools some more time to figure this whole thing out. I am an elderly sub with 17 years of service to the DOE and I regret that I cannot continue to sub in such an unsafe work environment. My teacher friends have all expressed concern over opening while so many important questions have not been answered by the DOE. Every one of these teachers have shared that their administration is "making it up as they go along". There is no leadership and the teachers are being required to make decisions that are beyond their capabilities in the majority of situations. Many of them are being coerced into not rocking the boat and having to house 20 or some even more students in a regular sized classroom. The required 6 foot distancing is not in place but teachers are suggested to take one for team because making waves will lead to their school being scrutinized. It is not a safe place for our keiki and it scares me that our government is so cavalier about our student's and school staff's lives. Before you require schools to reopen I respectfully implore you to speak to those actually working directly with students. Don't put lives in danger by listening to those who are not educators. They really have no idea of how ridiculous the notion of a "bubble" is. Children have bathroom accidents, need their noses wiped, need hugs, touch their friends and pick their noses among other things. Teenagers balk at mask wearing because they think it's not cool and that they are immortal. They also think it's funny to purposely cough on others and yell "covid". There are so many more reasons why schools need more time to come up with universal as well as comprehensive plans to figure out best practices for the many unsafe situations that will play out everyday. Staff have not had enough time to be trained to make schools safe. Please wait until our community is safer before we open. To do differently is negligent and I truly believe that you were appointed to the board because you are committed to our schools and are willing to see beyond the political agenda.

Mahalo,  
Caroline Koa

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Jonathan Kissida <jkissida@gmail.com> on behalf of Jonathan Kissida  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:04 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Aloha Board of Education,

My name is Jonathan Kissida. I work at Kilauea Elementary School. I am an educator. My child attends Kilauea Elementary School. I am submitting 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.](#)

Due to the constantly changing environment created by COVID. We as an ohana (keiki, parents, teachers, staff, administrators, and government officials) need more time to plan a safe and effective reopening of schools. We need time to learn new technologies, new ways of teaching, and how to best manage the safety for everyone involved.

Please consider the safety of all involved and work with us to provide the necessary time to work together to create the best situation for all involved,

Mahalo for your time and consideration,  
Jonathan Kissida

--

Jonathan Kissida  
Teacher at Kilauea Elementary School  
PO Box 1237  
Kilauea, HI 96754  
<https://www.donorschoose.org/mrjon>

"Yeah, well, I've got a dream too. But it's about singing and dancing and making people happy. That's the kind of dream that gets better the more people you share it with. And well, I've found a whole bunch of friends who have the same dream. And it kind of makes us like a family." Kermit the Frog

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** T. Jackson <terrijack12@gmail.com> on behalf of T. Jackson  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:05 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Cc:** Kurt Rix  
**Subject:** School Reopening

Aloha,

I am a first grade teacher at Laupahoehoe and I am genuinely afraid of going back to the classroom. I keep hearing people say that children are low risk so it's ok. That thought process makes it clear that those people have no care nor regard for teachers. We work so hard, get paid so little and struggle to pay our bills while those in charge are playing Russian roulette with our lives.

I have taught littles for a long time and I can assure you that there is absolutely no way to keep them in a bubble, socially distanced with masks on. It is completely unrealistic.

When someone gets sick and has to be hospitalized for up to three months, will that be covered under workman's comp.?

When someone gets sick or exposed and has to quarantine, how will we get subs? We couldn't always find subs last year.

When someone dies from the virus, will the DOE be paying for funeral costs? Teachers who don't have them are writing wills!

If it wasn't safe for us to return to classrooms in the spring until there were no new cases reported for a two-week period, why is it safe now when cases are on the rise?

And finally, the plan as I understand it, is to reopen schools and open the tourism floodgate as well. Who, in their right mind thinks there won't be an explosion of new cases?

Nothing good will come of this.

Sincerely,  
Terri Jackson  
First Grade Teacher  
LCPCS

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Jadine Navor <jnavor@waiakeawaena.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Jadine Navor  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:05 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Aloha Board of Education,

I am a concerned parent and teacher asking the state to please delay the opening of the 2020-2021 school year to have more clarity on the safety guidelines for my children as a parent and as a teacher.

As a parent and teacher with a high risk illness I am hesitant to start school this year on August 4, 2020. There are many questions unanswered and it makes me feel uneasy. I have 3 children who will be in elementary, intermediate, and high school who also has high risk illnesses. My worst fear is contracting the covid19 virus at school and bringing it home to my children due to unanswered questions and lack of training or proper safety protocols in place for guidance.

As a parent and teacher I would like to see the DOE Hawaii safety plan in action of each protocol to have a good understanding of what it will look like and what is expected of me in all types of scenarios.

With the delay of the opening of the 2020-2021 school year I hope to have the answers to my questions as a parent and teacher before starting work or sending my children to school. I want to feel confident as a teacher who can answer the questions to a parent and have a sense of trust that my children's school will keep them safe.

So, again I'm asking the Board of Education, the Department of Education Hawaii and the State of Hawaii to really consider delaying the opening of our schools.

Teachers need to be trained and parents need to be involved and told the truth. Thank you for your time and consideration. Take care and God bless.

Mahalo,

Jadine Navor

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** MTB <matube@yahoo.com> on behalf of MTB  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:05 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Re: 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 of Education Members,

As an HSTA rep, it's been really difficult to provide sensible answers or let alone any answer, to teachers' concerns under the current expectations & guidelines set by the State of Hawai'i Department of Education (DOE). We need more time because:

>Bubbles don't make any sense. Students are going to hang out with different groups throughout the day: before school, in each of their 4 classes a day, passing between classes, recess, lunch, after school, waiting for the bus-on the bus, walking home. That's not including their ohana bubble, which includes kupuna & other high risk individuals. What's the guarantee that students are practicing social distancing & wearing masks throughout the day? Same goes for the teachers, and especially those who need to float to several classrooms.

>How can the school successfully plan & reopen when we still haven't gotten our local Department of Health (DOH) written guidelines? Didn't HSTA, DOE, BOE agreed that we would not reopen schools until the local DOH would put written guidelines to ensure our safety. Didn't the Center of Disease Control recommend that we need to look at our local DOH for clearer guidance?

>Why are we reopening schools when there are mounting evidence that COVID19 is airborne? In a New York Times article [\*Airborne Coronavirus: What You Should Do Now\*](#),



**Airborne Coronavirus: What  
You Should D...**

"people should consider minimizing time indoors with people outside their families. Schools, nursing homes and businesses should consider adding powerful new air filters and ultraviolet lights that can kill airborne viruses."

>Why are we not providing telework option for teachers who are deathly afraid of bringing home the virus?

My principal, faculty, & staff are doing the best they can, but it seems really unfair that we are given very limited time to ensure best practices on everyone's health & safety. Therefore I implore each board member, to please postpone the reopening of school. First we need the descriptive written measures by the DOH. Then the schools must have the "time" to see whether they have met

those measures. If the school hasn't, then DOE or State of Hawai'i needs to work with the school to ensure the necessary resources are in place, and that the campus is fully prepared to ensure the safety & well-being of students, faculty, & staff. I also ask to please reconsider in providing telework for those teachers who are afraid to step out of their homes during this pandemic unless they are provided with powerful air filters and ultraviolet lights that will eliminate the virus. Until these steps are done, then we should reopen schools. We have to get it right the first time, so we can avoid another school closure.

Sincerely,  
Maria Bernard-Reantaso  
Moanalua High School Teacher

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Melissa Lehua Novikoff <melissa@halaukumana.org> on behalf of Melissa Lehua Novikoff  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:07 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Cuts to shortage differentials

Aloha mai e to whom this may concern,

I have been a dedicated DOE employee well before any opportunities have arose for any conversation about providing our more challenging teaching positions differentials. I've been conflicted my entire career between leaving my position due to very low wages for the amount of labor. People outside of teaching have little understanding that our jobs are far beyond a basic 8 hour shift. Majority of our DOE teachers work in crowded classrooms with no aid and that can be in classrooms with small children in Kindergarten to be left supervising 30 kids. During the school day, we are expected to be face to face with our children the entire time. There is rarely anytime for planning or time between classes because most of the down time is spent fulfilling basic duties for maintenance. Teachers are also expected to plan hours of lessons for a variety of content, make lessons exciting and fun, as well as engaging, and most often out of our already small budget after taxes. I remember not even making \$500 a week during furloughs. Business executives can spend weeks sometimes months preparing for a single presentation when teachers are expected to be ready in this manner five days a week and regularly with rare compensation to account for the added demand in student needs and pressure from the government to strive hi. I anticipate a lot of my colleagues and friends seeking alternative employment to be treated better for their services else where. There are a plethora of methods to increase funding to help support educational efforts but this state in particular chooses to invest all of our tax payers money into construction, building, tourism, military and destroying our natural resource rather than getting smart and finding ways to make our resources the most valuable commodity. It's not the teachers fault in these matters. This has to do with years of poor management. Living in a system that doesn't understand cause and effect but understands dollars, coins, and business for short term profit. Take for example this beautiful state of O'ahu a miraculous reduction in traffic after COVID-19. It has been made very clear that prior there were no regulations on tourism at all. The state was permitting upwards of 30,000 outside partisans travel to our islands to use them for what every means they feel without regulation or requirements on land use such as beaches which is definitely utilized in states such as New York to maintain cleanliness. Education is also constantly getting cut backs to put funding into efforts that cause harm to our long term system when in truth, education is what will allow us show the people how to make smart city planning choices in the future. Other countries are able to maintain their social, educational, and executive system by funding this systems. Taking short cuts has never proven good for anyone in any profession. Thank you for your time.

Regards,

Melissa Novikoff



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Sondra Lee <lee\_sondra@yahoo.com> on behalf of Sondra Lee  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:05 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

I am testifying on Action Item H, MOU between the BOE and HSTA. As an educator and mother of a public school student, I do understand the academic and social needs for our keiki to return to school. However I firmly believe that our schools are not ready to reopen on August 4th; therefore for the health and safety of our students, faculty, staff, and their families, I strongly encourage that the BOE delay the reopening of schools to students.

Our school has been working diligently over the summer to plan and prepare for the reopening of campus, however there are so many unanswered questions that it makes planning and preparation challenging. Administration, faculty and staff of schools need more time to train and prepare for safe and effective instructional practices. It is also my belief that some of these policies should not be left up to the individual schools for administrators or teachers to decide on. One such policy is leaving it up to teachers to whether or not students wear masks in the classroom, if a teacher allows students to take their masks off, are they protected from liability if a student is tested positive for COVID?

As of today, we still have so many unanswered questions from the HDOE and DOH to very important questions to procedures and policies that will effect the health and safety of our ohana. Will there be answers by the time teachers report back to campus next week? When and how will this information be effectively received by teachers? Will teachers be trained on social and emotional health to help support students through this traumatic event? Will teachers be trained on distant learning platforms and effective instructional methods on these platforms? If so, when? The two administration days and the two teacher work days is not enough time to plan and prepare for students to safely come back to campus. Its not enough time in a normal year! The consequences of rushing to reopen schools is too great a sacrifice to the health and lives of our families. I implore you to delay the reopening of schools until the HDOE fulfills the MOU agreement that was reached with HSTA and we can say with confidence that all campuses are prepared to safely reopen.

Sincerely,

Sondra Lee

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Michael Press <press.michaeld@gmail.com> on behalf of Michael Press  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:08 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Greetings,

My name is Michael Press and I am a 7/8 Social Studies teacher and Department Head at Ilima Intermediate School in Campbell/Kapolei complex on Oahu. I am 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**. We cannot open school campuses to students on Aug. 4.

As teachers we face the rather dubious position of reentering a situation that is objectively unsafe. Reasonable people can disagree about the degree of danger, and the degree certainly varies from location to location. Reasonable people can argue about the need for schools to reopen regardless of safety. Reasonable people, however, can not argue that reopening schools is the safe choice. It simply is not.

I think the more interesting question is why? The argument that Hawaii schools should reopen schools because other countries are reopening or because we "have Covid-19 under control" are hollow one once you compare rates of positive cases in the general population and that we have community spread. I know the question of why is a complicated one involving history, societal systems, and partisan politics, but I worry that maybe the answer is much simpler. The BoE does not feel like it can or should.

Throughout July and this uptick in Covid cases, a quotation keeps coming to my mind:

"The single raindrop never feels responsible for the flood." -Douglas Adams

As a middle school teacher for most of the last decade, I have a considerable network of teachers on social media, and I am amazed at the fear and the uncertainty. It's hard not to feel like we failed to meet the moment. During other periods of societal upheaval, we planted victory gardens, rationed gas and food, and entire segments of society went to work doing something other than their jobs. They did this for years. We made it about 2 months. I proudly live in a state that shutdown and shut down hard. In March and April, and even into May, we were doing well. Huge segments of the population were only going to the grocery store, we were following the hashtag #flattenthecurve, and we were listening to at home concerts. Cases were low and going down in many states and counties. Yet, here we are today.

I am not asking to not open. I want to teach. My teacher friends want to teach but we want to be safe. We live on an amazing set of islands and that means we have no room for error. We cannot get this wrong because there is nowhere to go for help. I am asking for a phased reopening to the school year. Distance, then Hybrid and finally full face to face. We are smart and have to act that way. **Pupukahi i holomua.**

Thank you for your attention,  
Michael Press

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Joli Johnston <jolijohnston@hotmail.com> on behalf of Joli Johnston  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:11 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Aloha,

My name is Joli Johnston and I am a Special Education Teacher at Laie 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 concerned that we are not prepared to begin this school year in our current climate and propose that we delay the beginning of the school year until we have a better understanding of how we can safely return to campus. We are walking right into "flu season" and I don't believe this is a good time to return to campus regardless of the guidelines and protocols in place. I am also in special education preschool and the guidelines provided will be dreadfully ineffective for our learning environment.

I would also like to suggest that we provide employees with more sick days given the nature of this illness. In previous years, when we became ill we only used sick days for the most acute days of the illness, resulting in about 1-3 sick days. If we are afflicted with COVID 19, we will need to take way more than that to ensure that we are free of infection before returning.

In summary, I would like to support the action of delaying the school year as well as adding allowable sick days to all levels of employees.

Mahalo for you time,  
Joli Johnston  
Laie Elementary

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Miki Yamamoto <mikiyamamoto808@gmail.com> on behalf of Miki Yamamoto  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:11 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Aloha Board of Education,

Thank you for your continued support for Hawaii's youth and teachers during this unprecedented time. However, as the start of the school year quickly approaches (August 4th, in exactly two weeks from the date of this email), we have seen an uptick in COVID-19 cases across the state, levels of which are much higher than when you decided to shut down the schools in March. I fail to see any common sense in that you would shut down schools when there were 0-3 cases reported when we left for Spring Break and yet you are comfortable with reopening schools when we are seeing a reported 20+ cases each day?

I am a music teacher who will be teaching 3rd grade this upcoming year to help my staff accommodate for the 6' social distancing measures that were recently implemented. I am nervous that I am teaching a subject that I have never taught- general education. But what scares me more is the possibility that I will contract COVID-19 from a student. I teach in a low-income community where there is a high population of multi-generational homes. If one student gets sick, not only could they infect their class, they would also infect their other siblings, cousins, aunts, or uncles that live under the same household and are in different grades and school "bubbles". At that point, you are not talking about one school "bubble" being shut down, but MULTIPLE, which includes MULTIPLE TEACHERS, possibly the ENTIRE SCHOOL. I won't even get into how me contracting COVID-19 will affect my family and my household. The bottom line is that if my students get sick, I will get sick. You are treating us as guinea pigs sending us into fire, HOPING that parents would have the hindsight to not send their child to school when they are not feeling well. There have been SO MANY TIMES where even RESPONSIBLE PARENTS would send their child to school even with the knowledge that they are sick. Trust me, I have seen it happen all the time even from when I started kindergarten in the public schools. It still happens.

Teachers are also not being given access to enough critical cleaning resources and PPE (such as wipes, tissues, hand sanitizer, just to name a few), and we have no clear understanding of a plan, because it sounds as if you are HOPING that no child or teacher will get sick and we will be teaching in a utopian situation. I want to teach my students, BUT SAFELY. What you laid out for us does not make anyone in the school environment feel safe.

Please delay the start of school so that all of us teachers can prepare and train with these new conditions. We are not prepared because YOU have not given us clear guidance when you had all of summer (and 4th quarter) to come up with clear and concise guidelines- and that needs to change. Teachers are not comfortable reporting to work with what you have laid out for us. Parents are not comfortable sending their children to school with what you have laid out for us. We need to delay the start of school until we have CLEAR SAFETY GUIDANCE AND UNDERSTANDING, especially regarding when a student or staff member contracts COVID-19. Students, parents, and teachers especially, all deserve so much better.

Thank you for your time,  
Miki Yamamoto

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Maxine Broad <kanamu@hawaii.edu> on behalf of Maxine Broad  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:12 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Delaying opening schools to students

Aloha, I am a parent of two elementary school aged children, and like many parents I too am concerned and worried about sending my children back to school especially because teachers are clearly telling the DOE that they are not ready. I am humbly asking that the date of August 4 for reopening schools to students be reconsidered, and pushed back until our teachers and educators are confident that they can properly and safely welcome our children back to school. I believe that if the teachers themselves are saying that they are not ready, capable or have any concerns about having children return to school at this time, the DOE needs to pay attention to what they are saying. They are the ones that will be on the frontline with our children, so they are the experts in this situation. It would be very irresponsible to not listen and take into consideration the concerns that HSTA has regarding this matter. You should NOT take any chances when it comes to our children's health and safety, This should be your top priority!

Mahalo,  
Maxine Broad

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Marissa Carlos <marissa\_carlos@hookele.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Marissa Carlos  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:12 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Aloha,

I'm a parent AND a teacher who feels that it is too early to send my children to school. I am worried for my own children's as well as my future student's health. I feel the state isn't ready for what may happen if students contract COVID and so many families will be affected in unimaginable ways.

Not only that, school will not be a CHILD FRIENDLY and collaborative environment. They will not have play time, group work, or any other type of VALUABLE INTERACTIONS that SHOULD BE a part of every school day. Children learn best when they are doing hands on activities as a group, problem solving with a team, and playing games with their friends, all of which will need to be done 6ft away from each other or online. How can our children learn this way?

Please consider reopening schools when it is SAFER for the kids.

Mahalo for your time!

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Laureen Tonaki-Coumas <ltonaki-coumas@mules.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Laureen Tonaki-Coumas  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:15 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Delay opening of schools

Dear Board members,

I have been a high school teacher in the state of Hawaii for 25 years. Going back into my classroom next week **the right way**, is of deadly importance. Our schools are not ready. Many have not even solved the logistics of creating a smaller number of students in each classroom with 6' distancing. The handy 'out' of getting a waiver for 3' distancing is only too easy and what is the consequence of this? More of a chance for this virus to spread? There's data that says older children (10 and up) have the same viral loads as adults and are spreaders. Spreaders to each other, their teachers, and their families. Let's be sure we are ready and can open schools safely, **the right way!**

Schools also need money to ensure all classrooms have the necessary supplies to make them clean and safe for its inhabitants. Hand sanitizers, extra masks, face shields, barriers, fans, and disinfectants. Who is responsible for disinfecting the common touch areas? Desks, doors and other surfaces? Bathrooms, cafeterias, library and other areas on campus? Are there enough custodians in each school to perform these essential duties? Enough nurses?

Who is going to screen students everyday to ensure they have their masks, and are not exhibiting symptoms. What happens if students and staff *do appear ill*? What is the protocol regarding testing?, quarantine?, returning to school? Who needs to also be tested and quarantined? Everyone that person came in contact with? What is the threshold for illness on campus? Are there enough Subs when teachers become ill?

Who is making sure all schools in Hawaii have these answers before opening up to students? **Let's do this right!** Lives are at stake here! Delaying the opening of schools, even for 2 weeks, may allow schools to find answers to all these questions and be more prepared.

I still love my job but I'm not willing to die for it. This hurried rush to open schools does not inspire confidence in anybody. We will be one of the first schools in the nation to open, all eyes will be on us. Will it be a success or disaster?

Thank you for your time,  
Laureen Tonaki-Coumas

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** IVY SAMOLINSKI <ivysamolinski@icloud.com> on behalf of IVY SAMOLINSKI  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:19 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Ivy Kraushaar and I teach 8th grade ELA at Chiefess Kamakahelei Middle School in Lihue, Kauai. I agree with this statement:

“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,” Rosenlee said.

This statement rings loud and clear. Let’s prepare for what we know is looming rather than being ill-prepared.

Thank you,

Ivy Kraushaar



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** rfvromo@gmail.com  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:19 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** TESTIMONY

Aloha Kakou:

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 think we all can agree that early in the summer, we all thought that by the time school session came, the COVID-19 situation would be well under control and it would be safe for kids and teachers to resume classes as normal. However, this virus has taken everyone by surprise and the recent surge in cases, especially in Oahu should make everyone rethink whether it is safe for students, teachers and their respective families and communities to open. I would strongly suggest that school opening be delayed at least one month until the situation can be reassessed. It would be safer to delay school one month and extend the school year one month later in the summer than to rush into opening too early.

My wife is a high school science teacher at Kea'au High School, she is extremely dedicated to her students and I worry for her, and her students. Please consider this and do what's right.

Mahalo

Rodrigo Romo  
Hilo, HI 96720  
Tel: 808.935.8270

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Jocelyn Valdez <chyvaldez@yahoo.com> on behalf of Jocelyn Valdez  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:19 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Good afternoon! I am an EA at Solomon Elementary School. I have some concerns about opening our schools.

1) If a student is sick (gets sent to the health room and stays home because they have tested positive for Covid-19) will the rest of us in our classrooms be screened later?

2) If our own child gets sick from school, are we using our sick leave though we are not able to use it to care for others?

We all have to come to work when school opens so a lot of us do not have that option to do 100% distance learning for our own children.

My child is in middle school and I understand they will not be moving out of their classrooms but the teachers are moving from class to class. That puts everyone at risk of catching the virus. Teachers will get it and spread it to the rest of their students. Teachers will be exposed to 6-7 different classes.

Please consider not opening schools just yet until we are in the clear of this.

Mahalo

Jocelyn Valdez

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** DJ Woodard <dwoodard@maili.k12.hi.us> on behalf of DJ Woodard  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:20 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Re: differentials take back

Aloha

I'm writing this to oppose this action. We teachers in hard ti staff areas deal with a lot more problems with children due to their home environment and the daily struggle to survive or basically having something to eat everyday. We most teachers who teach children in this population always have extra food stored away to provide meals to students who missed breakfast because they woke up late or had no money to purchase breakfast. We are the teachers that gotta use or own monies to support learning in our classroom because we know it will be a burden if we asked for help from the parents. So most times teachers supply their own classroom supplies.

Special Education teachers need to follow a federal document to ensure that each student on their caseload is provided with everything that is written in their IEP. We need to write n interpret our own impression on student behaviors and academic learning. We now will be faced with face to face teaching with the lowest cognitive students who displays aggressive ( hitting. Kicking , spitting, pinching, etc) behaviors when simply refusing to do work? What do we do in this situation where 6 ft distancing will be impossible for teacher to comply with. These xtudents continue to need one to one assistance on the daily. How do we teachers comply with 6 ft distancing or simply to protect myself n my family? We will be taking risks everyday that we report to work and on top of that you want to take away monies that we deserve and finally getting compensated for our hardwork ! Don't take away our differentials we deserve and earn that money ! We are the Frontline!!

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Jehnna McKeague <jehnnamckeague@gmail.com> on behalf of Jehnna McKeague  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:22 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** No School on Campus!!!

Aloha,

I'm an administrator for a school. I feel like we have prepared pretty well and have almost everything into place. However, I do not believe that having our children on campus is a good idea. If one person gets sick, I not only have to shut down my classroom, but I need to shut down their possible siblings classes as well. These "bubbles" don't make sense. These kids interact with other kids that interact with other kids and so on. I possibly have to shut down A+ and with that, shuts the whole school down. Now my teachers and my staff are at risk as well. Now the whole school is closed. 3 feet or 6 feet, doesn't matter!!!

But wait, the infected child has a sibling in another public school...

Do we have to wait until we get to this point in order to shut a school down and take the safer route?

Data with kids being least at-risk is not conclusive. Since this pandemic, we have protected our children as much as we could. Doesn't matter what state or country, schools were the first to close. So now that we're opening, this should be where the real data comes in and I hate to see the number of sick children rise because we failed to protect them!!!

We're the only state that is considering opening schools this early. Doesn't that tell you anything? Doesn't matter if our numbers are lower. It'll be up in no time. Can't we make the smarter decision and keep our children at home? Do you want to be responsible for an outbreak? Are you going to supply testing materials at adequate amounts? Are you going to help with medical bills? How is it going to feel to have children be admitted to a hospital because no person is the same and they could have a bad reaction? Do you like seeing your kids sick? If you could do something to prevent your kids from getting sick, wouldn't you? Wouldn't you keep them home and protect them?

No one wants to be the bad guy and make the right call, but please make the call to keep our kids home until we can figure it out. This is not the time. My husband and I both work full time and we figure it out for our kids and make it work for child care. People need to work together and make it work! Kids are safer at home.

Mahalo

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Haley A. Ku'uipo Bufil Agbayani <hakbufil@gmail.com> on behalf of Haley A. Ku'uipo Bufil Agbayani  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:23 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony: Agenda Item H.

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 H.** to ask you to consider the reopening of schools with regard to the MOU between HDOE and HSTA and contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response. The bottom line is that we need to proactively consider and be cognizant of the safety, health, and well-being of all school staff, faculty, students, all of our families, and community members.

We need more time to thoroughly prepare for the reopening of school building by ensuring healthy and safe learning environments including training on the proper procedures and protocols with regard to screening and instances when a person may test positive for COVID-19 and preparing for the unknown in the event that we need to carry out effective teacher-led online and distance learning environments. Furthermore, we must require face masks to be worn at all times while we are on our campuses! These aforementioned tasks will take an extraordinary amount of time, collaborative work and effort. As such, we should not be rushing and haphazardly reopening without the proper guidance for moving forward at the expense of students', teachers', staff, families', or community members' lives.

With cases on the rise, we still lack clear guidance from the DOH and HDOE. Let's be proactive rather than reactive should the reopening of schools result in everyone's worst nightmare, contracting COVID-19 and possible passing from the virus. Please, give us hope, act with kindness, and work towards togetherness by adjusting the reopening of face-to-face instruction and reopening until we have all questions answered from HDOE and DOH. WE NEED THOROUGH plans in place and specific guidance moving forward. Please err on the side of caution when considering your plans to reopen schools for the 2020-2021 school year; we need to delay reopening until clear guidance is received. Help us thrive, survive, and live!

Me ka ha'aha'a,

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

--

Haley Ann Ku'uipo (Bufile) Agbayani, M.Ed.

808-315-0102, [hakbufile@gmail.com](mailto:hakbufile@gmail.com), HC 1 Box 4069, Kea'au, HI 96749

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

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Aimee (Niwa) Clanin <aimee.niwa@gmail.com> on behalf of Aimee (Niwa) Clanin  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:24 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

To Whom It May Concern:

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, my name is Aimee Clanin and I am an educator at Pope Elementary as well as a parent of a student who attends Maemae Elementary. I am writing in support of HSTA to delay the opening of schools to students this coming school year because I believe schools will not be ready. Educators have been on summer vacation, resetting their social emotional clocks to be ready for a school year that will be like no other. We, educators, have not been required to attend professional development, check our emails, or even build plans for this school year. Many of us have been taking care of families and keeping our ohana safe from the spread of COVID-19. To think that we only have four days to spring into action for a school year with so many precautions to take and things we've never ever had to worry about does not seem rational. Plus, in reality it's two teacher days to prep and two days for Admin to go over the usual things like DOE policies, required DOE videos, school handbook policies, etc. Schools most definitely need more days to prepare for this very unusual opening.

The DOE has a chance to be an example for our nation because it's possible we are the first DOE to open for this new school year. Let's do it right! Schools should be allowed to take extra time to layout plans, protocols for opening, protocols for positive COVID-19 tests, organize their classrooms, allow for teachers to create plans for a year of teaching that includes learning modes that we've never encountered (blended learning, hybrid learning, distance learning, etc.), provide professional development for how to teach in this new environment and develop schedules/rules/etc that keep our students' and staff safety as the #1 priority.

As a parent of a student, I do have my worries but I know that his school (Maemae Elementary) has been building out careful social distancing plans for this school year. The only thing I see that would make their plan better is TIME. Time for the teachers that have been on break to catch up with what the school has planned, time for the school as a whole to know what to do if someone tests positive for COVID-19, and time for families to feel that their children are heading into a situation that puts their safety first. We need that peace of mind!

Do we educators miss our students? Of course we do!

Do we want our schools open again? Of course we do!

Are we scared to go back even though the numbers are rising? Yes, which is why we need that extra time to do things right.

Benjamin Franklin once said, "If you fail to plan, you are planning to fail." Yes, we have many schools that have put together plans for this unusual school year, but those plans need to be carefully shared and rolled out with the staff that have been on summer vacation for the last couple of months. Please give schools TIME to be 100% ready for students - there is no need to rush. If we rush, we will fail and we will be back at square one in a month's time.

Thank you for consideration.

Aimee Clanin



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Ms. Fung <jennifer\_fung@nvms.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Ms. Fung  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:24 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Aloha Board of Education Members,

My name is Jennifer Fung, and I'm a proud 8th grade science teacher at Niu Valley Middle School. This will be my fifth year teaching, and I absolutely love my job. That said, I would like to submit 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.

Last week, I voluntarily joined a call with 30,000+ other educators to hear what the National Educators Association recommends for the safe reopening of schools, and watched HSTA fight for the safety of our schools today, with one week before we go back to work. While I can't speak for everyone, the vast majority of teachers ALWAYS have our students' interests at heart. We don't leave the job behind when the clock strikes 3. We grade and lesson plan into the night and on weekends, we give our contract ordained work-free recess, lunch, and after school hours to talk and to counsel students about everything from academics to family issues to health problems to friendship and relationship issues to bullying to even abuse in the home. I love my job and thank God for the privilege of being there for students as they share about every single one of those issues. I've literally considered whether I could take in students to live with me to keep them safe. Even after they leave our classroom, they're still ours. This week alone, I was blessed to hear from students from two, three, and four years ago who have reached out just to say hi and see how I'm doing.

We worry about their safety, their academics, their futures, and we PRAY for our students and their families. We teach them about prejudice, respect, consent, and how to discuss ideas meaningfully when others disagree with you. We keep them safe during lockdowns and shelter in place, and we want to continue to keep them safe now, when the threat isn't a gun, or a person, but a virus.

Though the leaders of our country have tried to strong-arm us into opening by using our most vulnerable students as a bargaining chip, the American Academy of Pediatrics agrees and stands with the National Educators Association that schools should only reopen if it's safe, and I beg of you to let Hawaii lead the way not in being the first to reopen schools, but the first to reopen schools well. Let our state be a shining example of how we can beat this virus together and keep our keiki and our society's health a priority.

Teachers more than anyone know how in-person education compares to distance learning. I missed my students incredibly this past quarter, and trying to teach science without group activities and hands on learning was a challenge. But if we're going to open, it must be done well, and it cannot be rushed. Creating a safe space in our classrooms emotionally, socially,

academically and physically is the first thing we're taught in our education classes. If students don't feel safe, they won't learn.

We want our kids back in our classrooms. Period. We also prioritize the health of our students, teachers, custodians, staff, and you, the general public. The DOE AND the DOH need to put proper safety measures in place, like making masks the default (with exceptions), securing PPE and cleaning supplies, detailed plans regarding reopening schools, contact tracing, and training for the inevitable return to distance learning.

My principal has done an incredible job of leading us last quarter and I have attended every optional online meeting possible this summer. I recognize that principals are doing their best, and we as teachers are committed to our jobs, but even still, there are questions unanswered.

Students in middle and high school have "ohana bubbles" that contain upwards of 80 students and teachers even with splitting our classes into A/B/C days to accommodate 6ft of social distancing at our school. They will rotate between classrooms, wipe down seats that others have sat in, pass by others on the way to class or at lunch, take public transportation to and from school, visit 7-11 after school for a snack, and Jack in the Box before school for breakfast. Their bubbles are large, and what should happen if one gets sick?

In addition, substitute teachers will go from class to class, school to school, and many subs are retired teachers in the vulnerable category. What should happen in the event that they get sick? Will all classes in contact with them over the last week quarantine?

I humbly request that the Board of Education and DOH need to spend a day walking our campuses with a student's schedule, seeing what it will be like for them to return, and creating detailed distance learning contingency plans for the inevitable call that a student or teacher is sick. I gladly welcome you to come to my classroom at Niu Valley.

The DOH agreed to supply official guidance on how to reopen, and with one week to go before teachers return, there is no handbook as of yet. Already, teachers are considering early retirement, counting their sick leave, or worse yet, literally discussing advanced directives and living wills. Even myself, as a 33 year old healthy teacher, and my friends, have had discussions with our families about "what to do if...". We have the opportunity to keep our cases low, to limit the number of lives that we lose. My complex has unfortunately lost at least one person to COVID already, and one person is one too many. That's one family whose lives are forever changed.

Our state is hurting right now, and I recognize how privileged I am as a teacher to have a job at all, and especially one that stretches our 10month salary over 12 months. I can't imagine how difficult it is for families without jobs, single parents, or parents with jobs that don't allow them to work from home or have flexible schedules. We all want our state to reopen, for tourism to return so jobs can return, but we cannot risk the lives of people, of children, to do so. Hawaii is a prime destination for tourists, but they will not come if there is an outbreak, especially with children. There is no perfect solution.

Please put the health of our keiki first, please delay the opening of schools so that teachers can be trained, DOH can provide guidance, and detailed plans can be developed. Let us be remembered as the state that opened schools well, the state that cared about their kuleana to their keiki, the state with the least number of sick students, parents, grandparents, and educators, with the least number of lives lost. Let us continue to be known as the "Aloha State", a state that is known for loving people and putting them first.

--

Sincerely,  
Ms. Jenny K. Fung  
8th Grade Integrated Science  
Niu Valley Middle School  
(808) 377-2440 x264

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** John Shim <johnshim13@gmail.com> on behalf of John Shim  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:25 PM  
**To:** Testimony BOE  
**Subject:** Testimony

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,

I am an educator in Honolulu district and I implore the Board of Education to ensure every DOE worker in schools have access to proper PPE before opening up schools to the general public. Also, schools should have mandatory temperature screening for anyone entering campus to prevent mass infections. Lastly, I'd like more clarity on procedures for those who are infected or suspected to have covid infections on when they can come back to campus, especially since covid test results can take weeks to get back results from the mainland. Mahalo.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** David Bucknell <david.bucknell@gmail.com> on behalf of David Bucknell  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:25 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Questions from Teachers

Here are some good questions I saw posted on FB, and to which I don't think I've heard any answers, yet:

- If a teacher tests positive for COVID-19 are they required to quarantine for 2-3 weeks? Is their sick leave covered, paid?
- If that teacher has 5 classes a day with 30 students each, do all 150 of those students need to then stay home and quarantine for 14 days?
- Do all 150 of those students now have to get tested? Who pays for those tests? Are they happening at school? How are the parents being notified? Does everyone in each of those kids' families need to get tested? Who pays for that?
- What if someone who lives in the same house as a teacher tests positive? Does that teacher now need to take 14 days off of work to quarantine? Is that time off covered? Paid?
- Where is the district going to find a substitute teacher who will work in a classroom full of exposed, possibly infected students for substitute pay?
- Substitutes teach in multiple schools. What if they are diagnosed with COVID-19? Do all the kids in each school now have to quarantine and get tested? Who is going to pay for that?
- What if a student in your kid's class tests positive? What if your kid tests positive? Does every other student and teacher they have been around quarantine? Do we all get notified who is infected and when? Or because of HIPAA regulations are parents and teachers just going to get mysterious "may have been in contact" emails all year long?
- What is this stress going to do to our teachers? How does it affect their health and well-being? How does it affect their ability to teach? How does it affect the quality of education they are able to provide? What is it going to do to our kids? What are the long-term effects of consistently being stressed out?
- How will it affect students and faculty when the first teacher in their school dies from this? The first parent of a student who brought it home? The first kid?
- How many more people are going to die, that otherwise would not have if we had stayed home longer? 30% of the teachers in the US are over 50. About 16% of the total deaths in the US are people between the ages of 45-65.  
We are choosing to put our teachers in danger.  
We're not paying them more.

We aren't spending anywhere near the right amount to protect them. And in turn, we are putting ourselves and our kids in danger.

(I didn't make these up, but I think they are good questions.)

--

David Bucknell

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Jamie Espinoza <4jamie.espinoza@gmail.com> on behalf of Jamie Espinoza  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:27 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

To Whom it may concern,

I am writing this to persuade you to delay the physical opening of schools and to ensure shortage differentials are NOT taken away.

I have been teaching for 24 years and have always looked forward to the start of a new school year. The thought of returning to school this year has filled me with dread and anxiety for the following reasons:

**1. The health and safety of the students and their families, colleagues, and of myself and my family.**

Presently, HIDOE has provided guidance for keeping students in a “bubble”. However, the information is vague and could give parents, community members, and educators a false sense of security. I would like to have a detailed answer to these questions:

- Classrooms and high traffic areas are to be cleaned and sanitized frequently. Currently my classroom (and at every other campus I’ve worked at) does not get mopped or wiped down. The floors are swept and the garbage taken out, but NO other cleaning happens. With such a low standard of cleanliness in the DOE, how do you guarantee this additional cleaning/sanitizing will occur?
- Students regularly are sent to school when they are sick; some choose to come to school when ill. Often students begin to feel ill during the school day. Worst case scenario, students come to school knowing they are ill just to pass on the illness and shut down the school. Temperature is one indicator, but recent research shows that people are the most contagious BEFORE they develop symptoms. In addition, many people are asymptomatic. How do you intend to screen students and staff? Where will students be placed if they are being sent home? Are you going to put them all in the health room? Mix the students with COVID with those that may just have the stomach flu?
- Middle and High school students are not kept in one classroom and move about campus several times per day. The Chapter 19 guidelines state students cannot use or sell drugs, fight, or smoke on campus, but students still engage in these behaviors. Your reopening schools guidelines state students should wear masks and remain six feet apart. If we are unable to prevent students from committing crimes on campus, how do you intend to prevent students from practicing unsafe behavior such as sharing food, kissing, not wearing a mask, etc?
- Even with a blended schedule, there will be approximately 600 kids on a middle school campus per day. What happens when someone on campus tests positive for COVID? It says in your guidelines that the classroom will be cleaned, people sent home, and parents notified. If it is a teacher, he/she will have had contact with 3 or more classes of students and various staff members. One classroom, staff lounge, bathroom, and all other rooms the teacher visited will need to be cleaned. If it is a student, he/she will have been in contact with 3 or more teachers, 50+ students in class, and who knows how many other students during lunch, recess, class changes, and the journey to and from school. Every classroom, lunchroom, restroom, and doorknob to every classroom and building will need to be cleaned. How do you intend to do this? Do all kids that came in contact with the infected person remain home? How quickly will you be contacting parents? Are you providing testing to all of the students, families, and staff? Will you make parents sign a waiver to protect the school district from lawsuits when someone dies from contracting COVID at school? With all of the extended families living in Hawaii, you are truly risking the lives of not only the children and educational staff, you are risking the lives of grandparents, toddlers, and the 100,000+ people in the state that have diabetes.

- Who covers the medical expenses when we contract COVID at school? Am I forced to use my sick days and leave and pay the medical bills? What about low income students and families? Is the state going to provide compensation? Medical expenses and loss of work are devastating. Many families, including my own, would not be able to afford it.
- What PPE are you providing to the staff and students? How do you plan to ensure it is used with fidelity? On a recent trip to the grocery store, I observed 8 children between the ages of 4 and 18 wearing masks incorrectly. Two store employees had their masks below their noses, the woman behind the POKE counter was serving orders and talking to customers with her mask below her chin. Adults took off their masks to speak to one another. If this is the norm, why would you expect school children to wear masks properly?

## **2. Cutting pay and/or shortage differentials will lead to a mass exodus from teaching and from Hawaii.**

Per the HIDOE data, with the current differential more special education teachers remained in their positions and more qualified teachers moved into a special education position. Many highly qualified teachers would leave positions in special education and hard to staff schools if these differentials were taken away. Many of us are from the mainland. We chose to move here and accepted the fact that we would make less than we had in our stateside positions. We love Hawaii and all the Aloha that comes with it. We love teaching and are always working diligently to do what is right for our students. However, we cannot survive without continued compensation. My first year teaching in Hawaii was the 2009-2010 school year. With my starting salary several thousand dollars below what I was making in Texas and a 20% pay cut added to that, I almost lost my home. I could not afford to feed my family, pay my mortgage, even with both my husband and I working full time jobs. Currently, I am the only one employed in my home. My husband lost his job in March. Since he covered our health insurance costs, I had to get insurance through the EUTF - an added expense. In addition, my school is going through the shred process and I will be losing 7.7% of every paycheck. I do not know if we would be able to remain in Hawaii if pay cuts were made.

Special education teachers have worked harder than ever to provide services to our students. When schools closed, we immediately started planning how and when we could reach our students. Special education teachers went above and beyond by:

- Providing individualized instruction by any means necessary.
- Creating lessons that were engaging and based on students' IEP goals, even when other teachers were just posting or mailing enrichment materials.
- Providing academic and emotional support to students 7 days a week and at all hours of the day. Students called or sent texts on weekends and at 10pm. Our teachers responded without complaint.
- Remaining in constant contact with parents, sometimes multiple times per day.
- Collecting data in creative ways to complete 4th quarter IEP progress reports even though grades did not have to be entered or calculated by general education teachers.
- Completing an overwhelming amount of additional paperwork mandated by the DOE. Teachers were working 15 hour days and were stretched thin from virtual meetings with parents, administrators, and departments, working with students, planning lessons, and completing paperwork. Without the current differential, many would have moved to other content areas for the 20-21 school year.

I implore you to delay the opening of physical schools and to keep teacher compensation intact.

Sincerely,

Jamie Espinoza



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Anne Mcknight <anne.mcknight@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Anne Mcknight  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:28 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Please delay the start of the public school year

*Dear BOE,*

*I am a secondary teacher at Washington Middle School.*

*I'd like to urge the delay of the August 4th arrival of students on campus or even revert to a traditional school calendar that starts after Labor Day. Why are we rushing to be the first in the nation, the guinea pigs, for school reopening? We need time to learn from best practices around the world. We also need a financial commitment from the State & Federal Governments to our schools to provide materials and personnel dedicated to keeping keiki and adults safe.*

*Our school administrators, teachers, and staff have been working diligently to prepare for the reopening of schools and we need more time to prepare a safe environment. Teachers need **more than four days** of required professional development **before** the arrival of students on campus to be provided training on safe practices and on how to use technology for distance learning. Departments need meeting and planning time in order to unpack and address their unique needs for delivering in-person instruction safely and online instruction effectively.*

*Schools need to acquire, distribute, and install PPE, such as plexiglass barriers - at our last faculty meeting, we were told barrier materials are sold out and unavailable! We need to receive and understand guidance on what needs to be done with regard to contact tracing and quarantine should someone on campus become infected, including what should be done should someone in a person's out-of-school "Ohana bubble" become infected. We need to understand that "Ohana bubbles" on a secondary school level could mean hundreds of people that will come into contact with each other before, during, and after-school during extracurricular activities set to resume on August 19th. We need to be clear on how the entry of substitutes into schools will be handled. What training will they have in safe practices?*

*The BOE needs to commit to offering a 100% Distance Learning option as promised to families by actually offering it, advertising it to families, and preparing schools to deliver on this promise in an effective way by offering adequate training, resources, and time for dedicated distance learning teachers to prepare. Assuming that regular classroom teachers will have time to teach face to face and virtual classes at the same time with any degree of effectiveness for either group is extremely misguided and shows a lack of understanding about teaching methods and classroom realities.*

*We need more time to prepare if schools are going to open safely and effectively; protecting the health and safety of all those in school and their families, providing effective online educational service, and preventing sudden school closures.*

*Sincerely,  
Anne McKnight*

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Emma Davis <[e.davis@seariders.k12.hi.us](mailto:e.davis@seariders.k12.hi.us)> on behalf of Emma Davis  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:28 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony for Thurs 8/23

To Hawaii Board of Education:

I understand the complicated nature of making decisions in the current climate. As a teacher, I agree that face-to-face instruction is the most effective method of teaching for student success and that the social emotional aspect of being in a school setting is undoubtedly essential for student, staff and family mental health. I recognize that as family members have to return to work, students at home would pose a significant issue regarding access to childcare as well.

However, and this may be the only point that need be made, but for us to place students back in school puts the lives of students, staff, their families and the greater Hawaii community at risk. **If we were to lose a student...a staff member... or any more lives because of exposure in schools when we could have prevented it, you are responsible for that death.**

Additionally, the hybrid models that are the current expected course are littered with an innumerable amount of logistical nightmares that are waiting to happen including sick staff and ineffective substitute coverage, an unknown number of students who will have to be completely online compared to their peers and potentially entire classes that will have to quarantine at any point in time. The uncertainty that is accompanied by these models will be paralleled with uncertainty in instruction as teachers struggle to manage multiple classroom environments with little to no time to prepare.

While distance learning may not have the face-to-face component that we all desire, it DOES offer more flexibility within the ever changing status of the public health crisis at hand. We can find solutions within distance learning that will provide a much more solid curriculum, routine AND instruction if we are not having to change plans at every turn. Because of that, distance learning is the better option and I urge you to reconsider it as the path moving forward.

Finally, if your argument for pushing the return to school is based in any way on better instruction for students (which again, I believe can be better achieved through a less volatile plan) then suggesting that differentials for teachers in hard-to-fill and sped positions be cut is hypocritical. Students in these areas and placement experience the highest rate of teacher turnover which is a leading cause for less than optimal instruction. The differentials have proven to retain more teachers in these positions which directly impacts student learning. On top of that, **as you ask teachers to enter classrooms amid a pandemic and simultaneously cut their pay you're sending the message, as always, that teachers are dispensable and not a valued position within our society and that is a message we simply cannot take any more.**

Do better.  
Emma Davis

---

**E. Davis**

Science Teacher | Upper Academy  
Advisor | Class of 2021  
Wai'anae High School  
[e.davis@seariders.k12.hi.us](mailto:e.davis@seariders.k12.hi.us)

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** KL Wong <keeandlin@hotmail.com> on behalf of KL Wong  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:30 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Agenda Item VI-D

My name is Linda Wong – STEM teacher for Grades 6-8<sup>th</sup> at Stevenson Middle

I am asking you to look carefully at the myriad of variables that have not been considered by our DOE leadership when opening of schools on August 4<sup>th</sup>.

First of all, I know you are so busy, so thank you ahead of time for your consideration.

I know HSTA signed an agreement with the DOE, but personally, it was too vague and leaves us unprotected and unprepared to function in and create a safe environment for teachers, students and everyone's extended families.

I've been a public school teacher for 22 years and the one problem I always observe is that DOE leadership always "run the water before installing the pipes, and leave a huge mess for teachers to clean up. I have inserted specific examples below. Also, as you read, please Keep in mind that I am 47 with chronic sinusitis, my husband is 52 already gets bronchitis or pneumonia after any cold along with asthma, and my daughter is asthmatic. I am conflicted. I really want school to resume, especially since my daughter is starting HS this year. I want all kids to have the full experience of being in school. However, the reality and numbers and amount of prep teachers have been given is close to null.

First of all, there is no real plan for teaching with all these new safety issues.

Point 1: Enforcement is very subjective. The superintendent says that we have a plan. Okay, we've voted on 1 of 3 plans created with no teacher input. Kids wear masks, maybe, but it's up to teachers to decide when it's necessary. The DOE safety handbook states, "In the classroom setting, where the class is considered a cohort or bubble, it is not required that students and teachers wear a mask. Facial recognition and expressions are very important social cues in a child's development. A classroom full of mask-wearing students may cause unhealthy anxiety for students"

Point 2: Not enough time given to set up classes for safety. My school is not letting teachers into our rooms [until 7/29](#) because it's taking longer for custodial staff to set up our rooms and tape for social distancing. We'll have only 2 days workdays before the kids come to prepare. Normally, I go into my class A few weeks prior to our official start date. We packed up our belongings at the end of the year and we have to reset, clean, organize the placement and flow In the classroom setting, create posters and run off our syllabus, and lessons (no date or procedures set up yet for the teacher workroom), all of which take more than 2 Days. 2 days for mandatory meetings and 2 days for classroom set up.

Point 3: The DOE sent us their safety manual for reopening. Basically it only cover 3 items: Handwashing, wearing of masks, with an option to take of masks decided by the teacher if everyone is 6 ft apart, and end of the day sanitizing procedures. Procedures for everything else is left up to principles and teachers to figure out in 4 days before kids come on Aug. 4<sup>th</sup>.

Actually, even before the first faculty meeting, there are no standards. My school is asking all teachers to be on campus, but we'll have our meetings via webex from our separate classrooms. At Waipahu Int., teachers will meet in the cafeteria spread 6 ft apart. Even with 6 ft distances, airlines trainees were infected with COVID-19.

There are hundreds more routines that we need to rework and change. I just got a memo telling the teachers that we cannot have student comp books touch and students can't rifle through books to find their own. " As we follow health, safety, and social distancing guidelines, space and the ability to prevent cross-contamination will be a challenge. Materials

such as composition notebooks or binders cannot be stacked upon one another, and students cannot go through piles to get their materials. We must keep this in mind as we prepare for the new year.

I then clarified about other shared class supplies and here is the answer: “The supplies you will need students to bring every day should be listed in your syllabus and explicitly told to them during the first days of class. If you notice certain students are not bringing the needed supplies on a regular basis, I would suggest reaching out to parents to determine why they are not bringing supplies. As far as asking students to pack-up early to clean shared supplies, due to the fact face-to-face time is limited, we want to preserve as much of that time as possible for learning. Additionally, we do not want to single out students who potentially cannot afford supplies and reduce their learning time for cleaning. We recognize some of our families will not be able to purchase all of these supplies, it may be a case-by-case basis where you can give them supplies and store the supplies for them in your classroom.”

No standardized procedures for details of teaching such as passing out paperwork, group work, building of projects, teambuilding, discussions, lab procedures and use of lab equipment. Can we clean tech equipment with alcohol wipe downs between classes? etc. If parents knew that each teacher or even each school was going to have varying procedures then now I am fearing liability for myself, my school and ultimately the state. What if we do something wrong or don't do something we should do? If everyone is making judgement calls on everything, there will be chaos. This is a lot of responsibility to carry and unless we as teachers are prepared, we will fail miserably to keep the community safe. Schools have always appreciated autonomy to accommodate for differing styles of teaching, but when it comes to safety, we need clear and across the board standards for PE, for band, for Science lab work and hands on group project work, dance, Art, textbooks that are shared because there is not enough for the entire 9th grade English class. We ONLY have standards for hand washing, 6 foot rule, and cleaning at the end of the day. There are many more pukas to fill and all this filling of holes takes much longer than what we are given. 2 teacher workdays and 9 afternoons with the kids already present in the morning to figure out all these procedures as a school. My school may be really safe while The next closest school has less stringent standards. It's Russian roulette for which school your child attends or which school you teach at.

Suggestions:

Suggestion 1: It is a fallacy stated by the Superintendent that we can control opening because we have small bubbles. There is no bubble for middle and HS. We should entertain the concept of “in school learning” for elementary only and for SPED in the middle and HS levels. We could also have security and counselors monitor a computer lab in school for students who cannot connect to the internet for the middle and HS levels. We can reassess every few weeks and if things improve, then we can slowly open the schools.

The public keeps seeing it repeated in the news that kids will be safe in a small pod with 1 teacher per day. That only works for elementary, but not middle or HS. The superintendent keeps saying that we can go to distance learning in middle and HS, but not elementary. So why don't we do just that! Participation in distance learning will go up because attendance and grades will be enforced, not optional. Decision makers, including our superintendent have not seriously taken a look at older students. Middle and HS kids engage in riskier behavior. They wear masks a lot less. They share food, drinks, vaping devices, hugs, kisses and more. There's also an awful lot more of them than in elementary schools. My school voted and Majority agreed on an ABC schedule. That's a third of our school on campus at a time. My principal came back with a new schedule based on teacher feedback and we have an AB schedule now. So 50% at school each day. So I'm my middle school that's approximately 350+ students on campus with 70 ish adult staff. We will have 23-20 students in class at a time rotating through 4 teachers per day and a new set of kids the next day. In just 2 days, one infected student will have had contact with up to 160 students. If they have a siblings or cousins whom they live with, you'll have to test triple the number plus 7 teachers. I didn't even add the kids whom they came in contact with whom they meet in the bathroom or at recess or lunch. Do we really have enough tests and money to test 500+ people at 1 school? Or 2 or 3 All within a week?

Suggestion 2: Delay the opening of schools and require consensus or some expert to sign off on each school's procedures, but do not extend the year into the summer as that is too disruptive for summer enrichment programs, summer school credit acquisition, and sports/dance teams that travel.

Finally, I don't have much trust that our state is making sound decisions as a result of insensitivity to teachers, parents and grandparents at home. I read a quote by health director Bruce Anderson today and he shared in the paper that only 1/1000 kids have died to show how low risk it is for kids, however, in the next breath he says, “That doesn't necessarily

help teachers, of course, or faculty who are worried". It's like he's saying , oh well, too bad so sad, we can't keep everyone safe. Well, he sure doesn't assure me that I'm returning to a safe workplace. I wish I could retire early or take a year off, but that's not an option for my family.

I appreciate your open mind and listening ear as I shared my heartfelt concerns and suggestions.

Mahalo,  
Linda Wong

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Kaipo Inn <edwardinn@ymail.com> on behalf of Kaipo Inn  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:30 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I need training before returning to work Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Kuras21116 <kuras21116@hotmail.com> on behalf of Kuras21116  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:30 PM  
**To:** Testimony Boe  
**Subject:** Delaying student start day

I am writing to inform you that I am in favour of delaying the start day for school. Teachers never was asked to risk their lives for their jobs, which premature opening without proper training will do.

Thank you,

Shawn Kuratani

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Jennifer Johnson <jennyjohnson1677@gmail.com> on behalf of Jennifer Johnson  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:31 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Aloha,

My name is Jennifer Johnson and I am a parent of two second graders at Barbers Point Elementary School as well as a substitute teacher at Barbers Point.

This is for the General Business Meeting agenda for the opening of schools on August 5th.

My position is in opposition to Barbers Point Elementary's operating procedures and filing for a 3 foot exemption.

I believe the 6 foot spacing of students with mask use is a good minimum for prevention. This is with the understanding that kids are kids and will not be 100% compliant during the day. Per the CDC recommendation, all of the desks should face forward in the same direction and that meals should be served in the classroom.

Please mandate that our schools practice 6 foot spacing and do not allow for exemptions, with the understanding that the recommendations are for groups of 10 or less. There was a lot of science, research, effort and thought that went into these guidelines and I do not think that it is in the best interest of our children and community to bypass them.

Thank you for your time,  
Mahalo  
Jennifer Johnson



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Tiffany O <tiffanytam46@gmail.com> on behalf of Tiffany O  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:32 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 school is not prepared to open for students in two weeks. Many of my questions have gone unanswered and our school has not been able to make certain decisions due to unclarity from the DOE.

I am very concerned for the safety of my family. Being around so many students and families on a daily basis will put my family in harms way. I don't want to bring COVID home to them. I am having a lot of anxiety about going back because I do not feel that my school, Nu'uanu Elementary is equipped to handle the students who will be coming back. There are not enough hand sanitizing stations in our school. What do we do if a child seems sick? Will we be sending every student who has a runny nose or cough to the health room? What happens if someone on campus has the disease.

I also did not agree to my school's current model which is model C. I teach Kindergarten and having a full 20 plus students in my classroom is not safe for me. There is no way I can space them 6 ft apart. I think that teachers are not being taken into consideration. We are an afterthought. What about our health? It just seems like the DOE is pushing for schools to reopen but they aren't thinking about the teachers.

Thank you for your time.  
Tiff

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Kristen Miyazono <kristen.miyazono@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Kristen Miyazono  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:32 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

To whom it may concern,

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 would like to please urge you to postpone the reopening of our public schools in Hawaii for at least the first semester of the 2020-2021 school year. As an educator and a parent, I do not feel safe attending school and/or sending my child to school. Currently, the argument for reopening school is that it is important for children to interact with each other. They are not allowed to do this anyway due to social distancing guidelines. My child is in high school and they are rotating through four (4) groups of students a week. My son will not be on campus with his friends anyway. He will not be able to eat lunch with his peers because they will have to sit on opposite ends of the cafeteria bench....IF cafeteria space allows. He will be on campus one day a week and will be seeing his teachers in person only twice a month. Is this really worth the risk? What kind of quality education can my child receive from meeting with his teachers once a week and being on his own online for the rest of the week? What if he doesn't understand an online assignment? How will the teacher assist him if he/she is physically teaching their classes all day? That means that my son will have to wait until his teacher responds to his email....which will be after school at the earliest, and his recently released student handbook for his school states that online assignments are due by 2:00 pm daily. Keep in mind that at the high school level, grades and GPA counts! This gives students a very unfair disadvantage. During the 4th quarter school closure, I required my son to complete ALL of his distance learning assignments, even though they were not graded. I must say that he needed some assistance with some of his assignments and I was able to help and support him. This school year, he will be home alone as I will be in my own classroom physically teaching all 5 days of the week.

If schools are closed and teachers and students can participate in distance learning, teachers and students will be able to virtually meet on a daily basis. As a teacher, I will be able to spend time with all of my students through Google Meets throughout the day instead of seeing them only once a week for an hour. Keeping school online will also guarantee the health and safety of everyone involved.

I speak from the viewpoint of a secondary teacher. I'm sure elementary situations are different than mine, and I cannot speak for them. However, one of the concerns is that my students cannot be home alone and parents need to work. I teach in a middle school, and although it may be nerve-wracking to allow your middle school child to be home alone, having them run through their regular school schedule virtually will help us teachers "keep an eye" on the students. If a student meets with me from 8am to 9am, then another teacher from 9am to 10am, and so on and so forth, they will be "supervised" online daily between the hours of 8am to 2:15pm.

The current ohana bubble concept that is mentioned by Dr. Park and Dr. Kishimoto is a great idea and makes sense....if you teach in an elementary school where students stay in one classroom all day and do not switch classes. I will be rotating through 150 students in middle school. My school will be rotating 800-900 students! My students have a 7 period schedule, 8 if you count advisory as a class, so they will be switching

classes throughout the day. Having half of the students on campus with my school's A/B schedule is still 400+ students a day. This "ohana bubble" is pretty large in my opinion.

In conclusion, I would like to please urge you to keep our schools closed. I don't feel safe as a teacher and a parent to return to the classroom. I don't feel like adequate procedures and protocols are put into place to ensure our safe return. I also disagree with the position that you are putting us in to decide what's more important for our children, their health or their education. They should be entitled to both with online learning.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Kristen Miyazono

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Ashlee Imai <ashleekuuleinani@gmail.com> on behalf of Ashlee Imai  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:33 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Aloha,

I am a third grade teacher on Kauai. Our school has been working really hard to help prepare for the beginning of the school year however, it still feels like we need more time to prepare internally and by grade level to get proper trainings prior to opening schools. From planning and selecting what we need to teach in our curriculum to actually fully understanding the protocols for if a child or teacher falls ill. I also would like for us to get the chance to all prepare our rooms and get sufficient cleaning supplies that will protect us all. Shouldn't someone come by to check that out rooms are safe and someone in the health field explain to us what the safest practices are and how to deal with a child that falls ill. As a teacher I personally do not feel 100% ready to return back to school at this time and I think all teachers and students would benefit from more prep time. When we get back to school we most likely won't have the usual PLC time to collaborate and plan and it doesn't seem like time will be made besides meeting outside of contractual hours. We need to be ready before starting and we need to be more prepared to teach students and make the most of the time we have together with them rather than going in unprepared.

Best,  
Ashlee Imai

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Kris Kositwongsakul <kris1ny@icloud.com> on behalf of Kris Kositwongsakul  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:34 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Please delay the students return to campus

I think the schools are not fully prepared to keep everyone safe from this pandemic. Please push back the start of students returning to campus. Thank you

Kris Kositwongsakul

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Jenna Noga <jenna.noga@gmail.com> on behalf of Jenna Noga  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:34 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Re: Action Item H. Board Action on MOU between State of Hawaii BOE 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.

Aloha,

My name is Jenna Noga. My daughter will be entering the third grade at Lincoln Elementary School for the 2020-2021 academic year. I write to you with concerns that Hawaii's public schools are prematurely reopening campuses to students.

When parents drop kids off at school in the morning, we place the wellbeing of our children in the hands of their teachers. The HSTA has made it abundantly clear that teachers don't feel safe with the return of students to classrooms on August 4 under current reopening guidelines. It is deeply troubling for my family that we are faced with the decision of putting my daughter's wellness in the care of teachers who aren't fully protected from the threat of COVID-19.

Hawaii's public school teachers offer the best insight to classroom health and safety as they are the ones on the ground and in classrooms. The health and safety of students and teachers should be the Board of Education's first priority in response to the pandemic. I respectfully ask that the Board of Education delay the reopening of campuses until there are clear guidelines to ensure the health and safety of our students and educators.

Regards,  
Jenna Noga.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Patrick DeBusca Jr. <pdebusca@gmail.com> on behalf of Patrick DeBusca Jr.  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:34 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** TESTIMONY FOR BOARD OF EDUCATION GENERAL BUSINESS MEETING Thursday, July 23, 2020

**RE: 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.**

Board Members,

My daughter is a public high school senior. I have family who work in public schools.

Let's not pretend: Reopening schools is being driven by a desire for child care to free up parents to return to work; the governor has lectured parents to not send their kids to school sick but that's exactly what they do so they can go to work. Let's not pretend: The disadvantaged and vulnerable families are being disproportionately negatively targeted by this back to school drive. Families that lack access to adequate healthcare, sick leave and who work in jobs that expose them to infection risk are not going to be protected by increasing the number of COVID-19 vectors directed at them. Let's not pretend: Hawaii Department of Health Director Bruce Anderson's "bubbles" in schools is pure fantasy; attempting to control student cohorts completely ignores the irresponsible behavior we are seeing in the community at large that is exposing kids to multiple opportunities to become carriers of COVID-19.

1. **We need a report on school health and safety ("Percent of schools that are adequately equipped with PPEs, sanitation supplies, equipment and training to ensure a safe and healthy environment") BEFORE WE DECIDE WHETHER TO RE-START SCHOOL, not one month into this experiment with the lives of children and school staff.** The public should have had this information BEFORE being asked to take surveys and make decisions about schooling options. The public has been DENIED vital information needed to make critical decisions. DOE administration presumed the public would take their plans for safety on good faith but they have not acted in good faith as evidenced by the duplicitous and inconsistent behavior of the Superintendent. Lieutenant Governor Josh Green has said there are many questions that need to be answered: "I haven't yet heard how many tests they'll make available, how many screeners will be given to the Dept. of Education to help screen cases. Those are really important things. I think those have to be in place before schools open. If the Department of Health can get that plan to teachers and parents before the 4th of August, then that's fine. But that plan has to be clear and that plan has to be comprehensive." The Hawaii State Teachers Association is asking the state to delay the return of public school students to campus. The teachers union said it does not think the proper steps haven't been taken to prevent and handle the spread of COVID-19. "HSTA has no confidence that our schools, our school buildings are ready to open to our students," said HSTA president Corey Rosenlee.

2. **Schools and families are not being given enough time to learn and practice new ways of behaving in a school environment or distance learning.** It appears they will be given pitiful few days to master an entirely new way of behaving. Who among you really believes this is going to work out well? If any of the DOE administration and BOE members feel this is safe, you had better be seen in the classrooms and walking the halls of the schools you are forcing to operate this way. Anything less will signal either your cowardice or your bad faith.
3. **Every school needs a fully functional distance learning option for any and all students NOW.** The long-term nature of this pandemic and the likelihood of resurgent spikes of infection make this option NECESSARY, not a luxury.

Patrick DeBusca, Jr.

Kaneohe



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Jennifer Dyer <leigh\_luna@hotmail.com> on behalf of Jennifer Dyer  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:35 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** TESTIMONY WAIT FOR SCHOOLS OPENING TILL PREPARED

Aloha,

First I want to state that COVID-19's unclear path impacts the way decisions are made, so I am not pointing fingers in my testimony in fact I have concerns that possibly HSTA had not thought of.

I've chosen a few points that are serious and heartfelt.

### **How can students and teacher engage, teach and understand successfully?**

My God-daughter is beginning a new school year in another state. She will have two weeks of socialization opportunities and developing a caring relationship with her teacher. Then school begins at home.

Can Hawaii do the same? Can students and teachers begin together for two weeks. Our children have been learning social emotional practices for several years. Space would require new configurations, but isn't that what COVID-19 has become, morphed. How are transitions going to be addressed?

### **Military schools and Quarantine**

I work at a military school. I don't feel that the state has much grasp on tracking anyone on the islands. However, I believe that the military may have secured a procedure.

### **What standard practices and (PPE) methods should be followed by employees who need to get within six feet of others.**

**WOW!** Any contact. Upset students fighting, kids running for a hug, students punching, contact that is initiated by students toward peers or staff? I don't have hands to help or hands to protect myself when 6 feet of distance is not established in a students mindset, especially when they have become irrational.

Jenny Dyer

School Counselor

Daniel K Inouye Elementary

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** mjfrog715 <mjfrog715@gmail.com> on behalf of mjfrog715  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:35 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

What happened to the information we were given a month or two back that said "The State Needs To Be Two Weeks Clear Of No New Corona Virus Cases Before We Will Even Consider Reopening The Schools?" Now we are hearing that even though we have almost 20+ cases a day the voices are saying " Our numbers are active but lowest in the nation"!

So please answer the question of why this was not followed when we were told 0 cases for two weeks!

Mr. Scott Farias  
Kapolei Charter School Parent

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphon

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Eric Johnson <johnsonesj26@gmail.com> on behalf of Eric Johnson  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:35 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Aloha,

My name is Eric Johnson and I am a parent of two second graders at Barbers Point Elementary School and an active duty member of the armed forces.

This is for the General Business Meeting agenda for the opening of schools on August 5th.

My position is in opposition to Barbers Point Elementary's operating procedures and filing for a 3 foot exemption.

I believe the 6 foot spacing of students with mask use is a good minimum for prevention. This is with the understanding that kids are kids and will not be 100% compliant during the day. Per the CDC recommendation, all of the desks should face forward in the same direction and that meals should be served in the classroom.

Please mandate that our schools practice 6 foot spacing and do not allow for exemptions, with the understanding that the recommendations are for groups of 10 or less. There was a lot of science, research, effort and thought that went into these guidelines and I do not think that it is in the best interest of our children and community to bypass them.

Thank you for your time,  
Mahalo  
Eric Johnson

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Irene Garrison <igarrison56@gmail.com> on behalf of Irene Garrison  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:36 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Delaying the start of school

Dear BOE Members,

I am a second grade teacher at a school on the Big Island. I want to thank you for deferring approving our MOU until 6 feet distance and masks were further discussed. As I prepare to return to my classroom (which I miss dearly), I am unnerved at how many unanswered questions there are from all levels. Much of what I see on TV being portrayed as "the plan" is NOT what is happening on the ground level and on the front lines. I deeply feel that to open with the best chance to keep our keiki and communities safe, we need more time. Schools, teachers, and parents need more time. We need more time to make our plans and share those plans with our families. Teachers need more time to set up their classrooms and adjust to the new "norm" being thrown at them. The level of stress is HIGH. The unknowns are overwhelming and we teachers need more time. The cases skyrocketing on the mainland are also a concern. I believe we are blessed here on the Big Island to have such few cases, but I don't have confidence in the numbers. If numbers go up, we will quickly need to adjust and teachers need time to train and prepare for that. My team and I have been meeting non-stop over the summer to prepare for online and face to face classes, and I still don't feel it is enough. Please consider delaying the start of school to allow teachers and schools (who have always been entrusted with the well-being of our keiki) time to practice routines and protocols. Please consider delaying the start of school so parents can make childcare arrangements - rather than having to do so with one week notice (from when the school officially announces their plan details to when school starts). Please consider delaying the start of school so teachers can prepare and be ready to safely welcome back the students they have missed over these last few months. We are not ready to safely and appropriately reopen schools.

Thank you,  
Irene G.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Deb McCurdy <debmcurdy80@yahoo.com> on behalf of Deb McCurdy  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:37 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Sped differential and School Opening

Dear BOE,

I have been a Special Education Teacher in Hawaii for 28 years now. Being thrown into teaching 16 special education students virtually last quarter with no training and no online differentiated curriculum forced me to be on my computer from 7:30am until 4 or 5 PM daily to teach students and create and post individualized assignments on Google Classroom in between seeing students. In addition, I spent hours answering parent emails and assisting parents. I also kept a daily log of minutes spent with each child and IEP goals and objectives addressed during those minutes along with a log of all communication with parents. I continued to attend faculty meetings and IEP meetings virtually as well and have never worked harder at my job. Special Education Teachers were also required to provide fourth quarter grades based on current information gathered.

This is an unprecedented time and I do not feel that I have been appropriately trained or prepared to return to school and teach students who are both in my classroom along with those who have opted to be instructed fully at a distance. We have not received enough information about distance learning curriculum or how to operate the technology to broadcast our classroom sessions. I need to have access to resources so that I do not have to work 24/7 creating resources and I need to have the time to learn and be trained and not be asked to "voluntarily" go to trainings. We are already attending "voluntary" summer faculty meetings and "voluntarily" coming into the classrooms to arrange the furniture for social distancing.

I feel that my school is doing the best job possible in reducing class size and planning for social distancing with an AB schedule, but I am in my 60's and concerned about my health, especially working with special needs students. I would like the school to provide me with medical grade masks as protection.

I do not want schools to open until I am fully trained to handle the job and the state has a uniform plan across the state for distance learning, training teachers and health safety. As a Special Ed Teacher, I would also like the state to provide guidelines regarding compensatory Special Education services including, who gets them, what is the criteria for receiving them, what can we offer? We need a uniform plan across the state before returning to work.

In other concerns, I would like to greatly encourage the department to continue to provide the differential pay incentive for special education teachers. This year, we will have to hold additional iep meetings and come up with compensatory plans for our students' missed program minutes during last quarter. There are continually more demands made on us in the field of Special Education and the pay increase may keep me in the field for more years than I had planned to stay. The job is very difficult. Try teaching 16 students in grades 3-5 with learning levels anywhere from 1st grade through 5th grade at the same time and differentiating the curriculum to their individual levels. The Special Education field will continue to have a shortage unless the pay is more attractive.

Thank you for your consideration. I want nothing more than to return to school with a firm instructional plan, sufficient training and effective health precautions in place.

Sincerely,  
Deborah McCurdy

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Kekoa Apana <jensenapana@gmail.com> on behalf of Kekoa Apana  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:37 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Reject the proposal

This email is in regards to the Department requesting a temporary discontinuance of differentials with the reasoning 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 am opposed to this request as a teacher because of the impact this will have on my current life. Since the implementation of the differentials, I was able to quit my 3rd job I have been maintaining for a year. In order to survive, I currently work 2 jobs including my Special Education Teacher position at Moanalua High School. If this differential is discontinued, even temporarily, I will have to find another job to survive. I implore you to reconsider your discontinuance as it will have a negative impact on not just myself, but other fellow educators.

Mahalo

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** amber hernandez <amberhern@yahoo.com> on behalf of amber hernandez  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:37 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** testimony

I am employed as an EA in a SPED classroom and received no training whatsoever! As I understand it i am to return to school on July 29..

I have not received additional information besides that. I was told that our new school program was decided upon by staff, faculty and parents but I never received a survey or was notified as either parent or employee. I really wish we would follow the rest of the country and re open in September 2020. Although I understand the urgent need of school for the children; is it really worth putting our health, safety and ultimately our lives at risk???? I have very young children in my household as well as elderly people! The decision to go back to school is a constant reminder of all the unknown! I don't want to return under such circumstances or allow my most precious gift ( my children) to return back. Then there is two unfair, horrific options....

Option 1. Return to school and risk the health and safety of myself, my family , my students, my community!

Option 2. Do not return to school and my family will suffer and go without since we'll have no money. Seems like an extremely unfair and stressful situation.

[Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android](#)

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Debra Kam <dkam@kanoelanies.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Debra Kam  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:37 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 Debra Lynne Kam. I work at Kanoelani Elementary School. I am a special education teacher. I have been assigned to work with special education students in a fully self-contained classroom. The assistants and I will be working in closer proximity to our students as they are non-verbal and need direct physical assistance for their safety. We need to make sure that we are well-prepared so that all of us remain healthy as it will be difficult to have substitutes or many changes of personnel to work with the students should any of us be affected by the COVID-19. It will not only affect the physical health but the social/emotional well-being of everyone. We need additional time to be fully prepared so that we can prevent serious situations from occurring.

Also, as a special education teacher for over 25 years, I have seen many teachers come and go, especially in the special education department. I have also seen the increase of the need for special education teachers as our school started with 1 1/2 positions and has grown to 9 positions to meet the various needs of special education students so we can provide them with the range of services and placements they need as they grow. I have worked with many special education students who have difficulty with the social/emotional aspects of life and being able to independently cope with various situations which in turn, affect their academic growth. With this new COVID-19 situation, it is important to keep the special education teachers who already have experience in working with special education students and their social/emotional well-being. They can also offer assistance and expertise in helping general education students in the inclusion settings. The differentials are one area that will help teachers in this time when they will be giving more of themselves and their time.

Thank you for allowing me to share with you.



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Lesley Chong-Goo <lesleychonggoo@gmail.com> on behalf of Lesley Chong-Goo  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:38 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Delay the opening of school

Hello Everyone,

The DOE should delay the opening of school for the year 2020-2021 until the numbers of Covid decrease.

Losing life's of students and adults are more important than education. I'm over 50 years of age and I have many underlying health problems. I am afraid to go to work. I do not want my obituary to read that I lost my life because I went to work and contracted the COVID disease. You are opening up a problem that can be controlled NOW! DOE, Principals and Government Officials, please listen to our testimonies.

With deep concerns,

Lesley Chong-Goo  
Special Education Teacher

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Jennifer Moku <jenmoku@gmail.com> on behalf of Jennifer Moku  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:38 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Dear Board of Education,

My name is Jennifer Moku and I am a teacher from Ala Wai Elementary 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"<sup>[1]</sup>. 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.
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 I feel comfortable or safe returning to work.

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

1. Delaying the date upon which students return to school. Schools need guidance from the Health Department and adequate time to plan for a safe return for all.
2. 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.)
3. Allowing no exceptions to the six-foot distancing rule.

I 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 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.

Mahalo,

Jennifer Moku  
94-550 Halekuai Place  
Waipahu, HI 96797

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** hari messer <harimarc@gmail.com> on behalf of hari messer  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:38 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

My name is Hari Messer. I work at Waimea High School on Kauai.

**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, you've got to think this through. Peoples' lives are at stake here! You can't send students and teachers back into the classroom until there is a clearly defined plan based on scientific evidence from the CDC and the State of Hawaii's Department of Health. You certainly can't rush us back into the classroom and think you'll just make it up as you go. That is what it feels like you are doing.

Here are a few things for you to consider

- When will the State of Hawaii's Department of Health provide written guidance on the reopening of school buildings, which the HDOE agreed to in our MOU?
- What options are available to families seeking 100-percent distance learning 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? I believe everyone must be required to wear face coverings at schools, especially within six feet of each other!
- Teachers will be most at risk when schools reopen. They will be in close contact with dozens, and potentially hundreds, of children for multiple hours in a given day. Yet they seem to be more of an afterthought in the health director's overall concern for health and safety.

The coronavirus has created an ever-changing situation within our communities, and significant stress and fear for our students, parents and guardians, as well as all school staff. We need to ensure students are provided instructional services in school year 2020–21, but it should not be at the cost of a safe educational environment.

At this time I think it best if we open the school year with a 100-percent distance learning model until we can provide the aforementioned safe educational environment.

Thank you,  
Hari Messer

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Lynn Otaguro <lmotaguro@yahoo.com> on behalf of Lynn Otaguro  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:38 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony for BOE meeting on 7/23/2020 to request delay in the start of the school year

July 23, 2020

Board of Education  
State of Hawaii

### **Testimony for BOE Agenda, July 23, 2020, 1:30 p.m., to request a delay in the start of the school year**

Honorable Chair Payne and members of the Board:

I am a recently retired teacher from Lincoln Elementary and I am writing to ask that the Board of Education and Department of Education delay the start date for school.

I understand that it would be helpful to open schools before a possible amendment of the 14 day quarantine and an opening up to tourism. However, at this moment, we are seeing more coronavirus cases and community spread. Parents and school staff are apprehensive and worry that the opening of schools will result in students or staff members becoming sick and spreading the virus to others in the community. The DOE and DOH, and school administrators, teachers, and staff have been working hard to plan for the upcoming year. However, more time is needed. As with the coronavirus situation, the parameters for the reopening of school have been continually changing.

**Conflicts in expectations.** The conflicting guidance on the proper amount of distancing between students and the use of face masks made planning difficult as those factors help determine a school's ability to safely offer different instructional models. How schools apply these requirements also affects parents' comfort with sending their children to school.

**Changes in options offered.** Originally, in the DOE's reopening plan, elementary schools were to choose from three models, and there was no choice for 100% online. As I understand it, schools were only told that they should be offering a 100% online option last week, after many schools had started (and some seemed to have completed) planning for the fall. With parents now asking for online only and with questions as to how the option will be funded, schools need to reassess and reformulate the manner in which they are able to offer instruction in the upcoming year. It also is not clear what online instruction entails or that parents understand what is being offered.

**Need for support in preparing classrooms and buildings.** Important details on the fitness of classrooms and buildings for the reopening of schools have not been communicated. What criteria should be met before a classroom or building can be certified as ready? For instance, there are some classrooms with air conditioners. This should be wonderful, but with the coronavirus, the flow of fresh air is needed. Some air conditioners are said to recycle air; some take in fresh air. Some classrooms have windows; others do not. Are these classrooms safe for use in this age of the coronavirus? If not, how can they be made safe for use or what alternatives can be offered? (There was some mention online of a private school adding filters to air conditioners – would that help our classrooms?) **Are schools being given assistance in assessing the readiness of their classrooms and buildings?**

**Need for clarity and communication about what happens when infection occurs.** What happens when a student, teacher, school staff member, or their family member is infected with coronavirus? Who will likely be quarantined if there is an infection in a class? When would a classroom be closed? What instruction needs to be offered in the event that a classroom is closed? What happens when a teacher or student in high school is sick? What about the students who ride buses with an infected individual? When would a school be closed? What protocols will be followed when there is an infection or when a school is shut down? Are there enough personnel and substitute teachers in the event of an outbreak? (What if the school nurse or the school administration becomes sick?)

**Students from out of state and teacher training.** What steps need to be taken with students arriving from out of state? Also, while some teachers may have had access to training in the summer, many did not. How can we support teachers to be more effective online? (Also, could we tap into student and parent experience and advice on how to do better with distance learning?)

While the DOE should be lauded for giving the schools some choice in planning for reopening, in order to effectively open schools, there needs to be more clarity in these details to help schools better plan and to provide consistency across the state on important procedures.

**Additional time would allow the DOE and schools to more fully prepare for the start of school.** In addition to preparing classrooms and buildings and setting up the procedures to make schools safer, more time will allow schools to set up structures to better support students and parents both in class and online. It also would give the DOE and schools time to communicate with parents and students and to build trust in the reopening, so that there can be less apprehension and school can truly be ready to start.

Sincerely,  
Lynn M. Otaguro  
Oahu, Hawaii

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Francine Hennemann <fhennemann@wheeler.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Francine Hennemann  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:38 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** cuts to shortage differentials

I am a special education teacher grade K-6.

I absolutely love my job and I finally felt appreciated when we received the incentive in January 2020.

Working with special education requires lots of extra work, stress, and extra time to finalize documentation, meet deadlines, and provide specialized instructions for all learners.

Over my years teaching I notice less and less people wanting to teach special education because of low pay and extra work.

If they cut the incentive I am afraid that many special education educators will no longer be able to work in the field. And if that is the case, many keikis will no longer receive the service they need and deserve by qualified professionals. We are already suffering from a teacher shortage in the State of Hawaii. Please do not make the children, the future of our nation, suffer and be put to the side. Education is the only way we can create a strong community!!!!!!! They deserve the education. Please, do not cut the incentive to avoid a shortage in the special education field.

Sincerely,  
Francine Hennemann  
Special Education Teacher

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Michelle Kaku <harumi864@gmail.com> on behalf of Michelle Kaku  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:41 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Michelle Kaku and I am a teacher on the Big Island of Hawaii. I am writing my testimony on 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 concerned of the work conditions related to COVID-19 because I feel that 4 days is not enough time to receive proper training on how to appropriately respond to circumstances dealing with COVID-19. For example, to meet with my SPED department and curriculum department to collaborate on creating our lessons and how to meet the needs of each of the students. With the numbers rising with positive cases of COVID-19, I feel unsafe of returning to work so soon. All it takes one student or one teacher to test positive before it spreads around campus. Doctors have also stated that children are carriers of this disease and can be asymptomatic. With this being the case, with them attending face-to-face classes, and if they are asymptomatic, they could easily spread the virus to any of the faculty and staff especially to those who could be considered high risk.

With all these factors and other unpredictable variables, I feel that the B.O.E. and D.O.E. should reconsider pushing back the reopening date of the school year until teachers are properly trained and feel safe enough for the students to return to school. By reopening the school on August 4, I feel that they are putting everyone at high risk at being exposed to COVID-19.

Very truly yours,  
Michelle



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Brianne Kuratani <mrsbrikuras@gmail.com> on behalf of Brianne Kuratani  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:42 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Delaying start of school

I am writing in favor of delaying student start day. I want to teach in my classroom this coming August 4, but my school is not ready! I feel that it is not safe! I was never asked to risk my life. Have people forgotten that teachers are humans too. I have 3 children. One of them is an infant and I am extremely scared that I could possibly infect them due to the lack of safety measures. If I or anyone of my family members get sick and require hospitalization, is the state going to cover my medical expenses? Will I be getting hazard pay for putting myself at risk? If the answer is no, then delay the opening of school!! Make school safe for everyone!!

Sincerely,  
Brianne Kuratani

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Mai Monkeys <mai2monkeys@gmail.com> on behalf of Mai Monkeys  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:42 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Distance learning , opening too soon 😞

Hi there I am a parent and I'm highly interested in distance learning due to our household being very vulnerable in maybe catching the virus from strangers ..... please hear each of us as parents ..... we don't think it's safe to open right now .... I understand children need to go to school n be able to communicate but this is not the time ... my family is my number 1 priority and I will make sure we at home r all safe ..... with all of me I will make sure my child will be protected .... we just need a ouch back dat that's all we are asking for ..... I plead that I can't lose what I got .... they mean the word to me ..... pls understand and come to some type of agreement we will all be comfortable with ... Maile Kadooka

--

M@i2m0nk3y5

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Mahina Anguay <manguay@waimeahs.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Mahina Anguay  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:43 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Reopening of school

Aloha,

I'm not ready to open school and receive students on August 5th. That statement is very difficult for me to say publicly as I've always prided myself on being able to do my job well, no matter what. I'm frustrated, angry and upset that I have to write this email.

We've worked diligently on our reopening plan for weeks but it's been an impossible task as guidelines and guidance documents change frequently. We have revised our plan so many times, I've lost count.

The cleaning supplies, the hand sanitizers, and even soap that we ordered back in March has still not arrived and I am worried that I won't be able to provide the safe environment for students and staff that I am legally and morally responsible for. I don't have all the PPE I need for my teachers as those are also on backorder. I am completely at risk the minute our first teacher and then later, our first student, steps foot on campus to return to school.

The days we have prior to kids returning were already planned out months ago prior to COVID-19 in December 2019: 2 are teacher days and 2 are for professional development with our consultant that was set up months ago. He will be working with my teachers on effective online instruction and assessment; things we do need to train teachers on. That leaves me with just one day to do my compliance tasks and go over health/safety protocols with teachers before they receive students the next morning.

I respectfully ask that we return to school online for at least quarter one to keep everyone safe and I respectfully ask that we allow for more time to train/work with teachers on how to do this well. Right now my teachers are faced with a Herculean task of planning lessons for students who will be physically in class one day a week and then four online, one group who will physically be there four days a week because they're our vulnerable learners (ELL and SPED), and one group who will only be online. They are juggling office hours Monday, Tuesday and Friday afternoons as well as planning for all students to do synchronous learning on Fridays to squeeze in another teacher touch point for students. We sent out a survey to our parents last week and have been floored at the number who are requesting 100% online learning. Families are scared, my teachers and staff are scared and there's no learning and no teaching if that's happening.

Don't get me wrong. I have been and remain a loyal HDOE footsoldier with a deep passion to serve my school and community. I have an incredible staff that has shown over and over that they are student centered and bend over backwards every single time I've asked them to move mountains. Many of them have worked through their summer vacation to prepare for the return of students. But these are very unusual times and we cannot get it right if we rush to reopen with only days to properly and safely prepare our staff. As educators, we all know that we only get one shot at a great opening; why would we want to start something as important as a school year when we know we don't have all the pieces in place to win?

Thank you for your consideration.

Mahina Anguay  
Principal, Waimea High School

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** SM Yahoo <sierramahin@yahoo.com> on behalf of SM Yahoo  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:44 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Delay opening

Aloha,

My name is Sierra Mahin and I'm a Kindergarten teacher at Waikoloa Elementary and Middle School. I've been a teacher in Hawaii for over 20 years.

I do not feel that we are ready to open our schools. We haven't had any time to prepare. Four days before school starts is not enough. We need training on how to safely teach in a room full of students.

My principal left it up to the teachers to enforce mask wearing by the students. Everyone should be required to wear masks all day long.

My school voted for a schedule that I am not ok with. I thought about moving to a new school but that was not a possibility. Two-thirds of my class will attend school each day. That could leave me with 16 kindergarteners. I usually spend the first month hugging them and blowing their noses because they miss their parents. I have anxiety about how this will go this year.

My boyfriend has pre-existing medical conditions. I cannot bring come Covid-19 to him. I am worried about my own health too. Our children deserve to be safe and healthy.

Please take the time to create better and safer policies before opening our schools.

Thank you,  
Sierra Mahin  
Kindergarten teacher  
Waikoloa Elementary and Middle School

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Shannon Yano <shannon.yano@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Shannon Yano  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:45 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Hi, my name is Shannon Yano. I am a third grade teacher at Nimitz 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've always been one to go with what's best for the students. I honestly think that if we go back to school, it will not be safe for the kids, as well as myself. I live with my father who has health issues and I am so worried about his safety. The rise in cases has recently brought the reality of how scary the situation is. I understand that everyone is experiencing this for the first time but it's not YOU (those who are making the decision) that will be put in danger. It is me, it's my life, and I don't feel like I have a choice or a voice!

People expect their children to have the best education, with the highest qualified teachers to educate their child. The school year is quickly coming to a start and you do not have a written plan to follow. There is no training for new curriculum, even with the expectations to fit the type of learning that is being offered. It's literally like the blind leading the blind, except it's not YOU who will have to deal with the consequences. It's not you whose life is on the line. This cannot happen! Please take into consideration my plea for pushing back the start of the school year. My life, my family's life, is worth it!

Sincerely,  
Shannon Yano

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Eleanor Ortiz <eortiz18@yahoo.com> on behalf of Eleanor Ortiz  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:45 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** School Opening Concerns

Eleanor  
Lapahoehoe-Waiakea

These are my concerns:

- \*What type of PPE will be provided for employees and students?
- \*Who will screen employees, students and visitors for signs of illness?
- \*Will ALL staff be properly trained by [Aug. 4](#)?
- \*Who will supervise students during meal periods?
- \*What is the plan when someone at the school tests positive for COVID-19?
- \*How will physical distancing be enforced?
- \*What type of leave will employees take if they contact COVID-19?

Students, School Employees, and our communities should not be put at risk with a rushed reopening plan that the DOE is pushing forward.

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Malulani Bohnet <malulanibohnet@gmail.com> on behalf of Malulani Bohnet  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:46 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Questions/Concerns regarding school re-opening.

Here are some concerns that I have in regards to re-opening of the 2020/2021 school year.

- What is the plan when someone at the school tests positive for COVID-19?
- Are we all trained with proper guidance on a child or adult who shows symptoms COVID-19
- How will physical distancing be enforced?
- Will we be notified if we were in contact with someone who tested positive for covid-19?
- Who screens visitors entering school grounds?
- Is PPE being provided for all staff?

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** \*jacie tagomori\* <jacietagomori@gmail.com> on behalf of \*jacie tagomori\*  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:48 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** testimony

I am writing this testimony 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. 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 at even more 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 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 short falls. 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.

Jacie Kanetani,  
Special Education Teacher  
Mililani Mauka Elementary



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Mel O <melmobayashi@gmail.com> on behalf of Mel O  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:48 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

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

Dear State of Hawaii Board of Education,

Thank you BOE for taking the time to read our testimonies once again. Teachers are desperately asking to delay the start of the school year for students.

Only last week were teachers and principals told about the 6 feet distancing. And we are so grateful for that! However, my school only met and decided last week Wednesday that we would change to the blended model. And now, this week we are being told that my school is offering full distance learning. How do you expect teachers to be ready and prepared for students to return to effectively implement classroom practices, social distancing, being able to successfully and independently use google classroom, and teach academics when Dr. Kishimoto keeps changing things up each week.

I also want to let you know teachers ALWAYS set up their classroom, plan, and get ready for the new school year during the summer. Please note that it is difficult to get ready when plans keep changing and directives coming down are being brought up so late in the game.

This is really on the DOE and Dr. Kishimoto for not being forth coming in agreeing to the 6 feet distancing from the get go and confusing administrators about full distance learning. Teachers and administrators need time to safely start up school, time to plan for full distance learning and a combination of in class and online, and time to get ready.

On a side note, I don't recall receiving any information on training from the DOE. I would have liked to take some classes on online teaching and how to teach comprehension through distance learning. I'm not sure where Dr. Kishimoto got that information from.

It has been very stressful and disappointing listening to DOH, DOE, David Ige, and Dr. Kishimoto. If the DOH, DOE, David Ige, and Dr. Kishimoto want to start school on August 4th, they better be at school to help us. They can't just snap their fingers and expect teachers to figure it out that quickly.

Please understand we teachers take pride in our profession. We want to do our best to keep our students and ourselves safe and healthy. Rushing to open schools will hurt students academically and put students and staff at risk. Let's think about this seriously. I'm not saying to delay it a month but teachers need a couple weeks to prep and collaboratively revise our curriculum. Thank you.

Sincerely,  
Melissa Obayashi

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Beth Ann Kauwe <bethkauwe@icloud.com> on behalf of Beth Ann Kauwe  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:48 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 Beth Kauwe and I am a teacher on Kauai at Waimea Canyon Middle School. I not only have concerns and anxiety about returning to work at my school but have concerns for ALL teachers, students and families starting the school year in the dark.

I have not seen a clear plan outlining safety protocol from the HDOE for schools in general nor have I seen safety protocol for MY school regarding wearing masks, playing at recess, eating lunch in cafeteria, what to do if someone at the school level becomes infected, etc. This alone causes great anxiety-thinking of my students, their families, the community, and myself being put at risk because of poor planning. Aside from that layer, there is the teaching virtually piece that makes me anxious as well! When I heard the Superintendent claim that teachers received training, I cringed and was disgusted by her flagrant remarks. I have no idea what she is talking about! How to teach and survive this debacle has NOT been discussed during the summer, so I assume we will be thrown into some PD at the start of school NEXT week to 'check the box'. Feeling unprepared is not what I (nor my students) need during these uncertain times! How about the social emotional piece-thoughts on how to support us in that regard would help! Not only are we planning how to roll out a hybrid model with a smile, but we are responsible for teaching the students who choose to stay at home altogether (just learned this today through casual conversation). We are blindly going into this school year and expected to roll with it and figure it out as we go. Is this really something you want us to wing? Please show us that you care about our Keiki, our community, and our kumu! Develop a solid safety and PD plan please!! Take your time and do it WELL!

Mahalo for your time.

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Latasha Davis <davislatasha@hotmail.com> on behalf of Latasha Davis  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:48 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** TESTIMONY

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.

Dear members of the State of Hawaii Board of Education,

My name is Latasha Davis and I live on Oahu Island. I am a 6th-grade special education teacher in the central district at Wahiawa Middle School. I have been here for about 3 years and will soon return to school to begin preparing for the return of students. However, I implore that the BOE reconsiders opening up so soon, and push the date back.

Many of my students here in Wahiawa live in large multigenerational households. Because of this, sending students back will put their entire families at risk. In homes where family members live in such close quarters, it will be difficult to social distance. If one member of the household catches COVID-19 it could be devastating for every single other member. Having students come to school when we cannot guarantee adequate PPE or ensure social distancing efforts means that we are putting the entire community in danger. Even if our Keiki aren't prone to the serious symptoms of COVID-19 they can still become spreaders of the virus.

In addition, many families may not feel comfortable sending their children to school yet and would like to have online schooling. Before opening our doors, it would be prudent that we have all of the information regarding virtual online schooling out to parents so they can make an informed decision about their child's education. Teachers also must prepare for the online schooling option. There are many questions that need to be answered such as are teachers going to handle both on-campus and off-campus online classes? What will this look like?

In short, it is unsafe to open the school when we still cannot ensure the safety of the members of our community by limiting spread. Also, it is unwise to open a school without first giving answers to parents about the option of online school. I urge you to reconsider the start date of the 20-21 school year. Please delay the day for students to return so that we can ensure we have systems in place to accommodate them as well as adequate PPE to keep them safe.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Latasha Davis



Virus-free. [www.avast.com](https://www.avast.com)

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** rena paopao <gizmopao@yahoo.com> on behalf of rena paopao  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:49 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Our students deserve qualified credentialed teachers. Please do not remove the shortage differential for Special Education Teachers and Teachers teaching in hard to fill positions. It's very difficult to financially survive in Hawaii on a Teachers pay. I am a single parent and the one and only person supporting my family. When I'm working in the middle of the night and weekends typing up IEP's and planning for students the differential pay really helps me to think positively about continuing to be a SPED Teacher.

Please continue the shortage differential pay for Special Education Teachers and hard to fill positions.

Sincerely,  
Rena Kohagura  
Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Lauralee Owens <lovelyhawaiiigal@gmail.com> on behalf of Lauralee Owens  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:49 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

### 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 special education teacher in the central district. I just turned 60 yesterday and I was hospitalized in 2015 with an autoimmune disease, after pneumonia, in ICU for over a week then needing physical therapy. I have had numerous respiratory infections that were severe enough for me to ask for a change in my classroom environment BEFORE COVID!

I am very happy to live and teach in Hawai'i. This is my "dream job". I just renewed my state teaching license and I had previously planned to remain here on Oahu for at least 5-7 more years until my retirement, then possibly do local volunteer work for the Keiki in my community.

Now, however, although I desperately miss my students (I still keep in touch with the parents of my class I didn't get to finish!), I have told my daughter I don't want this to be my last year of teaching. I am terrified of becoming infected, especially considering there seems to be no plan for the very real and likely infections that will begin affecting our teachers and students the minute we resume classes!

The teachers are all looking for some kind of guidance and answers to our numerous questions but there seems to be only new "rumors" every day and no transparent communication. We understand that this situation is extremely difficult to navigate, but parents and students look to us to provide answers and we simply aren't being given any to pass along to them.

Yes, of course, we all agree that students NEED to be back in the SAFETY of the classroom as soon as possible. The parents need relief from trying to handle child care, so they can return to their "regular" jobs, and we educators want and need to get back to our students just as desperately. But the key is SAFETY!

Are students going to really be able to effectively learn when the very first requirement of a "free and appropriate" learning environment of SAFETY is clearly not being met?

Students and school staff are not science experiments or "Guinea Pigs" that you can throw out to see what happens so we can "get it over with before the tourists come back"! What happened to the days in March when there were so few cases, yet we were shut down for everyone's safety? Now, we've lost so many people, our lives no longer matter?

Sincerely,

Lauralee Owens

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Joanne N Tanaka <jojotanaka4@gmail.com> on behalf of Joanne N Tanaka  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:49 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** TESTIMONY

NORMALLY, at the start of each new school year, WE TEACHERS share the excitement of looking forward to being with our students once again. BUT this upcoming school year is "not normal" WE ARE EXPERIENCING A PANDEMIC!! As much as WE ALL would like to return to school and see our students.... BUT IT IS NOT THAT SIMPLE!!!! WE TOO, LIKE YOU, HAVE FAMILY AND LOVE ONES!! IT IS NOT FAIR TEACHERS ARE ASKED TO PLACE THEIR LIFE (AND THEIR FAMILIES) ON THE LINE AND EVENTUALLY FACE COVID 19 OR DEATH!!

I have been in my classroom trying to arrange to fit 19 STUDENTS desks , arranged with 6 feet social distance, BUT my classroom is TOO SMALL to provide appropriate social distances requirements, but my Administrator said IT IS A MUST TO FIT NO LESS THAN 19 STUDENTS DESK IN MY CLASSROOM?!?!?! THIS IS NOT RIGHT!!! THIS IS NOT A SAFE WORKING ENVIRONMENT FOR MY STUDENTS AND MYSELF!!!

PLEASE!!!!!! PLEASE!!! DO NOT SEND US TEACHERS BACK TO SCHOOL WITH OUT A PLAN THAT WILL KEEP BOTH STUDENTS AND TEACHERS SAFE!! UNTIL A VACCINE IS AVAILABLE, 100% DISTANCE LEARNING SHOULD BE THE ONLY MEANS FOR INSTRUCTIONS.

TEACHERS & STUDENTS LIVE MATTER!!!!!!

Sincerely yours,  
Joanne Acoba  
Waimea High School Teacher

Sent from my iPad

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Jody Brown <jodybro@gmail.com> on behalf of Jody Brown  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:50 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Subject: 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 the librarian at Kalama Intermediate School on Maui, about to start my 12th year there and my 14th year as a school librarian with the HIDOE. In its MOU, the HIDOE says on line 18, "health and safety of students and staff is the priority", yet does the DOE really expect elementary school and middle school students to understand the severity of COVID-19, respect social distancing during recesses and lunch, wear their masks, keep their hands and feet to themselves, wash hands frequently for at least 20 seconds, etc? Truly, COVID sanitation is an unreasonable expectation for 5-year-olds through even tweens to early teens. Peer interactions are inherently among their greatest joys, and COVID sanitation is way down their list of priorities. School districts across the country are realizing the enormous safety risks involved in gathering students together at this very dangerous time.

How many illnesses and deaths does the HIDOE wish to cause? How will the HIDOE stand up and take responsibility when, inevitably, school-based COVID spread occurs? As a librarian, I know that I would feel horrible if I learned that our facility caused even one minor illness. And yet, our school library does not have anywhere near the materials, cleaning supplies and support to ensure sterility. It is unethical for the HIDOE to put its employees in the position of supervising a knowingly unsafe environment.

Please do not set us up to fail. Many, many Hawaii citizens' lives depend on illness prevention.

Mahalo,  
Jody Brown  
Kalama Intermediate School Librarian, M.Ed., MLIS

:^),  
Jody

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** AUTUMN CRANWELL <autumnbombs@icloud.com> on behalf of AUTUMN CRANWELL  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:45 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

To Who, it May Concern:

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 Autumn Cranwell and I am a teacher at Kahakai Elementary on a Hawai'i island. I also have a son that attends this school and a daughter at the neighboring middle school. I am scared for us. While there is a huge part of me that wants to go back to school, there is the other side, the rational side, that knows it is not best at this moment. I have spent the past week helping a new teacher prepare her room. Tomorrow I will begin mine, without pay, but there is no guidance or models on how we are to set up, how we are to look. We are going to have 2 days to prepare this along with our curriculum and 2 days with whatever our administrators deem the best at this time. This is not enough time to prepare for something so important as our keiki. We simply aren't ready. I can say our school is further along than most and we still are not ready! I am scared for myself, my children, my family, and our community. It is not acceptable to think it's ok that our numbers will rise from Covid-19. That is not fair to anyone. I keep thinking what if I get it! I let down my class. One of them will most likely get it, then their families, not to mention mine. My son has a weak immune system. He has to go back to school because I do. My father also lives with us and is very compromised. What if I'm the reason he gets it, and dies! This is too much and I am not the only one who feels this way. Don't let us be the guinea pigs. "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," says Rosenlee. Yes! Please rethink our opening day. I am ready to prepare and bring us back in a safe way. We can't even provide hand sanitizer at this point, that's not good!

Sent from my iPad



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Kathryn Tonaki <kathryn.tonaki@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Kathryn Tonaki  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:53 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 BOE 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.

We cannot open school campuses to students on August 4. We are all fearful of contracting and spreading COVID 19 and yet we are all being forced to carry on with no clear understanding of what will happen if someone contracts or has been in contact with someone positive with this deadly virus. Medical professionals are again saying that this virus is transmitted by people who show no signs of the virus. Will you please look at Hood River Valley HS in Oregon which just shut down after a COVID 19 outbreak. This is proof that schools cannot keep children safe and this occurred when the school was following all guidelines: taking check-in temperatures, sanitizing, small groups, social distancing. We need to do the right thing to keep our children, school staff, families and community safe and that is to keep schools closed. The risk is too great and lives will be lost, if we reopen!

Kathy Tonaki  
Highlands Intermediate

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** holly80872 <holly80872@gmail.com> on behalf of holly80872  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:55 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Do NOT re-open schools yet.

Aloha,

I am a mom to a upcoming third grader and 12th grader. Both my daughters are in excellent health. As with many families that live in Hawaii we are a three generational household. My mother The Matriarch has chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, also known as COPD. I truly don't want to see either of my daughters miss out on their educational opportunities, at the same time I think we're being irresponsible in opening the schools in August. I cannot risk one of my children contracting covid-19, being asymptomatic and bringing it home and infecting my mother. If this happened it would surely lead to an early departure from this Earth for my mom. There are just way too many unknowns at this time. I say we do our best teach our children online and wait until we have a better plan in place. I am 100% against opening our Public Schools for fall semester.

Mahalo  
Holly k. Neves

Sent from my T-Mobile 4G LTE Device

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Hashimoto Pam <ypc6981@gmail.com> on behalf of Hashimoto Pam  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:55 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Please delay reopening school on August 4th

I am a mother of three and I can't imagine any one of my kid get sick from COVID-19. Hawai'i is no longer the least case state anymore, our number is going up daily, the curve is not flatten yet therefore I want DOE to push back the reopen of school until it's safe for the kids!

Thank you

Yiping Hashimoto

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** dupontohana@hawaiiantel.net  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:57 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Reopening of Schools

Aloha,

As a long time SPED EA in the Windward District, I have serious concerns regarding the opening of Schools on August 4, 2020. While I miss the children, and want them to continue in the gains that we made in the past year, I feel like we are rushing into this, and should be able to answer a few of the following questions:

**1. What will the State do, in the event that someone comes down with the COVID-19 virus?** We are asked to stay within 'Ohana Bubbles, but this will not prevent students from being near other students on the bus, playground, walkways, etc. Even with our best efforts, if that happens, **will staff be held accountable if students get sick?**

**2. Who will be responsible for screening all of the students? Will staff and visitors to campus also be screened?** In a perfect world, we'd all get sick the night before, and call in sick in the morning. This doesn't always happen, and students do get sick in the middle of the day. **Who is responsible for cleaning every room that child has been in, and logging in any children/adults who may have been exposed?** While we were told by administrators to do a visual check of students, and that not all may be temperature checked, this seems illogical. People can be asymptomatic, so even a temperature check may not suffice. **How will we keep our fragile students in FSC safe from the effects of the virus?** I worked at ESY, and our little preschoolers were not required to wear a mask. **Is this even safe for them, as they may take it home to their siblings and family members?**

**3. Who is supervising the students during meals?** In our Elementary school, that task has fallen on the Educational Assistants. This seems to go against compliance, since students should always be under the direction of a certified teacher/staff member. If I am watching students in the cafeteria or recess, **how will I keep my SPED students safe, being that I am exposing myself to a larger bubble?**

**4. Finally, is 4 days really sufficient to train and implement our new responsibilities?** While we are given the first 9 days to learn new routines, I believe it will be chaotic, confusing, and may, potentially, jeopardize the health of staff and students.

I hope you will take these points into consideration, and see it from the perspective of someone who is actually on the campus. I look forward to seeing the direction that the Board takes on these matters.

Respectfully,

U'ilani DuPont

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Tracy Bufil (via Google Docs) <t.bufile@gmail.com> on behalf of Tracy Bufile (via Google Docs)  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:59 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

[t.bufile@gmail.com](mailto:t.bufile@gmail.com) has attached the following document:



### Testimony - Reopening July - Mom

*Snapshot of the item below:*

To the Hawai'i Board of Education:

I am writing this testimony with 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** and to ask you to reconsider the reopening of schools. The bottom line is that we need to proactively consider and be cognizant of the safety, health, and well-being of all school staff, faculty, students, all of our families, and community members.

My name is Tracy Bufile and I am a concerned mother and grandmother writing to you because my daughter Haley Agbayani, is a teacher and a mother of a 2 ½ year old. I'm very concerned that the anxiety and stress that she is experiencing right now regarding the opening of schools and putting her health and that of her son as well as her students and colleagues is not healthy and needs to be reconsidered.

Haley has just completed her seventh year of teaching with the Hawai'i State Department of Education. She is currently a third grade teacher, but she has also taught in grades K, 2, and 4. She works amongst some of the most resilient students and colleagues in the Kea'au-Ka'ū-Pāhoā Complex Area on the Big Island, which have endured and continue to persevere a multitude of life-changing and trauma-inducing events: Hurricane/Tropical Storm Iselle, the lava flow of 2014, Hurricane Lane, the Leilani lava flow of 2018, and now, COVID-19.

Teachers need more time to thoroughly prepare for the reopening of school classrooms and buildings by ensuring healthy and safe learning environments. This also must include the proper training on the various procedures and protocols with regard to screening and instances when a person/student may test positive for COVID-19 and preparing for the unknown in the event that teachers need to carry out effective teacher-led online and distance learning environments. Are teachers expected to be nurses/health aides during this time as well? Furthermore, they are required to have face masks on and to have them worn by students at all times while they are on these campuses! These aforementioned tasks will take an extraordinary amount of time, collaborative work and effort. As such, we should not be rushing and haphazardly reopening without the proper guidance for moving forward at the expense of students', teachers', staff, families', or community members' lives.

With cases on the rise, teachers still lack clear guidance from the DOH and HDOE. There are so many different models being introduced but not one clear and concise plan within all schools. Why not be proactive rather than reactive should the reopening of schools result in everyone's worst nightmare, with contracting COVID-19 and getting sick or possibly dying from the virus. Please, give us hope, give teachers hope, by acting with kindness, and work towards togetherness by adjusting the reopening of face-to-face instruction and reopening at all until we have all questions answered from HDOE and DOH. THEY NEED THOROUGH plans in place and specific guidance moving forward. Please err on the side of caution when considering your plans to reopen schools for the 2020-2021 school year; we need to delay reopening until clear guidance is received. Help us all thrive, survive, and live!

Thank you for your time.

Tracy Bufile

Google Docs: Create and edit documents online.

Google LLC, 1600 Amphitheatre Parkway, Mountain View, CA 94043, USA

You have received this email because [t.bufile@gmail.com](mailto:t.bufile@gmail.com) shared a document with you from Google Docs.

The Google logo, consisting of the word "Google" in its characteristic multi-colored font.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Mary Carlson <mary.carlson@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Mary Carlson  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:59 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Please use logic and delay opening our schools

Hello.

I've spent the last 18 years proudly teaching at Kapaa High School, but now I am seriously afraid to go to work if schools reopen on August 4th. I am going to bullet my argument to make this easy for you to read and will follow it with a more thorough explanation if the bullets need explaining.

- My pregnant daughter and her unborn child are at risk if I get sick.
- Contact tracing for high school students is impossible.
- A heat index of over 90 degrees is intolerable for a teenager to adhere to a mandatory mask requirement.
- Recent news reveals how one positive case placed close to 100 people on Oahu on administrative leave.
- 82 Infants in one county in Texas tested positive for Covid
- Covid test results take too long to be an effective weapon against this disease.
- Covid test kits are in short supply.
- Masks do not protect me; they protect others.
- I have no plexi glass to hide behind.
- On Kauai, we only have 10 ICU beds.

I love my job and my community, but I also love my family and I currently live with my pregnant daughter and son-in-law and have grave concerns for their unborn child.

This semester I will be teaching 3 courses at my high school because we are on a 4x4 schedule. While we are promised that our roster will be reduced to 10 students in a classroom with a staggered A/B schedule, this still means that I will interact with 30 different students on one day and then another set of 30 students on the next day. So this is 60 different kids, yet each of those students will interact with other students from their other classes as well as just interacting with their friends whom they haven't seen since March. Then there are those kids who will interact with others on the school bus. I am not a math person, but my guess is that my 60 students exponentially exposed me to 600 hundred individuals if they each had 6 friends and come from a family of 4.

A mask is not going to keep me safe when I'm inundated with so many germs from so many students.

But the logic extends beyond basic math. Look at what just happened with HPD as reported on Hawaii News Now:

"Nearly 90 Honolulu police officers and recruits will be tested for the coronavirus on Wednesday after a former recruit tested positive over the weekend. The group includes 44 recruits from that class, about 30 officers who work at the police academy, about five from the Crime Reduction Unit, and others on fourth watch who patrol Chinatown and Waikiki. They have all have been on administrative leave since Saturday when the state Health Department notified the department about the positive test result" " [Lynn Kawano](#) | July 21, 2020 at 5:56 PM HST - Updated July 21 at 5:58 PM [HONOLULU, Hawaii \(HawaiiNewsNow\)](#).

The DOE has not indicated how they are going to handle an outbreak in our schools and has passed this responsibility to the Health Department. Okay. Fair enough. But is it really feasible to conduct contact tracing with one student when that one student interacts with over a hundred others? What happened with HPD was a bit easier to conduct contact tracing. But contact tracing within a high school is going to be impossible. And by the time the contact tracing has occurred, several other students and staff members would have already been infected and unknowingly been infecting others.

I understand that everyone wants to return to normal. But this cannot be done until there is a vaccine.

**Because we have the ability to teach students remotely, it is unconscionable to place my life and the lives of so many other staff members, students, and extended families at risk.**

I agree that our students are affected emotionally and psychologically by not coming to school. But at least there is a better chance of sustaining life by keeping them at home.

Please rely upon your logic when you make this life altering decision to open schools right now.

Respectfully,

Mary Carlson

Mary Carlson  
BA English  
MFA Creative Writing  
Kapaa High School  
808-821-4400 ext. 171  
Cell: 808-635-9835

**What greater joy can a teacher feel than to witness a child's success?**

**— Michelle L. Graham**

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Jessica Steinbeisser <jmsteinbeisser@gmail.com> on behalf of Jessica Steinbeisser  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:59 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

My name is Jessica Steinbeisser and my son attends Solomon elementary school in Wahiawa. I believe after speaking to several friends who teach at the school and with many other parents how off track we are with whats important. While I believe that the school is taking many precautions on safety it to the point that it is detrimental to our students. Our children are being pushed back into this school plan that seems to change everyday and no one in our schools office has a cohesive answer. Our school is saying that masks will be required to wear masks for the five hours that they are on campus while being social distanced and having barriers between them. They are using computers for most of their work and not getting to play together at all. None of this is healthy for their mental health. They are released at 12 15 and expected to pick up lunch, walk home, eat, and be back on the computer for distance learning at 1. That's not realistic. If they do distance learning, which is being offered, we are forced to apply by Friday but have been given zero information on what kind of programs they will be using, what hours they have to be logged on, and how they will be addressed if they have question or are struggling. Speaking of struggling our school is requiring for us to commit to our choice of learning with very little information for the entire semester so even if we do pick and option and it doesn't work for our family or our child is struggling we cant switch to another option. This seems very shortsighted since this is unprecedented we cant know how are kids will cope with either model without trying. I have made the recommendation to our school that they should have a one month trial basis but as a family pushing back the start day or even doing the first month all online would be a great way to start the year to give the teachers more time and the parents a chance to actually make informed decisions.

Thank you for your time and consideration

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Mia Fitzgerald <mia.fitzgerald@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Mia Fitzgerald  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:00 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** August 4

Dear BOE,

I am a secondary teacher at Washington Middle School.

I am pleading for the delay of the opening of our schools. Even though we have been working with our school administrators, teachers, and other personnel to prepare to reopen our school, we still need more time to plan so that we can return to our classrooms safely.

We still have questions, regarding the safety of our students, their families, and teachers. I live with my husband, children, and 84 year old mother, so I would like to make sure that I am protecting my family and my students.

We do not have protocol regarding what happens if a person is to become sick with COVID at our schools. What will be the safeguard in making sure that others do not get infected? Will there be tracers to ensure that we can pinpoint the spread?

I urge you to consider keeping us home and safe during this pandemic. I believe that distance learning is the only option during this time of uncertainty.

Respectfully,

--

Mia Fitzgerald  
Art Teacher  
Washington Middle School

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** ceslee ceslee <ceslee14@yahoo.com> on behalf of ceslee ceslee  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:01 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Differential Pay

To the Board of Education:

I strongly urge you to not do away with pay differentials for Special Educators, Hard-To-Fill, and Hawaiian Immersion teaching positions.

Yes, I'm an educator for individuals with special needs. I've been a special education teacher for nearly twenty years; never before receiving the pay differential.

I deserve this differential for many, many reasons. All of these specific teacher positions do. As for special education teachers, we are those teachers on the front line.

We are the ones with whom our colleagues utilize and refer to all of the time. Our colleagues rely on us to address behaviors in which they are not specialized in. We are tasked with providing differentiation and accommodations that are vital to those with disabilities. We run hour(s) long IEP meetings and spend upwards of five hours doing paperwork. We contact parent/guardians on a weekly basis; spending a healthy chunk of time with contacting, documenting, and reaching out to team members. This is just the beginning of my specific duties as a special education teacher. The list goes on and on!

What happens when we return to school and are to engage with students who are unable to wear masks for health/respiratory reasons? Those who are hard of hearing? Those who read lips rather than using sign language? Are we well equipped to begin school and are we guaranteed of our protection?

I hope you will seriously consider leaving the pay differentials in place; do not remove these benefits. We are well deserving of these benefits and I urge you to do what is BEST for these teaching positions by offering the pay differentials again this school year!

Mahalo,  
Ceslee K. Enos, M.Ed.

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Cassie <cale.tlw@gmail.com> on behalf of Cassie  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:01 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Cassie Ale and I work at a high school on Maui. I just received a letter yesterday telling me that I go back to work in just 9 days. I asked 3 weeks ago and was only informed yesterday. I could not believe such last minute warning. I expected to see my start date at least a month from now, not a few days.

I understand the need and desire to get our economy up and running, but not at the expense of our lives, everyone's lives.

We had more than enough time for planning and training for us, but I sat in a zoom meeting that gave a lot of basic information about the virus, the history of it's existence long ago. We were also informed that the medicine needed and ordered for the state of Hawaii is now not available. The order has been cut to half and the test results will take longer than usual. Nothing specifically related to the school environment was presented. I did ask questions referring to my job at school.

In my heart, I feel very uneasy and unsafe on how we're suppose to be there amongst our students and co-workers, more than 10 people, not protected and not knowing if we're taking the virus home to our families. No training, but only verbal reassurance that DOE and our Administration is prepared. Because there are too many unanswered questions and concerns, I move that we not open schools for another month. And that a lot of cleaning and TRAINING to keep EVERYONE SAFE. And nothing to be expected of each employee beyond our job description. If we are deemed essential, why is there very little consideration on making sure that we are well armed, like soldiers going in to battle? Who's going to wear a protective suit to screen and check temperatures daily? Where and who is going to wear protective gear to sit with those who are SICK as they wait for their ride home? Who has the expertise and responsibility to test those suspicious of the Corona virus? Does our desk/office space have plexiglass already in place before we arrive back to school like the main office has? Are we well armed with Health Room protective gear, supplies and equipment to take special care of our students, co-workers and ourselves? There's way too much preparation to be done before school opens. Please reconsider pushing back reopening schools for at least a month, hopefully that we're prepared and well trained for the unexpected. Thank you for your attention and consideration.

*Sent from my Verizon Motorola Smartphone*

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Monique Chow <imberski@hotmail.com> on behalf of Monique Chow  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:02 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.

Monique Chow  
Kauai High School  
CTE  
Kauai, HI  
808-977-2619

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Courtney Arnold <carnold12@hotmail.com> on behalf of Courtney Arnold  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:03 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 Courtney Arnold, I teach at Lana'i school. I implore the state of Hawaii and the Board of Education to 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 environment.

Given the numerous unanswered questions and teachers scheduled to report to campuses [on July 29](#), I have no confidence that our school buildings and classrooms are ready for students to open in a manner that minimizes the risk of COVID-19 spreading.

Thank you,  
Courtney Arnold

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Marissa Wong <randm628@gmail.com> on behalf of Marissa Wong  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:04 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony to Action Item G  
**Attachments:** Testimony.pdf



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 Marissa Wong and I am speaking as a special education teacher. I teach at Mililani Mauka 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,  
Marissa Wong

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Danielle Clay <danielle\_clay@hookele.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Danielle Clay  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:04 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony for Pushing Back School Opening

To Whom It May Concern:

This will be my sixth year of teaching, and the beginning of the school year is the MOST exciting time of the year. However, this year does not feel as exciting due to how many unanswered questions that still hang in the balance. As the decision is being made to push back the opening of schools, I implore you to understand why teachers need more time to prepare if that decision goes into effect.

In two weeks, we are set to start school and have spent hours upon hours preparing materials for partial IN PERSON and partial VIRTUAL learning. Pushing back the opening of schools supports the health and safety of all students and staff. However, all of that planning has been based on our school's current reopening plan. If the decision changes that we will not return in person, but that we will still be expected to start the same day, but virtually, that is not enough time for teachers to change and adjust their plans for 100% distant learning.

As we all know, we are in unprecedented times and I think the question has to be asked "Given the current situation, are we providing the time and preparation needed for teachers to deliver quality lessons and education?" We not only need to support and protect the health and safety of students, but we need to protect the quality of their education. Before this, virtual learning curriculum has not existed at this level. Previous semesters of instruction were built upon years and years of refinement that now has to be altered for virtual learning. At this time, virtual learning curriculum does not exist. Teachers need time to create this to ensure a continued high quality education for our students. At a minimum, teachers should be granted a prolonged planning period prior to the start of instruction. Not only are teachers set up for failure, but the students are set up for failure as we are rushing to failure.

I support the decision to allow schools more time to prepare for face-to-face learning, but I ask that more time is provided for teachers to prepare and alter all of their current lesson plans to fit the needs of their students if they are going to be learning virtually at the start of the year. Pushing back the opening of schools, as well as the start date of school, will allow time for staff to provide the best education and safest school experience possible. I entrust this governing body to make this decision not just for the health and safety of our students, but to provide a quality education for all.

Thank you,  
Danielle Clay

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** wmh214@gmail.com  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:05 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** School opening

Hi BOE,

Like a lot of parents, I am weary about opening schools up in the next two weeks. I think it's much too soon and we are ill prepared. As much as I want school to reopen and for things to get back to normal, there's just too much at risk with this unknown coronavirus. I'm scared for my 3 young boys, safety of teachers/school faculty, and the elderly people under my care at home. Please postpone reopening the school until we are better prepared and with options for all grades like distance learning. With COVID-19 going up this doesn't look promising opening now.

Best regards,

Wade H

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** kaliko kaauamo <kalikokaauamo@gmail.com> on behalf of kaliko kaauamo  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:05 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Delay in opening the school

Welina me ke aloha,

My name is Ashley Kaauamo and I am both a parent and kumu papa 'ekolu at Pā'ia kula. I am concerned for the safety of my child while at school and the "'ohana bubbles" that are most definitely not small and confined groups of children.

Should our family take every precaution as we have for all these months in avoiding others, keeping confined at home, and then send our child to school we would like to ensure every step is taken to keep him safe. As I have learned this will not happen. In his 'ohana bubble will be children who ride the bus, exposed to 30+ students in a confined space. His 'ohana bubble will also include A+ students who again are exposed to new large groups of students. Additionally, his 'ohana bubble will include every single other student at school as they all share a common bathroom area. How can tracking occur if these massive amounts of students are intermingling with each other?

A second large concern I have is the lack of air flow at our particular school. Since this virus is airborne how will he be kept safe from other students who will sneeze, remove masks, and so on?

I value the education of my child, however I value his precious life much more. It is not fair for my child to be subjected to COVID-19 and thousands of others via child interaction every single day. Please delay the opening of the school year and encourage a 100% online model so students may learn in a safe manner.

Please delay the opening of the school year and encourage a 100% online model so students may learn in a safe manner.

Please delay the opening of the school year and encourage a 100% online model so students may learn in a safe manner.

‘Oiai‘o nō,  
na Ashley Kaauamo

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Carol Ann Dorland <dorlandfamily@aol.com> on behalf of Carol Ann Dorland  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:05 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Aloha,

I am testifying about:

**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 Kihei Charter Public School. Two of my children also attend this same school. I want to state that I have a lot of concerns about our school being ready to open for students on August 3rd.

As a teacher, I have not been offered or heard about extra training that I could have done over the summer to be better prepared to welcome students safely back to school. In fact, I really have not been told anything except that details will be coming soon. Also, the information that I have heard has changed completely. For example, students need to be 3 feet apart vs. 6 feet. I want to say that I agree with this, but my school is still trying to have all students on campus in some capacity while following this rule. I have huge concerns about student's safety at school because of our school's decision. It also means that students need to be split into smaller classrooms. As of today, we don't have the teacher's to cover these extra classrooms - and we definitely need to have time to find them and train them in to safely teach in our school environment. We also need time to figure out how to best teach our students. It's different when you teach in the classroom vs. online. Teachers have been given no training on this as well. Also, we don't have enough technology to teach both at school and online. Rules have also been changed about wearing masks in the classroom and temperature checks (we don't even have a school nurse...). We have sooooo many things to figure out on how to open safely. I don't see how we will safely figure out all of these details in the few days that we have as workshop days before students start back to school.

I have been a teacher for over 25 years. I always get excited and nervous for the school year to begin. I; however, have never started a school year feeling the way I do this year. To be honest, I feel totally unprepared, have such high anxiety that I don't sleep at night from worrying about how to teach, what to teach, my health, my own kid's health, the health of my incoming students and their families. I'm overwhelmed. During a global pandemic, I don't understand why we would put our teachers and students in an environment where they are at any risk to get sick, have long-term complications, or even die. Is the economy more important than our teachers, students, and Ohana? Do we really value teachers and education? Or are we just glorified babysitters so that parents can go back to work.

How much is a student's life worth? A teacher's? A family's? No one has been told what happens if someone gets sick at school. We are walking into a scary environment where we have received no training or help to prepare. We need time to prepare, so that we can open our schools safely and smartly. We need to be set for success - failure is not an option when the price is so high.

Thank you for reading my testimony.  
A concerned teacher

To the Members of the Board:

I am testifying on Discussion Item VI(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.

My name is Anne Alves and I am a teacher in the leeward district on Oahu who this year transferred to a “hard to staff” school. This entire week is dedicated to orientation at my new school. I’ve been seeing all the progress that the administrative team has made in this school in terms of preparing for our (staff and students) return. Funds were allocated to purchase tech needs for the student body as well as staff. The reopening plan has been organized and in place for weeks already. With that said, the school is undoubtedly not ready for students to return. I received keys to my classroom today and was told that the room had been sanitized. I was also given a spray bottle and cloth wipes and was told that Clorox wipes have been ordered, but they have not been delivered, nor is there an estimated date for delivery because there is a national shortage. I also asked a lot of questions where the response was “We don’t know. Everything is changing day to day, so we hope to have answers to that question soon.” They did, thankfully, inform us that masks will be part of the dress code for this school and that if any student should come to class without a mask we are to send them to the office to get a mask. However, nearly every “presenter” asked to take their masks off in order to present their 1-2 hours of information to us. If these “presenters” (administrators, academic coaches, department heads, and teach specialists) couldn’t keep their masks on in the large library to speak to a group of 9 teachers who are well behaved and well intentioned, how are teachers supposed to do this with a similar sized group of adolescents? And taking the mask off is not an option.

I spent the afternoon cleaning out junk left by the previous occupants of this room. Some of the materials were things I want to clean and keep, but the majority of it was trash left by someone who clearly left with the intention of returning but was unable to because of the pandemic. I opened up all the windows to air out the room, but unfortunately, there were 2 wasps nests in the room, and within seconds of me opening the window, a huge wasp flew in and didn’t leave. I left after 3 hours of cleaning and had to leave the window open, hoping the wasp (who is building onto one of the nests) would leave before I return tomorrow afternoon, when I will continue to clean. I also notified a custodian who said he would take a look at it and close the windows.

I’m informing you of this not to pinpoint what is wrong with the school, but to draw attention to the “outliers” that we cannot ignore. This administrative team has done a tremendous job in preparing all the incoming teachers for their teaching positions, but there is only so much they can actually do to guarantee our health and safety. There are so many issues that are beyond their control. Imagine if that wasp had flown in during a class! Remind yourself of who YOU were at 12 years old. Would you have been able to stay seated and calm with a mask on?

Honestly, if you say “Yes I would!” you are either lying or, worse, you have completely lost touch with how a 12-year-old operates.

The “Return to Learning” “plan” that the DOE has put out is incomplete. It doesn’t account for the free-will of children! Every plan only considers the “best case scenario”. Every plan assumes that *all* students will behave how we *need* them to. And through years of classroom experience, I can tell you that you have to plan for the worst while hoping for the best. No matter how strong a teacher’s classroom management skills are, there will always be a problem, such as a student in desperate need of more attention than we are capable of giving them in the moment. Look at the state of our state! How many times have you been to the grocery store recently where people are wearing their masks in ways that will not keep us safe? Look at how our Covid numbers are increasing despite all the mandates. If you go for a drive around the island on any given weekend, you will find parking lots at every beach park are overflowing with people gathering in large groups, mask-less. If the state cannot control what the adults are doing, what makes you think that teachers will be able to enforce these rules in a way that does not jeopardize our own health and safety, let alone the health and safety of others. What happens when a child decides to take their mask in our classrooms? What happens when they decide that “my parents said I don’t have to wear my mask because masks will not keep us safe”? We are not to engage in a power struggle, but the way the plans are laid out, we are set up for the potential of a power struggle multiple times per day. For example, I will have to teach 5 periods with 7-9 students physically present in the classroom and around 20 others watching this scenario from their devices off campus. What happens when one student in one period decides to challenge me? Do I stop class? Even if I were to stop and call for support, there are numerous others watching this major interruption and losing valuable class time.

No matter how strong a teacher’s classroom management skills are, there are always problems that arise. I’m sure you’ve heard the saying, “You can lead the horse to water, but you cannot force it to drink.” All the choices I make as an educator stem from this universal understanding. My job is to guide to the very best of my ability. Every year in which I was on-cycle for EES, my rating was “highly effective”. This should prove that I am go above and beyond in order to successfully guide my students toward the “water”. But if you were to look at all of my records, you would find that, although I “highly” effectively guided them all to the water, several of them refused to drink. There are always factors outside of my control that make certain students behave a certain way. These are the kids that will make the theoretical, fallacious bubbles pop! The power struggle I mentioned before is just the first step of a potential domino effect of unsafe conditions that teachers are being thrust into.

Every legitimate question that is asked by teachers and parents has been answered **vaguely** by Dr. Kishimoto and Dr. Park with an emphasis on these fallacious “bubbles” that we all *know* is impossible. It *may be* possible at the elementary level if *all* students abide by *every* rule. But at the secondary level, the bubble concept is null and void. It is physically impossible to do. These bubbles are indeed fallacious because students change classes and have common recess, lunch, and passing periods. And what kind of “normalcy” can we provide for these adolescents if they are expected to remain 6 feet away from their peers and not interact with them?

As a teacher, I am planning for collaboration to be done in a safe manner, the same manner in which we adults have been collaborating: virtually. I cannot responsibly plan anything that requires close physical proximity. I cannot plan for anything that requires the sharing of basic school supplies such as markers, scissors, highlighters, etc. and I cannot expect all of the students at my Title 1 school (and wow! Title 1 schools actually have so many more resources than other schools thanks to their necessary additional funding!) to supply themselves with these basics. I don't understand how 100% distance learning is not a consideration for our "Return to Learning" when that's all we can actually plan for within our classrooms. Sure, a small number of students can be in the same space at the same time, but it is not safe for them to be any closer than 6 away from each other. What kind of *quality* interaction are we actually supposed to provide them? We cannot. We can provide numerous opportunities to collaborate virtually, but not one opportunity to physically interact. So why are we pushing so hard to "Return to Learning" in the same physical space when the world, as we know it, is changing every day. This is our opportunity to be on the forefront of a new and safe experience. We teach our students to plan for the future. Why must we use the "old ways" to try to get them there.

Even our state epidemiologist, Dr. Park, has made it clear in her webinar for administrators that Covid-19 will spread within our schools. Below is a screenshot of a slide she presented in this webinar:





## DOH Webinar for School Principals and Administrators

Unlisted

2.8K views

How are teachers being sent back into conditions that are “unsafe or hazardous conditions or to perform tasks which imminently endanger their health or safety”? This is a direct violation of our contract! And this is exactly what we are being ordered to do.

“When any teacher believes that an unsafe or hazardous condition exists, the teacher shall immediately inform the principal or other immediate supervisor who shall take appropriate action.” Many of us are doing exactly what is required in our contract, but principals cannot take the appropriate action because those above them are not honoring our contract. Dr. Park herself has outlined how these conditions are “unsafe and hazardous” by acknowledging the fact that “COVID-19 virus infections *will* spread”. How are you to then knowingly force us into these unsafe and hazardous conditions?

Additionally, Dr. Kishimoto claimed that educators have been provided with adequate training for remote learning. I believe Snopes would deem this claim as “misleading”. Yes, there were several training webinars offered on virtual platforms such as WebEx, but many of these trainings were offered *during* school hours (in quarter 4 of last school year) when we were expected to be teaching our students remotely or engaging in numerous department/team/faculty meetings. There were numerous webinars that I did sign up for but was unable to attend because they conflicted with meetings I was required to virtually attend. Were there trainings offered over the summer? If they were, I did not get this memo, despite

checking my DOE email account multiple times daily for any and all information about moving forward. And even if they were offered, may I please bring up the fact that we are 10-month employees? Why would these trainings be offered while we are not working? Our time away from school responsibilities is *our* time, our personal time because we are not **indentured servants**. Regardless, I did spend a significant amount of time preparing instructional materials for the upcoming school year and self-training on platforms I thought may be useful for virtual learning. Again, had I known about any official training, I would've done what trainings I could've because, again, I go above and beyond for my students, as proven by my "highly effective" EES rating. But I, nor any other 10-month teacher, should have been required to attend any trainings without compensation. I came prepared to my "new teacher orientation" with specific questions about how to actually execute these hybrid lessons. Not one person involved in this orientation could answer my questions with certainty, including the principal. If that doesn't prove that we are not ready, I don't know what does.

One more point I want to drive home is the offensiveness of the title "Return to Learning". **We never stopped teaching and the children never stopped learning. We closed school buildings, but school did not "close"**. As educators, we had to scramble to create curriculum and enrichment opportunities. The parameters and requirements for this changed, sometimes daily, and we had to adapt. We spent countless hours trying to figure it out, all whilst reaching out to each individual student for wellness checks. We created digital lessons for those who had access to devices and internet. For those without, we had to provide paper-packets with all the materials we posted virtually. We were repeatedly told that we had to provide "every opportunity" for students to pass. And, get this, none of quarter 4 counted toward a grade, unless it was to improve the grade they already had. The buy-in from my students was incredibly low. At first there were several students who did some of the work, especially from my honors class. However, as soon as the kids realized that if they didn't do it, it wouldn't count against them, the vast majority decided to get an early start to their summer break. This model of virtual learning was designed to fail. Why the push to return to in-person schooling? Why not iron out the kinks to a system we educators had already started developing in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter? Why can we not "Return to Learning" in phases, much as our state is trying to return to "normal" in phases? Why must we put all of our educators and students in "unsafe and hazardous conditions" for the sake of returning to a common physical location for learning? As the state began opening up in phases, COVID cases have gone up significantly to the point where we are above the peak that kept our schools closed in the first place. But at least there is somewhat of a handle on it in terms of the state assessing our situation and making adjustments to the reopening plan as needed. To force teachers and students to return to these unsafe and hazardous conditions is inhumane. Please reconsider and act responsibly. Our lives are in your hands.

Respectfully,  
Anne Alves

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Treena Kamiya <treena.kamiya@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Treena Kamiya  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:07 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Delay start of face to face instruction for Fall 2020

*The DOE needs to ensure the safety of all students and teachers during this time of extreme uncertainty. I want to see my students. I want to be in the classroom. However, I do NOT want anyone to die because they came to school.*

*Schools have been left to figure out how to follow CDC guidelines while being forced to bring students back "safely." How do we address passing time? Lunch? Entry and exit of students? What happens if a student is ill and their parents do not come to pick them up? What happens if a teacher feels ill during the day? What do we do if a student refuses to wear a mask or doesn't follow social distancing protocol? We need to understand that "Ohana bubbles" on a secondary school level could mean hundreds of people that will come into contact with each other before, during, and after-school, after-school during extracurricular activities set to resume on August 19th. Schools are STILL trying to figure it out. Student schedules haven't even been made. Schools are not ready.*

*Departments need meeting and planning time in order to unpack and address their unique needs for delivering in-person instruction safely and online instruction decently. Many teachers do not feel comfortable teaching during a pandemic nor are they comfortable with distance learning. Many of us have spent all summer learning in our own without any guidance or help from the DOE. We have spent countless days learning and improving our knowledge and skills in terms of creating meaningful curriculum for distance learning.*

*Schools need to acquire, distribute, and install PPE, such as plexiglass barriers. We need to receive and understand guidance on what needs to be done with regard to contact tracing and quarantine should someone on campus become infected, including what should be done should someone in a person's out-of-school "Ohana bubble" become infected.*

*DOE needs to commit to offering a 100% Distance Learning option as promised to families by actually offering it, advertising it to families, and preparing schools to deliver on this promise in a decent way by offering adequate training, resources, and time for teachers to prepare. Our students and teachers deserve better.*

*Thank you,  
Treena Kamiya  
Teacher, Washington Middle School*

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Sidney Holomuzki <armfelt.6@gmail.com> on behalf of Sidney Holomuzki  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:08 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

I am testifying on action item H in hopes of delaying the reopening of our schools. There needs to be a better, safer plan instead of this unorganized "experiment". Having more time to create a solidified plan and an opportunity for parent and teacher questions to be answered, will be the best for everyone.

Sidney Holomuzki  
Solomon elementary

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** cperrells <cperrells@gmail.com> on behalf of cperrells  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:08 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Pandemic Training

Aloha,

My name is Cleora and I am a School Food Service Manager at a Honolulu distric middle school. My concern about returning to school is mainly for the health of me and my staff. We will be providing meals to our students through a grab and go service in which we will pack meals and set up lines outside of the cafeteria. My concern is my staff and I will have to leave our bubble to service the students . What happens if one of us gets the virus. Will the whole cafeteria staff be under quarantine. If so who will feed the students. Feeding in the cafe we are protected by sneeze guards and can distance ourselves, but outside we are exposed to more people without safety barriers. As a manager my staff and I are committed to provide healthy and nutritious meals to our students but we need guidance to show us how to do it in a safe manner.

Sincerely,  
Cleora F Perrells  
SFSM III

Sent from my T-Mobile 4G LTE Device

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Michelle Rose O'Byrne <teachermichellerose@gmail.com> on behalf of Michelle Rose O'Byrne  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:08 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** delaying student start date

Aloha Hawaii Board of Education Members,  
I am a teacher and a parent of an elementary-aged child in a DOE school.

I am concerned that teachers and schools are not prepared to safely open in a way that will protect the health of our students, staff, and faculty. I am writing to ask you to delay the re-opening of Hawaii DOE schools for the following reasons:

1. Teachers have received no training on how to transition to become on-line educators. ( The DOE posted link to an online tutorial for the blackboard platform is not training, teachers can not be expected to implement effective lessons online just after watching the blackboard tutorial). The blended learning model has teachers instructing the same number of students as previously, but now we are expected to be giving live in-person instruction to one group while also monitoring and supporting students to do on-line work both synchronously and asynchronously. The DOE has given minimal guidance on how to do this and it is an unrealistic burden for individual schools to prepare teachers to begin teaching this way after only 2 PD days before students arrive.

2. The DOE email sent to teachers on July 20 states "The Department of Health has been working closely with the DOE on ensuring the safe reopening of schools," said Health Director Bruce Anderson. "We will continue to work with the DOE in assisting them to ensure their staff is fully informed, response plans are in place, and safe practices and reporting protocols are ready prior to the opening of schools."

Here is the current status of our compliance with the Director of Health's recommendation:

- a. Teachers have not been fully informed.
- b. Teachers have not received response plans.
- c. Teachers have not been informed of how safe practices will be conducted and enforced.
- d. Teachers have not been informed of reporting protocols.

It is not realistic to expect schools to devote their entire two days of PD training to be in compliance with the BOH recommendations. Those two days are normally spent focusing on how to better educate our students. I think we can all agree that we don't want to shift the focus of schools away from education.

3. In the same email from the DOE dated July 20 is this advisory: "To minimize the spread of COVID-19, DOH has advised HIDOE to use a symptom screening checklist for staff and students, which is included in HIDOE's Return to Learn Health and Safety Handbook. The guidance reads as follows:

Help stop the spread of illness by interviewing and visually inspecting all individuals (from at least six feet away) using the following symptom checklist:

- feverish or unusually warm (has flushed cheeks)
- coughing/sneezing
- sore throat
- shortness of breath/difficulty breathing
- headache/stomachache/nausea
- muscle pain/unusual fatigue
- new loss of taste or smell

This suggests that teachers are responsible to conduct the interviews and visual inspections. What is the protocol for this? Will we be provided training on how to do health screenings? What if we miss something? Can teachers be held liable? What if the student has one of these symptoms? Do schools have facilities and trained nursing staff to accommodate the numbers of students that answer yes to these questions?

4. Who is providing PPE and cleaning supplies for teachers and students?

Until these questions have been answered and a protocol put into place to address them with adequate funding, support, and training, schools should not be re-opened.

In addition, I am asking that cuts teacher pay be immediately halted. With all of the extra responsibilities that teachers are being asked to do right now, the very least that the BOE can do is not to cut our pay.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,  
Michelle O'Byrne

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Jhana Duarte <hulagr177@hotmail.com> on behalf of Jhana Duarte  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:09 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** keep schools closed

Sent from my iPhone

Aloha,

I am a middle school elective teacher on Oahu. I am very concerned about the schools opening next week. I feel like the schools are very unprepared to deal with the epidemic. My husband and I are both teachers. I have several underlying conditions and I have very real concerns that we will be contracting the disease, dying, and leaving our children without parents if schools open. Even worse, that we will give the virus to our young children who are not yet in grade school. We KNOW that someone will contract the virus if schools open, why are you still insisting on opening schools? Are you really willing to give up teachers and students lives to be one of the first states in the US to open schools? I can give you an almost 100% guarantee that students won't adhere to appropriate social distancing during school breaks (before school, recess, lunch, after school, etc.) which is also the time students will be able take off their masks. This means, students won't be social distancing and they won't be using personal protective equipment, then they will be returning to the classes that I will be teaching.

I found out last week that my teaching line will be changed when I return to school next week. For the past 10 years I have been teaching elective classes. This year I found out there would be no elective classes taught at my school and I would be teaching a core subject, Science. I am not prepared to teach the curriculum; I will not have the appropriate time to plan. I will need to plan an entirely new subject curriculum, learn the new standards plus switch my teaching style to distance learning. I haven't had any training about teaching Science through the pandemic, avoiding germs in school, or protocols and guidelines my school will enact to avoid the virus. I feel absolutely unprepared to start the school year.

During the break I was very responsible with my social distancing. I rarely left the house to avoid contact with people and to protect my children from the virus. Now I will be in contact with up to 8 different classes of students in school. I will knowingly be putting myself in an unsafe situation where safety protocols are undecided and incomplete. Please consider opening the school at a later date after the schools have more time to prepare concrete plans and ensuring everyone's safety. We don't know the guidelines about what to do if a teacher or student contracts the virus. Shouldn't we know that before we start school? Aren't people's lives more important than being one of the first states in the US to open? Who will take responsibility for all of the lives lost by going to school too early? If we don't even have confidence in the system, we don't even feel safe, how are we supposed to pass on that safe feeling to our students and assure them of their safety? Please extend the start date of school until more safety procedures have been planned.



A very concerned parent and teacher,

Jhaneen Kealalio

Wahiawa Middle School

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Wendy Sugata <jussaywen@hotmail.com> on behalf of Wendy Sugata  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:09 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Delay reopening for our Schools

When you think about school on the first day I can already feel the anxiety between the teachers, parents, students and administration. Why? No one knows what's really going on. Are we really ready for all of this unknown expectations during a serious pandemic?

All it takes is one person with covid 19 in school. That could infect another 7 people three days later, four days later another 21 could be infected, in two weeks another 44. If that 44 infect 10, that could probably wipe out half their elementary school. Whose monitoring our schools?

And then they all go home. They talk about these so called bubbles, but its not only at schools. There's the home, the bus, the friends, the classrooms, just way too many bubbles.

We talk about the safety of our Keiki, but we also need to think beyond that and think about the health and safety of our entire community. We're all in this together, right? We have to take those precautions at school one step at a time. Delay reopening and put health & safety procedures in place, technical training for everyone involved. We need to stay connected and communicate with teachers, parents, students and administration so everyone is informed together and knows what's going on. Right now I don't see enough being done to keep everyone informed. The left hand not talking to the right hand. Mahalo for taking responsibility.

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Steffany Burdue <sburdue@gmail.com> on behalf of Steffany Burdue  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:09 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** TESTIMONY!!

To whom it may concern:

My name is Steffany and I am a kindergarten/1st grade special education teacher in the Ewa/Kapolei District. I am emailing in regards to the update on the "temporary discontinuous" of differentials that was given to us in January of 2020 for the reasons being due to COVID-19.

I wanted to share my testimony on how the differential has made an impact in my life as a special education teacher and for my family.

With the differential that was given, it has helped me to put my child into a good quality preschool that will prepare him for kindergarten public school in which I support 100%. In addition, the preschool my son will attend has increased their tuition due to the COVID-19. Preschool is not affordable and during this difficult time, it has made it even more frustrating financially.

I started off as a special education teacher for four years. Then I became a general education teacher due to the high demands of being a special educator that was taking a toll on my mental health. After teaching general education for two years, I realized how much I missed teaching and working with students with special needs. I was drawn to them and I knew that is where I wanted and needed to be despite how much more stressful it would be. I knew where I belonged.

I know it was extremely difficult during school closures to create ways to support our special education students and parents at home which included individual packets and phone calls home weekly and online support.

I know that it will continue to be difficult when school begins on August 4th. We will be asked to do more this school year compared to previous years due to the COVID-19 in which we will be teaching our students face-to-face and to do on-line for students who will not be attending school in-person. This time is critical! If our differentials is put on a hold, for whoever knows how long, you will be sure to see many qualified special education teachers leaving the classroom. Our special education students need their qualified teachers right now more than ever!

We both know that teaching students with special needs is no walk in the park otherwise Hawaii wouldn't have special education shortages. Imagine what it will be like for this school year but to add on to that, we will no longer be receiving our differential pay? That does not make sense!

In the 10 years of being a teacher, I have seen an increase of special education teachers who would leave in the middle of the school year or not come back at the end of the school year... until the differential pay was given. This was the first school year that my principal was able to hire THREE special education positions in a snap. That has NEVER happened!

If BOE passes the suspension of differential you will sadly see many qualified special education teachers leave in which will increase the shortage of teachers in Hawaii. The same mistake is being repeated.

I can honestly say that I put my job before my own children at times because I am so dedicated to do what I need to do to fully support my students. My job has tested my marriage. But as a family, we have worked through our problems and figured out ways to balance our work and family life. We found a way to support each other. Why is it not the same with the BOE?

Is there no other way to look at other areas of its operating budget, as originally promised. Why is it that education is the first to get a pay cut but the very first to be brought up in politics as if they're fully supporting education?

Support your special education teachers, hard to fill schools, and the Hawaiian immersion educators. Temporary discontinuing the differential may help the BOE in saving some money now, but it will have a huge negative impact in the future. We all need to see the bigger picture not how it will temporary fix.... that will not last long.

Please, I urge you to discuss other options that will not have such a big negative impact on our special education students. This is not the way or time to pass the "temporary discontinuous" differentials. It is not the fix to this COVID-19 problem.

Thank you for your time in hearing my testimony,  
Steffany

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Sienna Makarewicz <ohanamaka@gmail.com> on behalf of Sienna Makarewicz  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:10 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Hello BOE,

I respectfully ask that you delay the date of the opening of school. We are not prepared and the 4 days at the beginning of the school year is typical of a regular school year, 2 days to move furniture and get the room ready and 2 days of meetings and training. This is a pandemic! We need more time to prepare. We have had NO training. There is no written policy from the DOH or DOE on any procedures for screening children nor what to do if someone at the school tests positive for the Corona Virus. Dr. Bruce Anderson does not even have a committee formed to create the protocols or procedures. The mask policy is still not clear. What is the standard practice if you have to get closer than 6 feet to someone. This disease is going to be much worse for a teacher. Why are you willing to let me be your guinea pig? This so called Ohana bubble is a little too big for my safety and comfort. I am an older teacher not old enough to retire but I listened to the HSTA presentation to see if I could go out on a medical leave. I also have a few health concerns that have been inflamed by my fears and anxiety of returning to school unprepared. My husband is in his 70s and my mother is in her 80s. How are you going to keep them safe. I have stayed home since we were ordered to shelter at home. I go out once every three weeks for supplies. Recently I have had to go to several doctor appointments. If I go back to work this Ohana Bubble is exposing me to hundreds of people that I would not choose to be exposed to. Our principal has ordered soap dispensers for our school but he told us they will not be there before the students arrive. We should not be preparing as students are arriving we should be ready with written guidance from the DOH and DOE. We need plexiglass dividers. A check in procedure and what happens when a school transmission occurs. Who is responsible? When will parents truly be given a choice for distance learning? When will we be trained to teach a distance learning program? Most schools that opened up in other parts of the world had to shut down again. Where is our plan? This unprepared opening date is causing fear and uncertainty. Please assure me that I will live and my family will live if I go back to teach school!

Thank you,

Sienna Makarewicz  
Second Grade Teacher  
Kapaa Elementary School

Sent from my iPad

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** tracie ifuku <tlhifuku@yahoo.com> on behalf of tracie ifuku  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:12 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

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 of Hawaii 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 children attend Aina Haina Elementary and feel that the DOE is NOT prepared for the schools to be starting August 4, 2020. We are putting our children and teachers at great risk and the schools have no really preparation and active detailed plans. I have spoke to numerous teachers and have read and re-read the letter families received about how school will be conducted when it plans to start August 4, 2020. I have sent an email to our school for clarification of procedures and still have not received a response. I have to submit my decision for my children by this Friday July 24, 2020 and I still have not received an answer??? How will my children do school from home for the first semester and be able to stay on track to possibly return to school the following semester with no setbacks?? There will be no teacher to follow up with them nor guide them live on line?? They have a pre recorded lesson but what If they have questions, do parents make up the strategies to get to the answer?? How do they not fall behind with very little to no guidance.....and this is all because we want our children and family to remain safe. Is this really The ONLY way to keep ourselves safe??? If we choose for our kids to go to school then we put everyone at risk, contact tracing would be so extremely difficult and pretty much impossible and by then, we would have community spread that could be so out of control. The teachers don't even know the protocols, guidelines, and operations that they will have to be following to ensure that our kids going to school will be safe. Is this really in the best "health and safety" interest that our schools said is their main priority?? If our teachers don't even know what will be happening, how will our children and families be prepared should the very very unfortunate situation arise w a DOE positive case? Will they even be prepared to do school online while the school is shut down. Our teachers have so much on their plates already but putting that back on them again while now wanting them to make sure our kids are socially distant, washing their hands like crazy, surfaces are cleaned in their classrooms and trying to keep them from getting out of their "bubble" and still teach them all they have to learn?? This is not right, nor are the prepared for this. The whole world is not ready for this as this is still new and so much discoveries of the spread. Why risk our hawaii kids, teachers, faculty and staff for this "experiment"?

My family and friends I have spoke with feel sick to our stomachs about this poor extremely risky decision. To put our kids and families as well as our teachers and their families all at risk, just doesn't seem just. There has to be another way or just more time. Our positive COVID case numbers in hawaii have been about the same as when we were in total lockdown, so it doesn't even make ANY sense at all for us to have to send our children back to school at a time like this and feel comfortable with it. We need to keep our Keiki safe and. Our faculty too. It just takes one positive case in the DOE, just one.

Thank you for your time and there are many hoping we make the best decision for our own children and teachers.

Thank you,  
Tracie S.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Sheila Buyukacar <sbuyukacar@gmail.com> on behalf of Sheila Buyukacar  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:12 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony - Agenda Item H - July 23, 2020  
**Attachments:** Buyukacar - BOE July 23, 2020 - HI DOE COVID Response.pdf

Please accept my written testimony in support of delaying the start of the SY 2020-21.

--

**Sheila Buyukacar**  
808 779-3878

Hawaii State Board of Education

Testimony for Meeting on Thursday, July 23, 2020

Time: 1:30pm

Action Item H – Board Action on MOU between State of Hawaii BOE and HSTA

July 21, 2020

Sheila Buyukacar

HI DOE Substitute Teacher - Pearl City-Waipahu District

**Subject: In support of delaying the opening of school past August 4, 2020**

Aloha

Learning happens in all spaces. Lives cannot be rekindled.

I believe the inconsistent safety processes and access to protective gear for all, as well as a lack of teacher (and substitute) training and school processes is an extraordinary concern during this extraordinary time. Losing one life should not be taken lightly because of an arbitrary opening date we set in place one or two years ago...before this unprecedented and unsafe situation knocked us off our normal path.

**I am in support of delaying the opening of the physical school facilities until a safe plan of action and associated processes and assurances are guaranteed due to the spread of COVID-19.**

**I am also in support of delaying the start of the school year until a consistent and appropriate level of teacher training of hybrid and online methodologies and school processes to ensure attendance and accountability (not to mention student engagement) are put in place across all schools.**

Our administrators, teachers, school staff, students and families deserve that we take into account their health, wellness and safety. **We are ohana.** Failure in our decision will not only result in our children not being in school for a longer and indefinite period of time, but people becoming ill and dying. This is too high a price to pay for little to no benefit, especially in light of other and more predictable options (online schooling).

In addition, we need to understand and account for the already current administrator, teacher and substitute shortage. More importantly, a COVID-19 spread within our facilities to our current administrators, teachers and substitutes will heighten the criticality of this shortage.

Let's use this time to correctly consider all facets of this unprecedented situation and put into place a success plan we can all feel and know is in the best interest of all.

Respectfully,



Sheila Buyukacar



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** danyel erickson <danyelerickson@hotmail.com> on behalf of danyel erickson  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:13 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Aloha,

I am writing in regards to the following 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 Danyel Erickson and I am currently employed as a First Grade teacher at Lana'i High and Elementary school. I am very concerned with the opening of our school. While we have been very lucky to have zero Covid 19 cases so far, it only takes one to become a very scary problem. We have a very small community with many vulnerable adults. We do not have any critical care at our hospital and limited amounts of healthcare staff.

Our school does not have a Health Aide. The position is currently vacant leaving us with no one to help monitor or screen potential cases of the virus. We do not have any PPE for staff or students. It was ordered but with such a high demand, it is not probable that it will reach here before August 4. Our school went against our wishes for a blended model and is opening up full face to face with Kindergarten and First grade classes. We are being told to plan on having 14-18 students who are aged 4-6 sit in their chairs all day while wearing a mask and face shield. This is not an age appropriate or engaging learning environment as presented. 95% of staff have not had any distance learning training. I would respectfully recommend the beginning of school be postponed until we reach an effective resolution or we change to a fully distanced learning plan until we are able to provide adequate safety precautions.

Additionally, I would like to address the pay differential in hard to staff areas. Lana'i is a remote island. We have limited resources of food, medicine and everyday products. If our barge fails to dock, that could mean the difference of fresh vegetables and eating canned goods. This is not an easy place to live and many people do not stay long. Without the pay differential, I would not be able to afford to live on Lana'i and continue as a teacher.

Thank you for your time,

Danyel Erickson

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Geena Okata <gnaokata@gmail.com> on behalf of Geena Okata  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:13 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony for Re-opening Schools (There are no magic beans for Kindergarten)

Kindergarten is a playground to catch germs, colds, coughs, and COVID-19. As a Kindergarten teacher going on my 6th year in a row teaching these bright minded 5 year olds, you have all these expectations, but let me share that there are many things that can go very wrong. If you've ever been in a room of 20+ Kindergarteners at the beginning of the school year it gets pretty wild. This is my room and what I experience for the first semester: students who have never been to preschool or been separated from their parent expressing their loud emotional distress, sneezing and coughing out into the open air no matter how many reminders are given, confusion when explaining consequences (aka not understanding these yet), running around and wanting to play tag at anytime, tapping anyone (because they don't know names yet) on your arms, legs, hangs, belly, back, oh my!, and constantly needing to wash their hands and use the restroom.

Please show me how you would take on all these kindergarteners, who at times do not have emotional control and demonstrate how you would support them throughout the day without being able to guide them. You can't, you can't monitor all 20+ kids and ensure that they are safe and socially distancing at all times. How will you ensure families that their child will remain six feet apart when they can barely stay in their seat? They aren't ready, therefore I am not ready. How are my students going to be "ready" for school when most do not even know what school is. There is no such thing as magic and society places such harsh demands on our keiki that are not developmentally ready for school. I am not ready for school, in fact I always experience a cold when school starts even though all the procedures are taught, reinforced constantly, and learned throughout each day.

Challenge yourselves to get into a title one preschool or Kindergarten classroom, because the policies and ideas you have are great for independent older students, but not mine. I need answers, their families need answers, and you are responsible for opening schools. Not teachers and administration. I'd like to conclude with your statement: "We will reopen schools when there are no new COVID cases", what happened to this statement?

Sincerely,  
A Kindergarten Teacher Advocate

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Trevor Teraoka <trevorteraoka@yahoo.com> on behalf of Trevor Teraoka  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:13 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Dear Hawaii State BOE,

I am emailing you this evening in regards to the 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 a College and Career Counselor at Kaiser High School, one of my main responsibilities is to be an advocate for our students. With a limited voice in the decisions that are made in their school, I am committed to be sure that I am supporting them at all costs. Let me assure you that many of us have realized how much we value the culture of high school in Hawaii and the many relationships that are built during this time of their lives. Attending high school physically is what we all hope for, but at what cost? Please realize that we would not be asking for a delay to the start of school unless we were deeply concerned about the consequences that would happen if we're not ready to best support them. Please reconsider your decision to have students physically start coming to school on August 4th knowing that no one is prepared to fully support them during this challenging time for all.

Thank you for taking the time to deliberate and consider the views of everyone during this challenging time. I am confident that you will place the safety of students, teachers, support staff and all of the many individuals that work directly with our students as your top priority when considering the decision to start school for students on August 4th.

Sincerely,

Trevor Teraoka  
Kaiser High School  
College & Career Counselor

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Elvera Kapuniai <elvera.kapuniai@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Elvera Kapuniai  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:17 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony  
**Attachments:** Testimony (E. Kapuniai).docx

Hello,

Attached you will find my testimony on a word document. Thank you very much for your time and consideration in these matters. Mahalo, E. Kapuniai

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.

Name: E. Kapuniai; Special Education Teacher; DOE

Mtg: General/Full Board

Agenda/RE: 1). Stopping/cutting teacher's differential pay 2). Extending DOE school's start day beyond August 4, 2020.

Position: Oppose

To whom it may concern;

July 21, 2020

I would like to start by sharing the fact that I am a full-time SPED teacher and have been employed since 1986. Most of my service years I was an educational assistant working with students with various disabilities. I then became a SPED teacher since 2007 and have worked really hard to get where I am today. It goes without saying that **all** teachers dedicate their precious time; often times after hours and continue to provide our students with an education, nurturing skills, and safety measures beyond our means. We are very dedicated to our jobs and continue to service our students under any and all circumstances. However; not everyone realizes that we work beyond our expectations and for many of us, often having to meet on an instant notice due to IEP timelines, re-evaluations, and initial evaluations just to name a few. If our differential in pay were to be cut back; or any cut backs for that matter were to be considered, this would really play a crucial role in people's outlook on our state system in several ways. Already, living in Hawaii is tough as our cost of living here is quite outrageous and should any cut take place, I foresee individuals having to retire, switch careers, or work at multiple jobs. A pay cut of any sort would be a huge mistake to this workforce who continue to serve our youngsters at a continuous lowest pay in comparison to the rest of the nation. Please consider not having to resort to any cuts in pay in relation to our DOE teachers who have continued to dedicate their time and service under these circumstances for the past decades. Thank you!

Next, I would like to voice my opinion and request in proposing that the state would consider extending the start date of our DOE public schools for several reasons. With the Covid-19 outbreaks among us; particularly daily increasing cases, poses a real concern for many employees, families, colleagues, and students to say the least. It would make a lot of sense to postpone or delay the start of school to allow staff and personnel to be able to be properly trained and better prepared to handle such a large number of individuals under enclosed and close proximity to one another; indoors and outdoors despite plans to lessen the class size via various teaching models. Both my son and I are teachers in the DOE system and therefore we are at an even a greater risk for potentially being contaminated and bringing the risks home to our families and or vice versa. Four days simply does not seem to be enough time to prepare for the "If's". What if one student falls ill in class? What do we do? What if another student does not wash up well after going to the restroom? What if a student decided to share food with a classmate during lunch? All of the "What if's" are truly concerning. Therefore, I believe that it would make a lot of sense to postpone the start date for these reasons and more. Please consider the need to do so. Thank you very much!

Sincerely, E. Kapuniai

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Amy Hinton <ahinton@hawaii.edu> on behalf of Amy Hinton  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:17 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Aloha,

My name is Amy Hinton and I am a teacher at Ka'u High and Pahala Elementary school. As the new school year approaches there are several things that have raised concerns.

First, I would like to address the unclear expectations for teaching during a Pandemic. While I did F2F teaching over summer and managed to keep social distance and masks on for 2.5 hours at a time (with 4 to 5 students), I see many uncertainties with our ability and "know how" to address the many unique experiences we will face during this time.

I wonder how and who will pre-screen for illness. They state visual checks but that seems like a poor protocol since some illness cannot always be seen.

What is protocol to address a child merely coughing in the classroom let alone how to address a covid outbreak at a classroom or school level.

I am also concerned about who will attend to sanitation at my school between group A and group B (we voted on half days and both attendings attending 4x a week). It was stated at a meeting the students could sanitize but that ultimately will fall onto the teacher for lower elementary grade levels. Also, the thoroughness of a kindergarten or even a teenager may be inadequate considering the severity of the pandemic and need for cleanliness.

When do we get time to create online lessons? 45 minutes a day for 2 group rotations and digital learning and enrichment seems insufficient. The prep and grading may take longer than the allotted 225 minutes per week. Many teachers will work beyond contract hours to fulfill this duty as that is the nature of teachers. However, with potential pay cuts this may lead to even more teachers electing to vacate the field. Please don't push us to our limits as we have already been through a challenging end of last year and unsure summer. Teacher burnout will be on the rise with all these additional demands we will face.

It seems that we should stall the opening of schools for a few more weeks to allow for proper training and classroom set up. This time would allow us to become informed and prepared to teach our students. Many colleagues that are at-risk have described grave concern for their health and it seems necessary we protect the physical and mental health of all employees and students involved with the DOE.

Second, the differentials were long fought for to retain teachers at hard to employ schools. KHPES is a unique school in the rural district of Ka'u on the Big Island that services a predominately low-income, migrant, and ELL population. Many of the teachers drive over 70 miles round-trip daily to teach the keiki of Ka'u. The differentials help teachers offset the costs of teaching at a rural and low income school. Please fight for these differentials to be sustained. It is vital for hard to staff schools. While it cannot compare to increasing teacher wages across the board, it does help a bit. Please request other options are exhausted before eliminating this additional pay. Superintendents, administrators, office staff. Etc should all be subject to pay decreases, not just teachers. We can't be the only ones required to afford them.

Mahalo for your time,

Amy Hinton

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Amanda Ybanez <ybanezamanda@yahoo.com> on behalf of Amanda Ybanez  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:17 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Strongly oppose reopening of schools.

These are uncertain times. Even though there are safety protocols and guidelines in place, the virus will still infect many more as is evident still.

That is the ultimate risk. And for some, it could cost them their lives. All are subject to the virus no matter what age. The State should look into and invest on technology and innovative approaches to distance learning. Vaccines and treatments are moving along everyday; keeping our ohanas, kapuna, keiki, our communities healthy and safe is the ultimate priority.

Sadly, we should not bargain away this importance. Education will happen, when it can be guaranteed that learning will not cost anyone their lives.

[Sent from Yahoo mail on Android](#)



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Trent Nakashima <trentnakashima@gmail.com> on behalf of Trent Nakashima  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:17 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

To people in charge,

I am testifying on behalf of the teachers of Hawaii, but mostly for selfish reasons. I am currently a high school English teacher. I will explain a little of my background. I was a construction laborer for nine years prior to being a teacher, luckily working for Hawaiian Dredging during the whole time. I have spent hours in the sun, dirt, wind, and rain with people who at times, act like students who would be too young to be in my class. I have zero regrets because I feel every learning experience is worthwhile, but when times got slow in 2012, I took the advice from my boss who told me, "why don't you go back and do what you went to college for?"

I am a teacher and I often tell my students that this is where I belong. I was put on this Earth to teach. I am used to working hard, so "laziness" is not my MO. However, I understand when things are lopsided and this situation certainly is. Being from a union who got things done, I understand that for one of the first times, this union feels strongly about something. Without protocol in place, I do not feel we can go back and feel totally safe at school. I've been asking since April, "what happens when someone gets Covid?" Someone will get sick, many have already and we are ignorant to think nobody will get it. I am also a football coach and in charge of Educators Rising (Future Teachers of America) and I can't possibly ask any student to take part in either, knowing their odds of catching Covid would intensify. I feel PD's for virtual learning need to take place and distant learning should be an integral part of this years' learning; at least for the first semester. We could start working as teachers with professional development classes and posting lessons and assignments online, but we will need time. Please consider this option.

Thanks for your time,

Trent Nakashima  
Baldwin High School  
9th and 12th grade ELA

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** thai touch <thaitouch.ak@gmail.com> on behalf of thai touch  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:18 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Board of Ed members:

I am writing to let you know how unfair and just wrong it would be to make cuts to shortage differentials. PLEASE reconsider this terrible option. Our teachers should be receiving pay raises not pay cuts!

I am also in complete support of delaying student start date until schools and teachers can better prepare for students, teaching and learning. Schools need time to prepare classrooms with protective equipment that, for many schools, has been order but not even arrived!

We also need to have a phased approach with a plan in place based on criteria , numbers, data, not blind faith all will be ok.

I know I speak for many teachers and parents, do not base your decision on old surveys that are not representative of now or the majority of parents opinions.

We need more planning and discussion that involves the union, teachers AND parents.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Kahea Kauhi <teahk96795@yahoo.com> on behalf of Kahea Kauhi  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:17 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Corona cleaning

I need training to prepare how to be ready when school opens. I do not know what specific things we need to do. I need training.

Thank you, Kahea Kauhi

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Nick Schmid <nickandann.schmid@gmail.com> on behalf of Nick Schmid  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:18 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Written Testimony 6 ft. Spacing Mandate

To Whom it May Concern:

We have four daughters registered to attend Barbers Point Elementary School next month. We believe the 6 foot spacing of students with mask use is good minimum for prevention. This is with the understanding that kids are kids and will not be 100% compliant during the day. Per the CDC recommendation, all of the desks should face forward in the same direction and meals should be served in the classroom.

Please mandate that our schools practice 6 foot spacing and do not allow for exemptions, with the understanding that the recommendations are for groups of 10 or less. There was a lot of science, research, effort and thought that went into these guidelines. We do not think it is in the best interest of our children and community to bypass them.

Sincerely,

Nick and Ann Schmid

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Wendi Keanu <wendikeanu@gmail.com> on behalf of Wendi Keanu  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:20 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Training/Protocols

Aloha BOE Members

Training/Protocols

1. Who will be taking student/staff temperature checks besides the school health nurse, there are parents who drop their child(ren) the earliest 6:15am we have six entrances to our campus, how will each of these locations be monitored? Will all staff be trained to know the cold, flu, COVID 19 symptoms and take temperature checks? Will staff be held liable if a symptom is misdiagnosed?
2. What if a student comes with a medical note not required to wear a mask, and an accompanying parent who walks around with no mask on as well, what is the Protocol for the protection of the health and safety of the classroom and outside common areas?
3. What will recess time look like? How will bathroom time be monitored, as well as the bathroom, sink handles, lights after each time it's used?
4. Who will accompany students to the lunchroom, and supervise them?
5. Will schools have a Contact Tracer in the event a staff member or student who has contracted COVID 19 to do tracing and notify those who were in immediate contact?
6. Will there be any training any staff member contracts COVID 19 while employed at school besides quarantine, for payroll purposes are we required to use our sick leave, would this qualify for Workman Comp or is there another type of leave for non-classified staff?
7. Will there be any virtual training for parents to help their child(ren) to adjust to school, wearing masks, social distancing? Many campuses do have ESL students whose parent primary language is not English, how will these families be reached?

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Patrick Lau <patrick.lau@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Patrick Lau  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:19 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Hi, my name is Patrick Lau and I am a SPED teacher at Likelike Elementary. I wrote a testimony a couple weeks ago and I am here to testify on Discussion Item VI(A). I am very concerned about the safety of myself, the EAs and other adults that work with the SPED students and my students regarding Covid 19. It's a couple weeks before school starts and I want to know what safety measures are put in place for SPED. We are very different than Gen Ed and so far, it seems like the SPED concerns haven't been addressed. What policies and procedures are there going to be in place to make sure we are doing everything we can to keep our students and fellow educators safe? What resources are the schools getting so we can purchase the necessary safety items such as pixie glass or equipment to do temperature checks or electronics so our students can do online learning if needed? Please advise and help keep our Keiki and teachers safe during this crisis. Thank you!

Pat

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Sherene Hong <sherenehong@hotmail.com> on behalf of Sherene Hong  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:20 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 Sherene, and I am a teacher at Ka'a'awa Elementary School. As a teacher, I do not feel comfortable going back face to face, all day with students in the classroom. There is a lack of clarity of a written guidance from the State of Hawaii's Department of Health provide on the reopening of school buildings, which the HIDOE agreed to. I have many questions about the distant learning that teachers are supposed to provide because I was not notified how that will be possible at school, especially when not all students have a laptop or working internet at their home. Our school has very little funding as well, so will DOE provide us with the money to support all students who are choosing distant learning? Will DOE provide students with laptops and internet? Are all schools receiving extra cleaning supplies and other necessities to make it safe for students and STAFF members to return to school safely? I would hope that the state and federal government will be sending extra money to help us keep safe and protect us since we interact with many students closely every day. It is not acceptable that there isn't a clear guideline ready nor extra supplies and equipment to keep everyone safe at school. Teachers have so many questions that are not answered, and the Covid case numbers are the same or nearly the same as we were in lock down. I don't understand how it is acceptable to reopen while cases continue to increase and there are no major changes or clear plan how to reopen schools other than extra hand washing and 6ft distancing.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Susan Shinkawa <20051935@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Susan Shinkawa  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:21 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Concerns about returning to school

Thank you for allowing me to share my concerns about returning back to school.

One major concern I have is I have not been formally and properly trained to safely perform my job at schools. I am a behavioral health specialist that provides counseling to identified students in multiple schools. My services consist of individual and group counseling, in-class support, consultation, and crisis interventions. Reading the DOE Health and Safety Handbook July 2020 does not clearly state what I need to do to keep students, staff and myself safe while doing my job. The guidelines on that handbook appears generic and not specific to my position.

Will I be formally and properly trained to safely perform my job before August 4? At this rate, I am not too confident that I will.

Other concerns like if I have the option to provide virtual telehealth/counseling during this upcoming school year instead of doing face to face and who's going to enforce all these restrictions (e.g., physical distancing, hygiene, screening, etc.).

I know that returning back to school is vital for our students' mental health. I want students to return back to school. I want to return back to school. Our students deserve and has the right to learn in a safe environment. Let's make sure that we do that!

Thank you,

Susan Shinkawa  
Behavioral Health Specialist  
School Based Behavioral Health  
Leeward District-Hawaii State Department of Education

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Norma Combs <ncombslotus@gmail.com> on behalf of Norma Combs  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:22 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Delay reopening of schools

Please help us. I am afraid to go back and teach my students for fear of contracting the virus. I am at a disadvantage with diabetes, kidney problems and a care giver to a 93 year old father. Can you guarantee my safety? If not please delay school openings. Mahalo for your help. NORMA COMBS

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Karen L <kloebl10@gmail.com> on behalf of Karen L  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:22 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Please delay reopening schools for the safety of all

Aloha,

Please delay reopening schools to provide more time to prepare and implement safety measures for students (the multigenerational families they live with), faculty, and staff. Amidst double digit spikes of covid, and returning to schools too soon, this might create a risky environment for many students, staff, and families to get sick. Please consider protecting your students and staff which in turn affects the community at-large. Some staff and faculty members, or even students, may have underlying health conditions or be taking care of, or living with, elderly family members. I support the HSTA's urging of delaying the opening of schools until proper safety measures can be evaluated and implemented as well as possible learning alternatives be considered. We live in extraordinary times which deserve creative and complex solutions. I ask that you consider pushing back the reopening of schools until after Labor Day or until each school is ready according to certain safety guidelines and requirements. Mahalo nui for highly considering this request for the safety of all.

Aloha nui, Karen LoebL

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Beth Pasternak <bpasternak10@gmail.com> on behalf of Beth Pasternak  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:22 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Pay Cut-No Way!!!

Aloha,

I am writing to you in regards to your recent announcement of possibly taking back educators differentials. I have been a special education math teacher at Lahainaluna High School on Maui for the past 6 years. During that time I have also worked a second job as a nanny to supplement my income to make sure I am able to pay all of my bills at the end of the month. Between groceries, gas, and rent there is very little left over for savings at the end of the month, even working 2 jobs.

When I moved to Hawaii from New York in July of 2014, I took a \$10,000 pay cut. I have taken PD classes and even started the process of completing national board certification to increase my income. However, it is still not enough. I feel as an educator I deserve to be able to support my family and have a house here in Hawaii without working 2 jobs.

Being an educator is one of the most rewarding and challenging jobs to have. Since the start of this epidemic I have been working nonstop to make sure that my students know that I am here and I care for them. I have made multiple phone calls, text messages, videos on google classroom, and emails to all of my parents and students just to check in to see how they are doing. As a special education teacher, I have a caseload of 12 students that I have been in contact with and help support. I also have about 150 students in my inclusion and specialized instruction classes that I'm used to seeing daily. I have only made contact with about 50%. Not making contact with the other 50% of my students causes me a lot of worry. I only think it's fair to keep our salaries as they are as we are all continuously working day in and day out to show support for our students.

I hope you seriously reconsider cutting funds for education, especially during a time where we are essential!

Sincerely,  
Elizabeth Pasternak  
Special Education Mathematics Teacher  
Lahainaluna High School

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Angela Corpuz <acorpuz5612@gmail.com> on behalf of Angela Corpuz  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:23 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** EXTEND SCHOOL FOR THE KIDS

ALOHA

I am a parent on Maui and I have 2 children who attends public school. 1 elementary & 1 in high school. I am an essential worker, that works full time. As a concerned parent, and with Covid 19 cases still rising, I do not feel that it is safe for schools to open in August 4.

Also, I have a sister who has been a public school teacher for 10 years has been informing me that teachers (including her) are at an all time burn out due to schools reopening and teachers not having the proper training for distance learning and safety measures in place for schools to reopen.

What happens if a student in one of my daughter's class is tested positive for Covid?

What will happen to my daughters "Ohana group?"

Again, I am an essential worker and I am not sure if I can have my youngest daughter, who is going to be in 1st grade, be full time distance learning?

I'm thinking for the safety of my family. I Strongly feel that opening schools on August 4 should not happen. It seems that most teachers may not be ready, protocols are not in place, and with the rise in cases, it simply is not safe.

Mahalo,

The Corpuz Ohana

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Dean Alip <waimanu36@gmail.com> on behalf of Dean Alip  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:23 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Cuts to Shortage Differentials  
**Attachments:** July 21, 2020.pdf

Aloha Kakou,

I hope all is well. Attached is testimony regarding proposed shortage differentials.

July 21, 2020

Aloha Kakou,

I hope everyone is well. My name is Dean Alip and I will be entering my 28th year as a Department of Education educator.

Mahalo for providing educators an opportunity to express our concerns regarding the proposed cuts to "shortage differentials". This proposal is demoralizing as I have been through similar disappointments regarding salary issues in the past. However, this possible reduction in pay hurts even more as I have already received a contract indicating that this pay differential would be applied during the upcoming school year. It makes me question the term "contract" and how I along with many other teachers will do our best to serve the students of our communities regardless of the compensation that is received.

I experience great difficulty not providing my very best for our students on a daily basis. Why does the department make decisions that do not provide the best for their employees? I feel extremely disrespected and underappreciated. In this trying time, I feel that the department needs to keep their employees motivated. We will be entering the "front lines" within two weeks and need confidence and positive momentum. Taking away "shortage differentials" does just the opposite.

Bottom line, money motivates and creates accountability for "great" educators. It creates a sense of responsibility to perform at a higher level and strive for excellence. The department should realize that they are blessed because they will get the best from many educators on the "front lines" no matter what type of compensation is received, I just wish they would give their best as well.

Mahalo nui loa,

Dean Alip

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Stephanie Young <stephstores@hotmail.com> on behalf of Stephanie Young  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:23 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Aloha Members of the BOE,

I am a third grade 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.

Yesterday I received an email survey from my principal asking me my preference for teaching this year. I have three choices to prioritize on a 1 to 3 scale: Do I prefer to 1) teach 100% distance for the parents who are opting for 100% distance learning, 2) teach the hybrid model with half of my students face to face while the other half is "distance learning" and 3) teach face to face five days a week with the vulnerable population(Special Education, 504, and ELL students with some general education students to be determined) who need to be at school five days a week.

Choosing option 1 or 2 both involve online teaching. I have not received any training or guidance from my school about what official platform I will use or guidelines. Am I required to live stream while I am teaching? Is it a blend of asynchronous and synchronous instruction? The only assistance for online teaching I've received is a few emails with links to a couple of Google Education/Classroom webinars. So the Superintendent's statement that teachers are being trained is misleading. I found several online trainings and have joined several teacher support groups to train myself on programs that I might use with my students for distance learning as the DOE has not providing training. However, I have no idea if our school will adopt or approve these programs. Will I have professional judgement in how I teach online/distance learning with programs I have found to be effective for online learning (Pear Deck, Near Pod etc) or will I be told on our first day back to school which programs I will have to learn in a short amount of time before students return? Teachers need training with adequate time to learn the programs prior to the students returning. We do not have a virtual learning curriculum or official guidelines however states like California are providing guidelines for their teachers.

Choosing option 3 requires me to teach face to face 5 days a week. So while this doesn't pose the challenges of distance learning it has another challenge: I do not know what protocols will be in place to keep my students and I safe. Especially in reference to mask wearing. The vulnerable population of students have a percent that may not be required to wear masks at school for a variety of valid reasons. So if I am exposed to the virus from a student by choosing this option, I do not know what the protocol is. We have a system for sending a sick child to the health room but that does not address the issue of what will happen if someone in the "Ohana Bubble" tests positive or what happens to the students and adults on a school campus if a student, teacher, or other school employee, test positive for COVID-19? Will a teacher that must be quarantined still be paid? What if it is determined that a student tests positive, will the school be quarantined, or will just the people/students that are in that students' building be quarantined or just the students' classroom/ohana bubble? Who determines this? What if I get sick do I receive workman's comp? Do I have to use my personal leave?

In addition, I do not think the proper steps have been addressed to keep teachers and students safe as we return back to school because at this time masks "should" be worn. We do not have any guidelines for exceptions to mask wearing or protocols for enforcement. It seems it is up to the teacher whether or not face

coverings are worn. This is a challenge as one teacher might require masks and one may not. This opens up possible volatile relationships between teachers and parents that may not agree one way or the other. It is not appropriate for teachers to make a judgement call of whether masks are required in their classrooms. We need a protocol for this to keep everyone safe.

I'd like to be able to answer my principal's survey and choose a first, second, and third option but with so many unknowns, I am at a loss. We need more time to have these concerns addressed. Please consider pushing our start date back until these issues are resolved.

Thank you for your time and consideration,  
Stephanie

Sent from my iPhone



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Summer Tan <summer.tan@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Summer Tan  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:23 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

To whom it may concern,

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 Summer Tan. I am a first grade teacher at Salt Lake Elementary School. I am uncomfortable with returning to work on Tuesday, August 4, 2020. Let me tell you why.

First off, please know that I truly do love my job. I love teaching and I love my students. A huge part of me cannot wait to go back into the classroom and be with my students. However, I would hate to walk into an environment where we do not feel safe. It's not right. It's not fair.

Therefore, I feel that we simply need more time. Please give us more time to properly create and implement health strategies that will mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Teachers, administrators, and faculty have been inundated with so many different challenges because of this virus. We have been asked to completely change everything that we do in order to ensure the health and safety of ourselves and our students. A lot of careful planning goes into ensuring this safe environment for us all and therefore, we simply need more time.

Why? I do not want this virus to spread anymore then it already has. I do not want to bring this virus home. I have a one year old son and a father who is immunocompromised and already suffers from a respiratory disease. Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony.

--

**Summer Tan (Grade 1 Teacher)**

Salt Lake Elementary School

(808) 305-1600

[www.saltlakeeshawaii.org](http://www.saltlakeeshawaii.org)

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Jennifer Reale <jennifer.reale@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Jennifer Reale  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:24 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Dear Board of Education,

My name is Jennifer Reale. 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 5th grade teacher at Makakilo Elementary School. My husband is also a teacher at Mauka Lani Elementary School. Our eldest of three children, Luca, will be entering kindergarten this school year at Mauka Lani Elementary School.

Today was one of two days that I participated in volunteer professional development regarding virtual/distance learning. Unsurprisingly, most of our teachers participated in person or via zoom because we have had no official training in this area. I am thankful to our admin who brought in these amazing instructors to our school, but it was glaringly obvious within the first hour of the first day that we were now being tasked with reinventing our entire mode of educating students. It's like asking Bob Ross (the famous PBS landscape artist) to do his artwork and TV show...but blindfolded. He's good enough that he could do it and I bet you he would be up for the challenge, but the quality of his work would be nowhere near what it could be. Amongst my colleagues and I, it was never an issue of not wanting to do virtual/distance learning. We are up for the challenge and more than willing to do it. Instead, the issue is how to get our google classroom's set up in time for the first day of school. With the August 4 deadline looming, it is possible, but the quality of work will not be there. That is for certain.

As of today, I'm still trying to figure out how to space out my student desks and furniture to provide 6 feet of spacing, let alone how to do virtual/distance learning indefinitely. To give you perspective, my colleagues and I spent a good hour and a half just trying to figure out the details of what Day 1 of in-school teaching would be like. We spent another hour and a half trying to figure out what Day 1 of virtual/distance learning would be like. Including weekends, we now have 12 calendar days to put together this entirely new system. That is not enough time for teachers to produce quality work.

One other aspect of the challenges we currently face is that teachers are not islands of their own. We need to collaborate with our colleagues. This type of collaborative planning requires constant adjustments, rethinking, and replanning. This requires time. Twelve calendar days are not enough.

We are in a race against time. The health aspect of this situation is still very unclear. I come from a family of teachers. My husband, sister, brother in law, sister in law, and cousin in law are all teachers. We all have different schedules and health protocols in place based on our school. Teachers are coming up with their own ways to keep themselves and their students safe based on common sense and whatever reliable information is out there such as the CDC and AAP. My auntie, who is a nurse practitioner, has provided me with homemade cloth masks and a plexi glass partition. That says a lot! None of these safeguards are being provided for me or teachers. Every man for himself. That's not a very safe or reassuring work environment.

As a mother of a child entering the public school system in Hawaii amidst this pandemic, I fear for the health and safety of my child and our family. I also am deeply concerned about the quality of education he will get.

The public school system in Hawaii was not meant to be done virtually or socially distant. During this unprecedented time, however, this is the best option we have for our students' education while trying to keep them healthy and safe. We need more planning time to deliver the best quality education for our students as well as shore up our health guidelines and protocols.

I implore the BOE to delay the start of students returning to school.

Humbly,  
Jennifer Reale

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** ms buck <msmbuck29@yahoo.com> on behalf of ms buck  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:24 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.](#)

Please reconsider the student report date. We are NOT ready to start school.

Thank you,  
Michelle Buck  
Na`alehu Elementary School

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Melinda Ahn <melindaahn@hawaii.rr.com> on behalf of Melinda Ahn  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:26 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Aloha,

I am very concerned about returning to school especially as the number of cases soar.

Many schools on the mainland like California are not going back to in person school. There needs to be continuity of all schools. Why if it's not safe in California is it safe in Hawai'i?

The CDC hasn't even come out with a clear plan. First they said it was safe and then they said "Wait while we figure it out!"

With so many infected, and very sick why are we taking chances? With such a wealth of technology why aren't we using it?

Teachers should be trained on Distance learning! Not all teachers are trained in how to teach using technology. Teachers need to be trained in technical learning.

If we should become sick and pass it to our family many multigenerational homes could involve hospitalizations or even death. Is the DOE going to support these families paying for healthcare or for funerals? If a teacher with a young child dies is the DOE going to support those children?

We need clear guidelines! Some schools in affluent areas created beautiful outdoor areas protected from rain but natural air circulates. These were funded by parents and local businesses. Not all schools have the means. It isn't fair that they would be safer than poorer schools.

We are underpaid and overworked and now we are asked to risk our lives.

I feel we need clearer guidelines from the CDC and the DOE.

I do not feel safe!

Melinda Ahn MEd

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Kuulei Serafina <pulelehuahoni@gmail.com> on behalf of Kuulei Serafina  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:26 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Board of Education Members,

My name is Serina Souza. I work on Maui as a District Registered Behavioral Technician. I have worked since June directly with students with Autism in person. I haven't received the training I keep hearing about. I feel a training or meeting regarding COVID-19 needs to be provided for RBT's and Paraprofessionals. We are on the frontlines. RBT's need to be less than a foot away from students. That doesn't allow for social distancing. And, I encounter students who bite and spit.

I have a sickly Mom at home who can't afford to get COVID-19. It literally could kill her but I can't afford not to work.

I feel the BOE/DOE needs to provide Face Shields and Masks.

Thank you!

Aloha,  
Serina Souza  
(808) 359 - 4693

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Lea Minton <lea.tiare@gmail.com> on behalf of Lea Minton  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:27 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Dear Board of Education,

I'm asking you to delay the start of public school so teachers can be more properly trained in the online platforms they'll be using for instruction. We want to ensure they can utilize it well before the children start.

Concerned public member,  
Le'a Minton  
Hau'ula, 96717

Sent with aloha

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Mary Ryan <ryanmk17@gmail.com> on behalf of Mary Ryan  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:28 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Dear Board of Education:

My name is Mary Ryan and I am a teacher at Ala Wai Elementary School and has a child who will be starting Kindergarten this year. I am writing to testify on Action Item H. Board on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

I am writing because I am 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"<sup>[1]</sup>. 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.
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 I feel comfortable teaching under the current conditions, much less sending my child to school to be exposed.

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

1. A distance-only online class option for all schools;
2. Delaying the opening of schools until at least 4 weeks have passed with no Covid cases in our state
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.

I 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 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,

Mary Ryan  
Special Education Teacher  
Ala Wai Elementary



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Michelle Umipeg <michelle.umipeg@gmail.com> on behalf of Michelle Umipeg  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:28 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Aloha,

My name is Michelle Umipeg 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.

My son graduated from Kalani High School this year. Although he, among his fellow seniors, did not get to experience prom, graduation, and Project Graduation, I am glad they were all safe from exposure to COVID-19 due to the decision to close schools and offer distance learning. This decision was made before we had more than 20 cases a day.

I believe school should be delayed; our state is simply not ready to open up schools due to the consistent number COVID-19 cases we have a day (more than 20). We would be putting teachers, staff, and students at risk. Poor ventilation as well as the possibility that students are unable to comply with mask-wearing (especially younger students) will increase the chances of students, teachers, and staff contracting COVID-19. Who will be paying for disinfecting and sanitizing materials? What will happen if a teacher or student contracts COVID-19? Will the whole class be under quarantine? If a teacher contracts COVID-19, will that come out of their sick pay? What happens if the teachers run out of sick days?

I believe the state of Hawai'i and the Board of Education should delay the opening of school buildings to students. They need more time to strategize and implement safe protocols for the school community.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,  
Michelle Umipeg

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Angie Miyashiro <terqu2004@yahoo.com> on behalf of Angie Miyashiro  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:30 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Differentials

Please please keep our differentials. I teach in a small rural school on the bottom of the Big Island. Often we use our own money to help our students and many of us travel 50-100 miles every day to be at our school. We also have trouble keeping teachers because of cost of travel as well as our kids are awesome but challenging. I have not in my 20 years of teaching not held at least two jobs so I could make ends meet. I love my school and would not want to leave because I could not afford it. Please help us. Thank you Dr. Angie Miyashiro

[Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android](#)

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Bozo Clown <nelsonmaeda@yahoo.com> on behalf of Bozo Clown  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:30 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony - postpone opening of school due to DOE not having a clear plan of action

We as Teachers bargaining unit 5, have not received any info. on safety plan of action when school starts. There is mass confusion on many what if situation occurs. I will be utilizing Sick Leave till the DOE & Kishimoto get their act together. If need be, I will retire before returning back to school w/o safety ;precautions.

Nelson Maeda  
Counselor  
Castle HS  
45-386 Kaneohe Bay Dr.  
Kaneohe, HI. 96744  
305-0820

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Brittney Caminos-Kekahuna <brittney\_camk24@yahoo.com> on behalf of Brittney Caminos-Kekahuna  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:31 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** TESTIMONY

What's running through my mind right now is, how are they going to be able to control the environment IF someone at the school tests positive. They say the kids stay in one class like a bubble & the contact will minimize the amount of infections. WRONG! I'll have 2 kids going to school this year, both different grades. If one child's classmate tests positive, they are not only infecting they kids in there classroom.. they are infecting there classmates siblings & family. What if some kids have multiple families living under one roof? They'll infect those families & the list will go on & on because you decided in this SHORT amount of time that you want kids to go in an environment where they could easily catch this virus. Kids get sick all the time & it's mostly from other kids at school. What makes you think you'll have control of this virus from spreading.

& not only that.. If one child tests positive, there going to shut the school down ANYWAYS & we're back to distance learning.. When distancing learning should've been the option in the first place. But I also understand that teaching through a computer is hard but that's going to happen eventually because the cases are going up everyday. So let's control it NOW & keep the kids home. They are the main ones that are most vulnerable to spreading the virus. You're not considering other options for children that have underline health issues. My children are asthmatic. Them wearing a mask for a long period of time can trigger there asthma/respiratory distress. Mom

With that being said, I don't feel safe sending my child back to school. & I support the teachers request at delaying school from reopening. These teachers care about the safety of everyone. You send these children back to school, who knows where they've been or who they've been in contact with before they stepped foot campus. You're playing with our children's well-being as well as the teachers. I have a toddler at home that has asthma as well. I can't have all my children put at risk. It's easy for you guys to say, "Let's Reopen" without a specific protocol to follow. Teachers aren't prepared.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Tanya Hall <tanyaleihall@gmail.com> on behalf of Tanya Hall  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:31 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** OPEN SCHOOLS ASAP

Good evening BOE. I support the HIDOE and BOE opening schools on the scheduled date of August 4th. Please study and look at the science data of COVID-19. The survival rate of someone contracting COVID is in the high 90%.....we don't need to shut our schools down any longer. Our students need to get back to school and HIDOE employees need to get back to work. This is NOT a pandemic as the mainstream media paints it to be. Dr. Anderson and Dr. Park as well as our LT. Governor Josh Green feel it is safe for students to return to school. Safety measures are in place and we need to implement the safety measures set-up. OPEN SCHOOLS ASAP!!!!

Sincerely,  
Tanya Hall  
HGEA Unit 6 Member

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** J Washington <jwashington333@gmail.com> on behalf of J Washington  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:31 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Concerns for Reopening of school

My name is Julie Washington and I work for the Kauai School District. I, as many others are very concerned for the health and well being of the students and staff when returning to school. What precautions are we taking to ensure the safety of everyone involved. As we all know just trying to live in our daily lives is difficult enough so when the reopening of the school happens what next. As a staff member I am very worried for myself and everyone around me. We haven't been trained properly in these situations, we haven't been given any direction in case of an outbreak, we have minimal PPE supplies which are a big necessity and the list goes on. What are our plans for these situations? I have worked in many areas of the school and have a big concern in all aspects. We as staff members can only do so much. Are we going to get enough support in the arise of an outbreak? Will anyone be screening our students to check if they are sick by taking their temperature or will we trust that their parents will take precaution and ensure that the staff and other students will be safe? I am also a parent who is taking every precaution for my child and not putting them in that situation. I think if we came up with a better plan and more training we would be ready for this situation instead of just throwing us in to a dangerous situation. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Julie Washington

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** CHANTEL-VANESSA N K KAAIKAULA <ohanakaaikaula.waihee@gmail.com> on behalf of CHANTEL-VANESSA N K KAAIKAULA  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:31 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony to delay start of 2020-2021 School year

Aloha, please take my concerns into consideration. As a parent of 2 children, one in high school and the other in elementary school, also my husband is a middle school teacher so naturally I have quite a few concerns and reservations in sending my children back to school and having my husband return to his classroom. I believe social distancing in close quarters such as the classroom, especially portables, office, health room, locker rooms, et cetera isn't ideal.

Valid concerns regarding upcoming 2020-2021 school year.

- 1) Will teachers/campus staff have an ample amount of time to sufficiently be trained on CoViD-19 safety protocols to be 100% prepared for returning to school?
- 2) Will the State provide schools with an adequate supply of PPE and sanitising products for students, staff and campus employees for the duration of the school year?
- 3) Will teachers and students have complete access to equipment, material, et cetera to successfully complete virtual lessons?
- 4) Will the State provide additional staff to provide temperature screening for all staff members/campus employees and students upon entering campus like they do for screening inbound/outbound travelers at the airports?
- 5) Can the State provide any guarantee that the opening of schools this Fall WILL NOT have dire consequences which may cause the entire State to go into a complete lock down?
- 6) Will kid bus riders be temperature screened prior to boarding the bus?

Additional concerns:

By: Yours truly

- 1) The State pushed back trans-Pacific arrivals to September 1, the same should be done for the opening of schools.
- 2) Schools should remain closed until Hawai'i sees ZERO +CoViD-19 active self-quarantine and hospitalised cases for 4 consecutive weeks.
- 3) What happens to the Teacher's Duty-Free lunch if students are to have their lunch in class?

By: Bon-e May

- 1) If someone tests positive in the classroom will the whole class need to quarantine? Will the teacher need to use their own sick days to quarantine?
- 2) At the secondary level who will sanitize between each period of classes?
- 3) Where is the funds going to come from to ensure a safe and healthy learning environment because asking families to provide any sanitation products as part of the school supply list is wrong in so many levels?

In closing, at the end of the day, the fact remains that until Teachers, campus staff and other employees, students, parents, the community and other people/businesses that have direct contact to the school are 100% confident that schools are a safe haven for all, schools should remain closed until Hawai'i sees ZERO +CoViD-19 active self-quarantine and hospitalised cases for 4 consecutive weeks.

Me ka mahalo,  
Ka 'Ohana Ka'aikaula

Wahi noho leka: P.O. Box 2788 Wailuku, Hawai'i 96793  
Kelepona 'o Chāntel-Vanessa: 1 (808) 280-7376  
Kelepona 'o Kama: 1 (808) 357-8465  
Leka uila: [ohanakaaikaula.waihee@gmail.com](mailto:ohanakaaikaula.waihee@gmail.com)

GO GREEN: REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE. MĀLAMA OUR 'AINA, THINK BEFORE YOU PRINT.

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE: The information contained in this communication, including any attachments, is confidential and intended for the sole use of the recipient(s) addressed above and may be legally privileged and exempt from disclosure and otherwise protected by applicable law. Any unauthorized review, use, copy, disclosure or distribution of this communication is strictly prohibited. If you have received this communication in error, please contact the sender by reply email and destroy the original communication and all copies. Opinions, conclusions and other information in this communication unrelated to our official business, should not be understood as neither given nor endorsed by Chāntel-Vanessa, Kama Ka'aikaula, children and immediate 'ohana in household.



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Irene Garrison <[igarrison56@gmail.com](mailto:igarrison56@gmail.com)> on behalf of Irene Garrison  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:31 PM  
**To:** [testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov](mailto:testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Delaying the start of school

I would like to add..

I fully understand and can come to grips with the idea of a new normal being 20 cases in Hawai'i per day. What I cannot come to grips with is the DOE saying we teachers are being trained and schools are being provided PPE for staff and students. As someone on the frontlines, I can tell you.. this is NOT true. If we are going to reopen, then the employer (DOE) needs to provide the basic supplies we (students and staff) need to stay safe. This is why I feel we are not ready. We have not been trained on distance learning or health and safety routines, and we do NOT have the proper equipment to stay safe.

Thank you,  
Irene G.

----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** Irene Garrison <[igarrison56@gmail.com](mailto:igarrison56@gmail.com)>  
**Date:** Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 7:36 PM  
**Subject:** Delaying the start of school  
**To:** <[testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov](mailto:testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov)>

Dear BOE Members,

I am a second grade teacher at a school on the Big Island. I want to thank you for deferring approving our MOU until 6 feet distance and masks were further discussed. As I prepare to return to my classroom (which I miss dearly), I am unnerved at how many unanswered questions there are from all levels. Much of what I see on TV being portrayed as "the plan" is NOT what is happening on the ground level and on the front lines. I deeply feel that to open with the best chance to keep our keiki and communities safe, we need more time. Schools, teachers, and parents need more time. We need more time to make our plans and share those plans with our families. Teachers need more time to set up their classrooms and adjust to the new "norm" being thrown at them. The level of stress is HIGH. The unknowns are overwhelming and we teachers need more time. The cases skyrocketing on the mainland are also a concern. I believe we are blessed here on the Big Island to have such few cases, but I don't have confidence in the numbers. If numbers go up, we will quickly need to adjust and teachers need time to train and prepare for that. My team and I have been meeting non-stop over the summer to prepare for online and face to face classes, and I still don't feel it is enough. Please consider delaying the start of school to allow teachers and schools (who have always been entrusted with the well-being of our keiki) time to practice routines and protocols. Please consider delaying the start of school so parents can make childcare arrangements - rather than having to do so with one week notice (from when the school officially announces their plan details to when school starts). Please consider delaying the start of school so teachers can prepare and be ready to safely welcome back the students they have missed over these last few months. We are not ready to safely and appropriately reopen schools.

Thank you,  
Irene G.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Angela Cain <cain.angela.r@gmail.com> on behalf of Angela Cain  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:33 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

The following is testimony for 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.

This email is to urge the Board of Education to delay the opening of school buildings until teachers and staff members have ample time to prepare for a safe, methodical return to the classroom. Currently, teachers have not been provided written guidelines as agreed upon in the memorandum of understanding on how to implement health strategies to keep our students and staff safe at school. We need more time to train and prepare our classrooms. Additionally, the online component of the school models is unclear. There are no guidelines for which programs to use, how much student/teacher support is available, or how progress will be measured. With only a few weeks to go until August 4, 2020, teachers are feeling rushed, and still have many unanswered questions. Parents/guardians also have many questions and need to be aware of all options for educating their child as well as what school policy and procedures are specific to COVID-19 to make the best decisions for their 'ohanas. Please do not rush the opening of school buildings; set schools up for success by making the health of staff, keiki and their 'ohanas the number one priority.

Respectfully,  
Angela Cain, Special Education, Kauai

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Lisa Ebinger <lisaebinger@gmail.com> on behalf of Lisa Ebinger  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:33 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 Lisa and I am a 3rd grade teacher at Mililani Ike Elementary School.

I have so many questions that I would like answered before the start of the school year. Can you please help me answer these questions?

These past few months, my family and I have been socially distancing ourselves and avoiding contact with many people, so tell me, is it safe to collect pieces of papers (homework, important forms, etc.) from 20+ children who have had their parent's sign?

Is it ok to let students borrow books in the classroom? I had to look at the state public library system for guidance on how to handle this (they quarantine their books for 3 days before allowing others to borrow). Why was I not trained for this? Is it the same for homework then? Should students turn in papers and I should not touch it for 3 days before correcting it?

How can the "Ohana Bubble" be effective if my class ("ohana") is with each other for 6 hours out of the day, yet each student goes home to their individual families who have also come in contact with others for the remaining 18 hours of the day? How is that safe for me and everyone in my class to be OK with taking off our masks?

Recently it was reported on the news that one police officer was diagnosed with Covid, so 90 other officers are now on leave. How many Covid-positive students will it take for schools to shut down again?

Why isn't the community being informed of this "Ohana Bubble"? I can't see it being effective if families don't take responsibility on their end.

How do I be sure that I am not bringing home Covid to my own family at the end of the day? Can we get advice on this?

How will we contact trace students if there are only 8 bathrooms in my building with about 400+ students in the building?

How often will my room be sanitized?

Is it just my school that hasn't addressed these issues? It sounds like many other teachers have similar questions and concerns too.

If DOE claims that teachers were offered opportunities for training to teach during a pandemic, please provide evidence of any training for teachers at my school.

Bottom line: Teachers need time to discuss and plan so that we know how to better prepare for teaching during a pandemic. I have never been offered any type of training to do this and I can't see my colleagues and I being trained in just 4 days before students arrive. I don't feel safe and I worry that I will do what I normally do pre-pandemic days and that'll be it - another shut down.

Lisa

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Marybeth Baldwin <marybethhamilton808@gmail.com> on behalf of Marybeth Baldwin  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:34 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** School reopening- DELAY for students

Hello BOE members,

I am writing to you as both a teacher and a parent of a child in the DOE. As much as I want my child to return to school, I know firsthand that **teachers and schools are not ready for students to return to physical campuses**. Teachers have not been trained on many things that would be necessary for a return to campus-- monitoring health, making sure classrooms are clean, figuring out how to teach with PPE, helping students with PPE, etc. In addition, many other questions about what happens if there's a positive COVID test in a classroom have not been answered. These questions include the larger impact on families of the students and teacher in that classroom, including issues of leave, hiring a sub, transition to distance learning, etc.

Teachers have 4 days of training (2 administration-directed and 2 teacher-directed) before students are currently expected to return to campus. It would make a lot more sense to **delay the reopening of campuses** for at least a few weeks to allow teachers to be trained and school buildings to be prepped. If we need to add time onto the end of the school year, so be it.

Thank you for your time,  
Marybeth Baldwin

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Aubrie Morrell <aubrie.morrell@gmail.com> on behalf of Aubrie Morrell  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:35 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Reopening Schools

Aloha,

My name is Aubrie Morrell Morris. I work in the Maui DOE Canoe Complex area. I am emailing questions related to my growing concern for myself, my family, students, colleagues, families, and the community under the circumstances of expecting plans for schools to reopen. Some questions that I have include:

What type of PPE will be provided for employees and students?  
Who will screen employees, students and visitors for signs of illness?  
What will be screening procedures and how frequently will they be completed (daily, etc.)?  
Will staff be properly trained by Aug. 4?  
How will the training be conducted, so that all related providers and contracted personnel receive the appropriate training within a short period of time before the expected reopening of Aug. 4?  
How will safety measures at the school level be monitored for compliance?  
Who and how will fidelity of safety procedure implementation be conducted?  
How will frequently used school equipment and materials be sanitized, what is the expected schedule for such sanitary procedures, and who is responsible for such?  
How will school meals be provided?  
Who is monitoring these rules are enforced?  
Who will supervise students during meal periods?  
What is the plan when someone at the school tests positive for COVID-19?  
How will physical distancing be enforced?  
What are reporting procedures for observed safety practice concerns and how will violation reports be handled?

I appreciate your time and attention to providing answers to these questions during the BOE general meeting on July 23rd.

Be Well,

--

Aubrie Morrell Morris M.S., CCC-SLP  
Speech Language Pathologist  
King Kamehameha III Elementary School

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Gierly Valdez <gierly@hotmail.com> on behalf of Gierly Valdez  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:36 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Delay school opening!!!

I am a parent who feels that the school should not open on August 4th. I don't feel comfortable sending my child to school at this time. The DOH needs to think about health & safety of students, teachers and staff. I think all students should do 100% distance learning because the schools are not safe. Please delay school opening. Thank you for your time. Sincerely, Gierly Valdez

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone  
Get [Outlook for Android](#)

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Corinne Kelley <misterlumlum@gmail.com> on behalf of Corinne Kelley  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:36 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Delaying Start

Dear Board of Education,

This unprecedented time calls for unprecedented action. Allowing children back to the classroom without a clear plan will put teacher and student's lives at risk. Please consider pushing back the start date so that time can be taken to prepare. This would be the best course of action for our students, teachers, and community.



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** char strong <cstrong4r@gmail.com> on behalf of char strong  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:38 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Health Room Safety

How do I protect myself? Like cashiers, banks and most places they have a barrier like a pexi-glass protecting them from close contact. How will I do that in the Health Room?

Do I limit the amount of students allowed in the health room? Keeping the 6 feet distance?

I only have one bed, and no curtains to isolate or protect other students or me from the sick ones, do I treat other students outside of the health room while we wait for sick child to be picked up?

Will the DOE provide face masks, gloves, face shields, eye protection or disposable gowns? Shouldn't the SHA be protected like the hospitals, And clinics?

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Edward Kawaauhau <kawaauhauedward@yahoo.com> on behalf of Edward Kawaauhau  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:38 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Ke Kula o 'Ehunuikaimalino

My name is Edward Kawaauhau Jr, I am a makua 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.

I have 4 keiki that will be enrolled at Ke Kula o 'Ehunuikaimalino this school year. We've worked so hard to learn 'olelo Hawai'i which was lost in my 'ohana. These funds will allow my keiki to continue to learn hawaiian and our culture. Taking away funds will discredit everything we've worked hard for thus far.

Mahalo nui no kou kōkua,  
Edward Kawaauhau Jr

[Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android](#)

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** elongboy1@hawaii.rr.com  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:39 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Delay the school date of opening

To whom it may concern,

My wife and I have a child that will be attending Kauai High School. Because of the concern for the safety of our child regarding safe practices due to COVID, we feel that the date to open schools should be delayed.

We feel that there should be more safety procedures and training for teachers before school resumes.

Sincerely,

Eufemio and Victoria Longboy

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** mark <markcom808@yahoo.com> on behalf of mark  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:39 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony to be Submitted

### 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,

My name is Mark Alfred Kawika Fontaine. I am a teacher on the Big Island of Hawaii. I am excited by the prospect of returning to school. My administrator and other staff have been working hard under difficult conditions to prepare for an opening which is unsettled at best. But I am anxious about having to return to a situation in which the health and safety of my students, co-workers, me, and my family is at risk because policies and practices to keep us safe and healthy have not been worked out. But worse, according to some, trust has been eroded because agreements have not been kept, there have been inexplicable delays in providing necessary guidance and protocols to keep us all safe, misleading statements have been made, follow-through has been lacking, yet time is passing.

I understand that we are all in new territory, that things take time, that there are many other factors involved like opening the economy, but that should in no way compromise the health and safety of those dedicated to doing their part as teachers, administrators, and other school staff. And what about the students? What about the inevitable spread of a disease that we know little about that could easily put Hawaii in the same boat as other less fortunate places? And if this happens what about the loss of life that we will all needlessly suffer through? More particularly, what about masks? What about social distancing? What if a student gets sick? Or a teacher? Or a member of their households? Too many unanswered questions, too little guidance, too little thinking and planning, too much rushing and too much waha.

Unless all parties are satisfied that all agreements have been kept, all preparations have been made, and all questions answered, more time should be allowed for the decision makers to get their information straight and come up with rules that will keep all of us safe and healthy. School openings should be delayed until this happens.

Thank you for the opportunity to put this on the record.  
MAKF

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Chieko Idemoto <checho0708@gmail.com> on behalf of Chieko Idemoto  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:39 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony for Shortage Differentials

I have been a Special Education Teacher for 23 years. I have known from day 1 that I will be overworked and underpaid. Every year, I contemplate whether staying in my position is the best decision for myself and my family. I spend so many countless hours preparing, documenting, researching and assessing. There are days when I am so exhausted and stressed out that I have no time for myself or my loved ones. But at the end of every school year, I can honestly say that I have made a positive difference to every one of my students.

Earlier this year, Special Education teachers and other hard to fill positions were given shortage differentials. You don't know how happy that made me, not so much for the pay increase, but for the thought that something is FINALLY being done about the shortage. Being a Special Education teacher is hard and not everyone is willing to do it. **Take that shortage differential away and you will have unqualified subs in the classrooms.** Is that what we really want for your children?? Think about it.

Sincerely,  
Chieko Idemoto

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** char strong <cstrong4r@gmail.com> on behalf of char strong  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:40 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Health Room safety

I only have one Thermo reader will I be responsible to check staff, students and visitor's temperature before entering the school grounds?

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Kim Motta <kimmotta@yahoo.com> on behalf of Kim Motta  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:41 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Re-opening schools

Hello,

I am a 27 year veteran teacher at a Mililani elementary school. I am writing to implore you to please delay the start of school on August 4.

Teachers need time to meet and plan for in-person and distance learning. The four teacher work days are simply not enough to plan this momentous task. We are already going in to work on our summer break to set up our classroom plus we have been participating in online distance learning trainings. We have also been learning new online programs to use in our instruction. We still need more time to do this.

Schools need to figure out staggered schedules for arrival, recess, lunch, and departure, plus classroom health/safety protocols.

Please consider delaying the start of school.

Thank you,  
Kim Motta

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Lindsey Lowe <fhtgjsj@icloud.com> on behalf of Lindsey Lowe  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:42 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Teacher differential pay

Hello,

My name is Lindsay and I taught a special education preschool class over the school closure. Over the clothes are all special education teachers worked longer hours than they had worked in any previous year. We were out until late hours in the night planning our virtual check-in's and lessons, documenting all communication and accommodations as well as continuing to run I DEA meetings virtually. Now more than ever special education teachers will be working tirelessly to provide the best services to their students possible. I feel the need to strongly urge teacher shortage differentials due to the amount of work and adjustments special education teachers have put and will continue to put into their classrooms. I personally am now able to pay my bills without having to work a second job, I wouldn't have had time for over fourth quarter if I still had to work that job. The future is unknown, but as it looks right now, special education teachers will literally be putting their life on the line. Many of the students that we work with will be having a difficult time understanding social distancing as well as wearing protective equipment on their face and our dedicated special education teachers will be entering these dangerous environments for the service, support, education and social progression of of their students.

Thank you,  
Lindsey

Sent from my iPhone



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Kimberly Davenport Hunt <kauaidav@icloud.com> on behalf of Kimberly Davenport Hunt  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:42 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Aloha,

I am writing to you as a parent of a 10 year old who is scheduled to return to Hau'ula elementary school on August 4th but will not be returning. The reason my son will not be returning to school is that I am also the only veterinary clinical laboratory scientist on the island for the past 15 years who has also studied viral and bacterial transmission in animals and humans. I release hundreds of medical diagnosis each day for every species of animal on this planet across the United States and Canada including the CDC. I am 100% confident you have not set into place the proper air purifiers, air filters for internal circulation, proper PPE, and safety measures for our children to return to school in two weeks from now. I have heard of no plans for if and ultimately when a child or a teacher/employee tests positive. For the past 5 years on a daily basis I cannot ensure my child's safety when we expect heavy rain/flooding due to the inability of the principal to work with the local C&C employee to clear the sand plug in the stream leading to the ocean near Hau'ula Homestead Rd.

With this in mind I know the entire BOE system is certainly unprepared for a BSL level 4 virus that is circulating uncontrolled within the local population. I am eager to hear of the the on line lesson plans that will be available to those families who chose to protect their children during a global pandemic.

Thank you

Kimberly Davenport Hunt  
808-372-4447

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** kassie tanigawa <kassie\_tanigawa@yahoo.com> on behalf of kassie tanigawa  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:44 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Hi my name is Kassie Tanigawa, I am a OA at Kekaha Elementary School on Kauai. We need proper training for reopening school safely.

[Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android](#)

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Shannon Kuranishi <skuranishi5@gmail.com> on behalf of Shannon Kuranishi  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:51 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

To whom it may concern,

I am testifying on Action Item H.

I would like to share my concern with schools reopening On August 4th. I am a parent who is concerned for my child's safety and health with Covid in full-effect. I understand that schools need to reopen and parents need to go back to work. However, I do not feel safe with my child going back to school in 2 weeks. I don't feel the DOE is prepared and ready for when new cases pop up at schools because they will happen, it's inevitable. What will happen if a student or teacher tests positive? It seems that more time is needed to work out the details for parents to feel safe sending their children back to school. I know even teachers don't feel safe going back to work. It's important to take them into consideration as well. Please consider pushing back the time of reopening schools in order to better prepare for this school year.

Thank you,  
Shannon

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Angela Ramey <kinnickbiker@icloud.com> on behalf of Angela Ramey  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:45 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Good evening. My name is Angie Ramey and I teach Grade 5 at Ho'okele Elementary in Kapolei. In the last two weeks, we have literally been asked to reimagine every single thing we do as educators for the 2020-2021 school year. We've been asked to educate children in ways that require a complete paradigm shift due to health and safety reasons. Practices that require extensive professional development that we won't receive or will receive but under extreme duress. The anxiety and stress due to the pandemic is bad enough. It is being exacerbated by such an early start date. It's early even in normal times. There are thousands of examples of school districts in the United States that are prudently delaying the start of school until late August or even until after Labor Day to afford school staffs to better prepare for students, regardless of the instructional model. Making sure teachers have personal plan time and collaborative plan time with grade level peers is missing. We're doing literally everything for free right now.

This is rushed. This is a significant risk on so many levels but first and foremost because of the health and safety of staff and students. I'm buying my own Clorox Wipes, paper towels and hand sanitizer. Please consider a delay and/or a virtual start with gradual phasing. Why this wasn't an option to begin with has sent a message that health and safety of students and staff is not a priority.

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Tisha Fukunaga <tisha.fukunaga@gmail.com> on behalf of Tisha Fukunaga  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:45 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** TESTIMONY

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.

We need to be able to RECRUIT & RETAIN CERTIFIED SpEd teachers and having the pay differentials definitely helps with both. Within the past 3 years, I have witnessed and experienced the effects of not being able to recruit and retain SpEd teachers.

1) Our SSC, who's SpEd certified, left her position to go back into the classroom for the upcoming 2020-21 school year. She made that leap because of the differential that was offered. Many teachers have moved or made major life adjustments because the differential was offered. It will be too late for them to back out now. **To make an offer and not to honor it is like false advertising.**

2) In January of this year, another of our SpEd teachers left mid-year to move to Oregon because the pay as a SpEd teacher was \$80,000/year. She was having difficulty with the high cost of living in Hawaii. In turn, her students received a long-term sub and then COVID hit. Those SpEd students were affected tremendously!! They lost out on a lot of learning and fell even further behind.

Also in effect, the rest of the SpEd department had to pick up her cases. It was additional work and a strain on us when our case loads were already heavy. During those IEP meetings, parents were very unhappy with the **lack of continuity**.

3) Our PreK consisted of two SpEd teachers. After one left, we were unable to fill her position the following year. Which left the remaining teacher managing a class of 12+ SpEd preschoolers by herself. She took leave after that school year because she was **overworked and burnt out**.

So the following year....we now needed to fill TWO SpEd positions for PreK. We filled it with an emergency hire, not SpEd certified, and another SpEd teacher filled in the second position but not PreK qualified. At the end of the year, both left their positions. So AGAIN....STUCK!

4) At the same time, we had another emergency hire to help with grades K-5. She was NOT SpEd certified or certified at all. She was a teacher in training. She was unable to return this school year, so again...going through the process of finding another teacher.

When desperation sinks in, and you are limited in your choices and options, you end up with inexperienced teachers who are non-certified or lack the knowledge & understanding especially with IEPs. This leads to inconsistencies and affects the learning and progress of our students. This in turn, sets us up for lawsuits & due process, causing undue stress and costing even more time & money for the DOE.

**To make things even more difficult & challenging was COVID and school closures.** This was especially stressful!! Remember, these are students who have a wide range of disabilities, some are non-verbal, some autistic, some who are medically fragile. With schools closed...how do we service our students and their minutes? SpEd teachers spent so much time in planning & prepping to meet the needs of our students with distance learning. It required us to go **FAR & BEYOND** our normal scope of work. We spent **COUNTLESS HOURS** only to have the DOE throw more work at us. We were now required to keep communication logs on each student and complete data logs.

To add salt to our wounds....the **REOPENING OF SCHOOLS**. Because our students are the vulnerable population, they will receive face-to-face instruction. Many of our students need 1:1 instruction and other SpEd related services. **It is impossible to remain at a 6 feet distance when working with SpEd students. This puts us at a higher risk for exposure to COVID.** While General Education teachers can remain in their "bubbles", we don't have that option. **Other jobs have hazard pay and we don't. At least with the differential, it will help to know that what we do...matters. That we are important and that our students matter.**

This is especially NOT the right time to temporarily discontinue the differentials. You will be adding insult to injury.

Tisha Fukunaga  
SpEd Teacher  
Kamiloiki Elementary

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Asa Leto <letoasa64@gmail.com> on behalf of Asa Leto  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:46 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Aloha,

My name is Aasa Leto and I am a teacher at Konawaena Middle School on the Big Island. I have some concerns and questions about going back to school. We know how important it is for kids to go back into the classrooms, but it will not be business as usual. School will be very different, for both students and teachers. The social interaction will be with social distancing, so will the teaching.

One of my major concerns is of course being around a lot of people every day. I will not be in an ohana bubble, as I have students from all grades. The students are not spending the whole day in the classroom. They have recess and lunch with other students, and I fear that social distancing will be challenging at times.

I feel that worried teachers who can quit or retire will do so, making the teacher shortage even worse.

I wonder what it's going to be like if someone gets sick. Will everyone be tested, sent home and we will be back at remote learning?

What happens if some of my students choose the homeschool option? Would I then have to make a curriculum for them, on top of the planning I have for the students in school?

I read that teachers have received training during the summer. I don't know what kind of training that is, or that there was one.

I am not sure what's expected of me. I am not sure if schools are ready for teaching during a pandemic. Is my school prepared and supplied with all that will be needed?

I, like all other teachers I know, want nothing else than to get back to school and see our students, but at this point I feel unsure, and not completely safe doing so. I am not sure parents and students do either. I feel like we need more time to prepare.

Mahalo,  
Aasa Leto

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Stella O <song1190@gmail.com> on behalf of Stella O  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:47 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

To the Board of Education, My name is Stella Ong and I am a Speech-Language Pathologist in the BKM complex area. I still have questions and concerns about returning to school.

Related service providers (SLP, PT, OT) have not received enough training to safely perform our job at school. Students, school employees and our communities should not be put at risk with a rushed reopening plan. Here are my questions:

- Who will screen employees, students and visitors for signs of illness?
- Will staff be properly trained by Aug. 4?
- How will school meals be provided?
- What is the plan when someone at the school tests positive for COVID-19?
- How will physical distancing be enforced?

I appreciate your time and hope to hear from you soon.

Stella Ong  
Speech Language Pathologist



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** mahinakomeiji@gmail.com  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:49 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Returning to schools

Dear BOE,

I'm a high school teacher in Hawaii. I miss my students and my classroom. But I don't think August 4th is a good face to face reopening date. Firstly, we normally start school in August where I have students passing out from heat stroke INSIDE my classroom. Let alone inside and wearing a mask Or shield.

Secondly, I don't think it's particularly safe for our students to meet with us face to face. I think it's important for us to teach them. But I think face to face during a surge is a ridiculous idea. I will come into contact with about 130 students in 2 days. How do I keep them all safe? How do I sanitize between classes? How do I keep myself safe? The school they are returning to is not the school they know. They will be flooded with anxiety about covid and spread. How can they even socialize with their friends when most of them are broken up into two different days? Because of social distancing they can't even sit next to each other and chat. They can't do small group work because it's too close? Is this the ideal school you'd like to return to?

I plan on wearing both a shield and a mask even though I know I will be uncomfortable. I will probably be yelling so they all can hear me through all of that, putting a strain on me. But more importantly, because of the aforementioned exposure I feel like I will not be able to see the high risk people in my life, attend the gym, or really leave my home so that I don't spread germs to others. And I feel like that's a rude ask to be burdened onto me.

Lastly, I'm sad and offended that there are claims you "hear" our concerns. But you haven't actually acknowledged our concerns. Instead of figuring out how to socially distance classrooms. We need a better plan and more assurances about what happens in case of an outbreak. How will this affect our students and us? How will this affect our sick leave? What about our substitutes? I feel like time would have been better spent determine ways to create equity so students can access distance learning. Since schools provide students meals, especially those from low income housing, give them a place to study that's socially distanced, has good internet connections, and ideally AC. They can then take their lunches after and go home. I know the DOE has invested a lot in getting devices so that more kids can access the lessons. But once the equity issue is addressed teachers can plan, then assess what's working what's not working, give students feedback and eventually even grades. Teachers and parents are not asking to start later in the year just for other solutions and for them to be reasonable.

Mahalo,

Mahina

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Michele Lefebvre <wren1251@yahoo.com> on behalf of Michele Lefebvre  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:49 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Support for opening schools on-time

To whom it may concern at the BOE,

Hawaii is in a unique position by way of its low COVID-19 case count and limited community transmission (only on Oahu). We are the envy of the nation. We worked hard to get here and the postponement of quarantine exemption for trans-Pacific travelers gives us an advantage to start school on-time. We fit the bill for opening schools according to the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Harvard Global Health Institute (<https://globalhealth.harvard.edu/path-to-zero-schools-achieving-pandemic-resilient-teaching-and-learning-spaces/>). Many families have paid a financial cost to weather the spring closure of schools.

With a 30% unemployment rate statewide, we need to have kids back in school so they can get the education they've been promised and parents can go back to work. The blended schedule chosen by many schools leaves working parents with few options. Distance learning on the off days is not defined and parents are left wondering how students will get 180 days of instruction this year. Some parents have chosen full-time distance learning, and some teachers have retired early. I strongly urge you to consider an accelerated teaching certificate for young up and coming teachers, similar to the programs put in place for doctors, to replace those who have left.

I hope you will give parents the option to have full-time, or the very least part-time in person school option or many more people will have to leave their jobs, take fewer shifts, or take more unpaid leave. On Hawaii island we have no indication of community spread. No one on the mainland understands why we aren't opening schools full-time. Consider all the services that schools provide and the importance to students of all ages to attend class with their peers. As stated by the superintendent during the press conference today, the DOE was not designed to deliver on-line learning and it does not appear to be prepared to do so.

Thank you for your time,  
Michele Lefebvre  
(Parent of two elementary school daughters in Hilo)

Thanks,  
Michele

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Tymesha Aona <tymeshajohnson27@gmail.com> on behalf of Tymesha Aona  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:50 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony Delaying Student Start Date  
**Attachments:** COVID-19 letter.docx

To Whom It May Concern,

There are many questions and concerns that many teachers having been asking and still have yet to have clarification. Being an FSC special education teacher, I am VERY concerned and worried about opening schools on August 4<sup>th</sup>. Many of my students are still learning basic health and hygiene practices. They are constantly putting their fingers in their mouths and nose. Many of them still require hand over hand assistance for washing their hands and using the restroom. I am not going to have the option to the 6ft distance rule or having an “ohana bubble”, as my students have to travel to my class and their homeroom as well. Not mention the children that will be attending A+ afterschool.

What PPE am I going to have ordered and when will it get here? I am concerned about my health and safety and the health and safety of those in my household. The “guidance and procedures” that should be taken in the event that a student or teacher contracts COVID are VERY unclear and it is concerning.

What is the rush? We all need to work together. Let’s start later and end later. One life is too many. Push back the August 4<sup>th</sup> start date.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** mahinakomeiji@gmail.com  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:52 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Dear BOE,

I'm a high school teacher in Hawaii. I miss my students and my classroom. But I don't think [August 4th](#) is a good face to face reopening fate. Firstly, we normally start school in August where I have students passing out from heat stroke INSIDE my classroom. Let alone inside and wearing a mask Or shield.

Secondly, I don't think it's particularly safe for our students to meet with us face to face. I think it's important for us to teach them. But I think face to face during a surge is a ridiculous idea. I will come into contact with about 130 students [in 2 days](#). How do I keep them all safe? How do I sanitize between classes? How do I keep myself safe? The school they are returning to is not the school they know. They will be flooded with anxiety about covid and spread. How can they even socialize with their friends when most of them are broken up into two different days? Because of social distancing they can't even sit next to each other and chat. They can't do small group work because it's too close? Is this the ideal school you'd like to return to?

I plan on wearing both a shield and a mask even though I know I will be uncomfortable. I will probably be yelling so they all can hear me through all of that, putting a strain on me. But more importantly, because of the aforementioned exposure I feel like I will not be able to see the high risk people In my life, attend the gym, or really leave my home so that I don't spread germs to others. And I feel like that's a rude ask to be burdened onto me.

Lastly, I'm sad and offended that there are claims you "hear" our concerns. But you haven't actually acknowledged our concerns. Instead of figuring out how to socially distance classrooms. We need a better plan and more assurances about what happens in case of an outbreak. How will this affect our students and us? How will this affect our sick leave? What about our substitutes? I feel like time would have been better spent determine ways to create equity so students can access distance learning. Since schools provide students meals, especially those from low income housing, give them a place to study that's socially distanced, has good internet connections, and ideally AC. They can then take their lunches after and go home. I know the DOE has invested a lot in getting devices so that more kids can access the lessons. But once the equity issue is addressed teachers can plan, then assess what's working what's not working, give students feedback and eventually even grades. Teachers and parents are not asking to start later in the year just for other solutions and for them to be reasonable.

Mahalo,  
Mahina

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Cassandra Armstrong <cjarm69@gmail.com> on behalf of Cassandra Armstrong  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:52 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

### TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

RE: Testifying on Action 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 Cassie Armstrong. I am a PreKindergarten Teacher at Kohala Elementary School in Kohala District on Hawaii Island. I am submitting testimony to support teachers keeping the differential pay as it is so important for us who live in very rural areas. Especially, now with this pandemic we teachers will be driving long distances to go to stores to purchase cleaning supplies if and when it happens or something a student or students need to help them learn, because their parents can't afford the material to help their child to learn. And, get stuff we find to help students learn safety! Also, this testimony is to support the best decision for our children to get the best education and physical protection as possible with the COVID pandemic, especially our students who need the most help or find new ways to help them learn.

I also don't think we are ready to teach students as there are a lot of questions and I don't think the children with disabilities or other impairments that are making some student lag behind other students in their academics are getting any benefit from schools open on time or waiting, because there disabilities, learning process, or language delay is being address on how to help them in the new way of teaching. For example, how do we address a student with a hearing impairment, where in a normal situation we would be using FM systems to their hearing aids, speakers, and have them look straight at our faces and speak clearly to them without anything in front of our mouths to muffle the sound waves coming from our mouths so they can hear clearly? This problem can go a different way for students with speech impairments! We teachers need something that will not obscure the vocal sounds coming from a student who can not speech clear or correctly. But, these are not the only disability problems there is in the schools. There are so many that we need to address! We need time to find resources that can show us different ways to help **ALL** our students and not just the general student population!

I want to thank you for helping make the best decision for our young citizens to keep them healthy, safe, and get the best learning experience in this time during a dangerous pandemic!

Mahalo,

Cassandra Armstrong

Kohala District

Hawaii Island

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** samantha cleek <samantha.m.cleek@gmail.com> on behalf of samantha cleek  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:53 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Reopening schools

As we get updates from the schools, principals, other teachers, the news, and other sources about the reopening of schools I wait to hear how these plans and new guidelines are going to be executed. Unfortunately I have yet to any concrete information. The number of covid cases and fatalities are rising and while our children's education is important, so is their health. There are many important questions going unanswered such as "what happens if a student tests positive for covid 19?" What about the staff and faculty? I havent heard any concrete information about how the BOE/DOE plan on keeping us safe. I have a child under the age of 2 and all 3 of his grandparents (the only people who baby sit while I work) have compromised immune systems. Can the BOE guarentee that i won't be putting their health and other students health at risk by returning to work?



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Seppelfrick Diana <dseppelfrick@gmail.com> on behalf of Seppelfrick Diana  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:54 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Ladies and Gentlemen:

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 Diana Seppelfrick, a Teacher at Wai'anae High School.

Please recognize that, the health, safety, and lives of our students, faculty and the staff of our public schools must be considered in any decision-making. We must verify that everything in our community is safe before we allow our citizens back on every school campus in Hawaii.

We don't want to rush to have the schools reopen to the students by August 4th, based on a previously scheduled SY 2020-2021 school opening. Please consider reopening our schools later so less people may be exposed to the Corona virus. The teachers, students, and staff don't want to be the Guinea Pigs, if schools reopen on August 4th, knowingly that there is no cure for the virus. This type of pandemic has never happened in my lifetime before, it is better to be safe than sorry.

Please take action and do not open the schools until it is safe to return, and knowing that there is a cure. Stick to distance learning. Thank you, for your willingness to review my testimony.

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Kristina Viloria <noreply@jotform.com> on behalf of Kristina Viloria  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:54 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Please Save Teacher Shortage Differentials!



### Please Save Teacher Shortage Differentials

Name	Kristina Viloria
Email	kmkv521@gmail.com
Subject	8086516408

**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.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Kelcie Lei Nagata <20116180@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Kelcie Lei Nagata  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:54 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 Kelcie Nagata and I work at Kamiloiki Elementary. I strongly believe that the Department of Education is not ready to open schools. Protocols need to be put in place and teachers need to feel safe returning back to school. I urge you to reconsider opening schools on August 4. Think about the health of your teachers and keiki. We can not let any one of us fall short to this deadly virus, it's not worth risking our lives.

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Brandi Tulang Mahuna <brandi.tulang\_mahuna@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Brandi Tulang Mahuna  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:54 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

I do agree that cuts to shortage differentials should be made. The stipends were unfair to begin with. All teachers deal with hard to work students and are faced with challenges. I am an inclusion teacher and my SPED teacher supports me to a bare minimum. I need to differentiate my lessons to meet the needs of my identified students in my classroom as a general education teacher. I put just as much effort and work into my identified students in an inclusive classroom teacher as does my SPED teacher. I do everything as she does expect for writing up the IEP. However, I do support her with evidences and other information that is included in the IEP.

I feel that public schools ARE NOT ready to reopen on Aug 4. I do not feel as if I was properly trained to handle these health guidelines in my classroom. My classroom was barely getting cleaned and was sanitized once a year prior to COVID-19. Myself, my students and my EA wiped our areas with clorox wipes and sanitizer bought in by my students at the beginning of the year, and then provided by myself out of my own pocket after supplies were diminished. Also, we were given less than a week to come up with a reopening plan via our principal which changed several times, before our principal finalized the schedule with little or no help or input from our faculty. Having each school pick it's own schedule is a disaster. I work at an elementary school and my students have siblings at our middle and high schools. All of which children will be on different schedules. How is that helping our families and how is that helping our students. If students are on different schedules are parents forced to quit? Will children be left at home to fend for themselves? What about us teachers who have school aged students who attend public school and will not be at school the whole week. Are we to call in sick because we have no child care for our children because both parents are working. Will there be enough substitutes. Will substitutes even want to accept jobs. It's hard enough to get substitutes to accept jobs prior to COVID-19 and to think about finding a sub in this upcoming school year gives me stress just thinking about it. If the cost of living wasn't so high in the state of Hawaii I'd take the school year off to focus on the needs of my own children and their education. There is so much more to think about when reopening face to face education for all children. I have 5 kids of my own including an eight month old. I am not only putting myself at risk by returning to work and working with my 25 students throughout the week. But I am also putting my children and my family at risk. Including my kupuna who watch my infant while I will be returning to work. THE DOE has said all of these things and guidelines about schools reopening. But who is responsible to check on the principals and if their guidelines, schedules and other things that they've set up is a logical plan. I heard that distance learning should be offered at all schools. Many parents have called and requested DL at our school but was told that it is not an option at this time. If there was ONE set guideline and schedules were chosen by district it would make it more desirable for the families. We are not ready to reopen schools for face to face learning just yet.

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Melissa Forrest <melissa.forrest@hawks.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Melissa Forrest  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:56 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** School Openings

I am a teacher on the west side of Oahu. Many of my students live as multigenerational families as well as in multi-family dwellings. These factors increase the likelihood of Covid-19 spreading more quickly once schools reopen. I am a 52 year old woman in good health with the exception of asthma. Having a chronic condition such as asthma makes me more susceptible to experiencing life threatening complications if I were to get Covid-19.

Please consider not reopening schools until we have a vaccine for Covid-19. We live on an island that does not have the health care facilities to care for an influx of patients with Covid-19.

Sincerely,

Melissa A. Forrest  
Makaha Elementary School

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** David Larsen <captaindavid25@gmail.com> on behalf of David Larsen  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:57 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Do not cut teacher pay

I live in Lahaina and have a daughter in elementary school. Please do not cut teacher pay.  
Please continue funding hard to staff areas.  
We need to keep the good teachers in Hawaii nei.

Mahalo  
David Larsen  
Lahaina, HI

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Yavette Charles <yavette.charles@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Yavette Charles  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:57 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Aloha!

My name is Yavette Charles, I am a SPED teacher in an Alternative Resource Classroom at Kailua High School. I work mainly with students who have behavioral difficulties , anxieties and health issues. NO TEACHER SHOULD BE GETTING A PAY CUT! ESPECIALLY THIS SCHOOL YEAR! PLEASE VOTE NO! on 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.

As a SPED teacher, not only do I and other SPED teachers need to constantly be in communication with our students and their parents, we have to do IEP meetings which require at times hours of preparation and most often take place after school hours when other teachers get to go home but we have to stay on our own time to complete these necessary meetings. We don't have the option to leave the meeting if they run long like our Gen. Ed counterparts are able to. It is about time SPED teachers get paid for the time above and beyond what General ed teachers do and to threaten to take that away is horrific! Since schools were shut down in March 2020, ALL teachers have been working above and beyond their normal capacity AND making it work for our students. The very idea that the BOARD of EDUCATION would want to take away ANY pay from teachers is reprehensible on your part. The Board of Education should be doing EVERYTHING in THEIR power to SUPPORT teachers in the STATE OF HAWAII especially when you are asking Teachers, to do what many are terrified to be doing right now! ALL Teachers are underpaid. Please vote no on Item G. I understand the impact of the last several months, but the teachers have been underpaid for at least the last decade! The differentials and proposed salary schedule for the new contract is certainly an improvement, but I'd argue it's more like pay restoration versus an actual raise.

If any of you feel otherwise, please come to my classroom anytime. I would love for you to join me for a day so you can see what a day is like in my classroom. I imagine there are hundreds of teachers out there who would love to have you join them as well.

Thank you for your time.

--

Yavette Charles  
Kailua High School  
(808) 266-7900 ext. 2270

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Rhonda Morishige-Osora <rmosora@yahoo.com> on behalf of Rhonda Morishige-Osora  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:50 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Dear Board of Education:

My name is Rhonda Morishige and I am a parent and teacher who has a 12-year old child at SEEQS, another 12-year old at Kaimuki Middle School, and I teach at Ala Wai 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 because I am deeply concerned about the State of Hawaii's plan to reopen public schools on August 4, 2020. 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"<sup>[1]</sup>. 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.

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 I feel comfortable sending my children to school nor do 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. Delaying the re-opening of all public schools for at least one month in order to allow schools more time to prepare online learning systems.
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.

I 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. 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,  
Rhonda Morishige  
6072 Haleola Street  
Honolulu, HI 96821

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Kaimana Chun <kaimana.chun@gmail.com> on behalf of Kaimana Chun  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:58 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 BOE 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.

My name is Kaimana Chun and I am a SPED Teacher at Kapunahala Elementary School.

Personally I am terrified about returning to school. The fact is, we do not know enough about COVID to insure the safety of the students or the teachers and I don't want to feel responsible if any of my students get COVID. I have no confidence that our school buildings and classrooms are ready for students to open in a manner that minimizes the risk of COVID spreading.

On top of that, I have heard very little about procedural daily plans for how to deal with COVID if students or teachers are suspected to have it. While it may be posted online, teachers need time to review the information and sit in trainings to unpack and understand what the plans mean and how to implement daily "visual checks" and protocols. We are not medical professionals and feel very unprepared for dealing with any COVID situations. Even researchers are still learning about this virus so why risk the lives of our students and staff without adequate knowledge? Let's be honest, one student contracting COVID is one student too many.

I can't help but be concerned about my health and the thought of being around asymptomatic or presymptomatic students and bringing COVID home to my toddler and infant. I also live with someone who is at high risk. Why do I feel like I have to choose between my career or the health of myself and loved ones?

With this in mind, I wholeheartedly believe that until the numbers are seriously controlled in Hawaii or there is a vaccine, teachers should be 100% distance learning. The BOE had ample time this summer to prepare for more effective distance learning. Delay the opening of school buildings to students to give us time to prepare for, plan, and conduct rigorous lessons via distance learning. It can be done. Students can have quality education online without risking being exposed to COVID. But we need time and training to prepare for this.

Give us time to see how reopening businesses and tourism affects our numbers during this pandemic. Do we really want schools to be the reason our COVID numbers increase? Because spending all day indoors with a group of students who then go home to (often multigenerational) families is a sure-fire way to exponentially increase COVID numbers in Hawaii where the current numbers are already increasing to alarming amounts.

I am an educator and I want to educate but we are in a PANDEMIC and I am terrified. In these unusually rare and dangerous times we should show that we VALUE our students and staff by pursuing action that keeps them healthy and alive. Delay the opening of school buildings to students, provide trainings to deliver 100% distance education effectively until it is safe to return, and address our questions.

The DOE's failure to answer these questions pertaining to the reopening of schools impacts my ability to teach because I am left with high anxiety trying to navigate the new expectations of teachers, not only delivering teaching both in person and online but also policing new social distancing/mask wearing/cleanliness rules to keep students as well as myself healthy. It is a lot to learn and I have unanswered questions and little time to prepare. This impacts my students' ability to learn because if

the plan is inconsistent, then students will be more confused and stressed and this will impede their learning. If teachers are not given ample time to plan distance-learning strategies, students might struggle with engagement in the learning process.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Alyssa Masuda <alyssamasuda@gmail.com> on behalf of Alyssa Masuda  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:00 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

7/21/2020

Dear Honorable Members of the Board of Education.

My name is Alyssa and I work in the Windward District--Kailua/Kalaheo Complex. I am concerned that there has not been any sort of training put into place before school reopens in the Fall, and we begin work starting July 29th.

While I am part of the support staff, I feel like we should still receive training as well in order to keep all staff and students safe. I am also concerned about, or even if, PPE will be provided for employees and students--or are we expected to buy them ourselves? I'm hoping there will be enough items in stock especially now, considering that so many other people are stocking up on them, too. I feel a little anxious going back to school so soon, and am in support of thorough training being put into place for all employees before school starts up again.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Alyssa Masuda

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** J808 Town <j808town12@gmail.com> on behalf of J808 Town  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:00 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** TESTIMONY- REOPENING DATE

Dear BOE,

We cannot open schools for students on August 4<sup>th</sup>. There are too many unanswered questions from teachers, principals, custodians, and parents. Many parents are being told that their home school will not offer 100% distance learning. Kishimoto said that there would be that option but due to lack of communication and rushing, schools are not getting the correct information. She also said at the conference that teachers will do a physical check and prescreening of our students. I'm not a nurse or doctor. I didn't receive any training for this and will not feel confident. My first graders can't even tell me when they are not feeling well. The way we find out is when they throw up in class and then they get sent to the health room. You expect them to answer health screening questions such as "if they have been in contact with someone who tested positive." Are you kidding me? That's why you have to trust the teachers who know what really happens in a classroom. I can guarantee that if ONE student has the virus in class, we will all get it. Now if they use the restroom or went to Aplus it will triple the spread. Kids catch colds and flu from their classmates every day. It will spread like wildfire. We don't want to say we told you so. Why did Dr. Park say that we want to shut down schools or shelter in place forever??? We are not saying that we are saying to reopen schools safely and NOT RUSH. Our parent and teacher handbooks are on hold because we are waiting for answers from DOE. DOH is creating a committee right now to write health guidelines for the schools. We go back in 7 days. DOE started their planning way too late in the game. You've also questioned why it's so late. We just revised the MOU and now teachers are trying to understand it better. Just because documents are published doesn't mean everyone will understand it. We need to ask questions and clarifications. My school is still trying to figure out how students will be allowed to use the restrooms. Do you know how much fluid is exchanged in the restroom? How is locking kids up in a classroom with 1 recess where they can only walk around by themselves helping them with socialization as stated by Dr. Park. I packed away all my books, games, and recess balls because they won't be allowed to touch them. You can't play checkers by yourself. You will have to play four squares by yourself because you can't touch the same ball as your friend who will need to be 6 feet away from you. I don't understand... what socialization are we talking about? Young children will be more confused and frustrated because they can't be near their teachers or friends. The good thing it will not be forever. So if they can wait, why can't the schools? Distance Learning works now that DOE and teachers had time to prepare. CDC reported on July 21, that asymptomatic people are spreading the virus too fast and that's why we are not able to contain the virus. That's even scarier to hear this. Sadly, I have recently retained an attorney to write out my will in order to take care of my children. I am a single mom and worry who will take care of my children if I get really sick or die. One last question, if you were a teacher would YOU feel safe going into a classroom with 22 different families and be together for 6 hrs in an enclosed room with terrible ventilation. Please make the right choice in the name of health and safety for our students, families, and teachers!!

Jane P.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Alissa Schneider Berg <alissanks47@gmail.com> on behalf of Alissa Schneider Berg  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:00 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** testimony

Alissa Schneider Berg  
Behavioral Health Specialist, Campbell Complex

- Why is the opening of school year time for teachers so similar to other years? How will there be enough time for teachers to do their regular beginning of the school year meetings and prep, along with the new training and protocols for the pandemic?
- How will substitutes be trained? Will teachers just have to write all the school protocols into their sub plans? That would be completely inadequate.
- If a teacher or student in a bubble comes back with a positive test will the whole room have to quarantine? If this is the case, will the exposed teacher be expected to provide distance learning to students during that quarantine period?

Aloha,  
Alissa ^(:,,)^

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Brandi Chung <brandichung@gmail.com> on behalf of Brandi Chung  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:01 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** TESTIMONY - SPED Differential

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 Brandi Chung and I am speaking as a special education teacher at Mililani Mauka 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 everyday. 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,

Brandi Chung

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Chieko Idemoto <checho0708@gmail.com> on behalf of Chieko Idemoto  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:01 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

I am writing 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.

In the past few weeks, there has been much debate whether school campuses are ready to open in the midst of the Covid pandemic. As a Special Education Preschool teacher, I can guarantee you that there will be ZERO social distancing in my classroom. Preschoolers, especially those with disabilities need much physical prompting from adults throughout the day. In addition, many students will resist wearing masks and/or shields due to their disability. This is a double whammy for Special Education Preschool classes, as many of the "safeguards" to protect us from Covid are no longer applicable. I have checked with my Administrator and District Resource Teachers on further guidance on how to protect myself and my class. Unfortunately, nobody seems to have an answer.

As the opening of schools loom, I am filled with fear that I cannot keep my students, their families, Education Assistant and myself safe. We simply do not have enough equipment, supplies or training to open school campuses at this time.

Some would argue that most individuals recover from Covid so we do not have anything to worry about. WRONG! We simply do not have enough information to guarantee anyone that they will not have any lasting side effects from Covid in the long run. With multi-generational families in Hawaii, the infection rate will sky rocket and those who may have other health issues will be in danger of getting severely sick or even death.

Can you say from the bottom of your heart that you can keep every child, staff and family safe from the Covid virus? Would you send your own child to a public school at this time with 100% confidence??

The children and teachers of Hawaii are not guinea pigs. Please let us do our jobs in a safe environment. Please do the right thing.

Thank you for your time,  
Chieko Idemoto

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Marlene Medeiros <mkmedeir@hawaii.rr.com> on behalf of Marlene Medeiros  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:03 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Reconsider reopening school date!

Aloha e,

My name is Marlene Medeiros and I teach at Kea'au High School on the island of Hawai'i. I am reaching out to the BOE to plea for a push back in reopening Hawai'i public schools. For the most part my BIG concern is that fact that the DOH and HIDOE has not taken into consideration whatsoever the health and well being of school faculty/staff and most importantly our keiki. Just know that when teaching staff, faculty, and keiki begin to contract COVID-19 it will be because of poor decision making based off of your decision to reopen schools. The harsh reality here is when there are deaths associated with COVID-19 within our schools then that can weigh on your conscience and the decision that you folks made. I'm not sure if you are ready to have to deal with that, especially if it is our keiki that get infected and then potentially die due to this MAJOR threat.

Secondly, we as educators are in the dark of how implement a hybrid type of teaching schedule as well as distance learning. Most of us have not even received any form of PD regarding "teaching" in a distant/virtual learning environment. This is crucial for educators to be effective to semi effective when teaching in a virtual platform. It's almost as though the decision makers, HIDOE, BOE, DOH and our superintendent are just passing off the buck to the our administrators who have no clue how to pursue opening their schools. Like you folks have no clue what educators and administration are dealing with regarding how to safely open schools because the decision makers are making decisions too quickly and not really being problem solvers here, it's the blind leading the blind.

If you do decide to reopen schools too early then I personally request that ALL of you attend our public schools to monitor our health and safety as well as be a part of our school communities, after all, when schools become infected with COVID-19 so will the rest of our communities thanks to your rush to reopen schools. Cases of COVID are on the rise people so get prepared for the worse when schools reopen too soon without great thought, training, and real problem solving/planning. Mahalo for your time and possible consideration concerning this important decision for our keiki!

Me ke aloha pumehana,  
Marlene Medeiros

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Katy Parsons <katy.parsons55@gmail.com> on behalf of Katy Parsons  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:05 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

My name is Katy Parsons, and I am a Math teacher at Jarrett Middle School, also my son will be starting high school in August. 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 health and safety of our keiki and the staff of our public schools must be taken into account in any decision-making processes. We must take every precaution before students are brought back on campus. This is a process we cannot afford to rush. If the BOE were to allow teachers 2 & 1/2 weeks to properly prepare for instruction students will have a much safer and smoother transition back to school. During that time we can watch for potential spikes in COVID cases around campuses and perfect sanitization techniques. These new requirements on teachers and staff are way out of our regular school norm and will take time to adapt to properly. 4 days is not enough time for teachers to get used to new regulations and requirements, rearrange classrooms, update syllabuses, rules, procedures, change seating to proper social distance, and attend meetings/training related to school opening and COVID-19. These are unprecedented times and accommodations should be made to help lessen the fear of the unknown for teachers, parents, and students. The case numbers are increasing daily at a greater rate than when we shut schools down in the first place. What happened to the promise that "We will open schools when there are no cases for 4 weeks"? At least meet us educators half way and consider our input.

The proposed two and a half week timeframe would allow teachers to better set up classrooms, receive further training, develop more curriculum options, meet as departments/teams to plan and carefully map out first quarter instruction, etc. Then we can welcome students on campus for the last two weeks of August with half days to slowly transition everyone to the "new norm" on campuses. During that time teachers will prepare emergency lesson plans in case they were to catch COVID-19 and emergency packets to send home with students in case of school wide shut down. Meetings with admin and teachers where true collaboration could occur to open schools properly instead of just relying on the virtual meetings during the middle of summer that were optional for teachers to attend.

I myself am immune suppressed due to ongoing health issues. I have struggled the past few school years with surgeries and treatments. I for one do not want to see myself, my family, my students, or my colleagues catch this disease. I am personally afraid that I won't survive, and as a single mother that really worries me for my son. My parents are also retired and in their late 70's and I do not want to risk getting them sick as well. Like many others I have been weighing my options but can not survive without a paycheck so I will do my best to tough it out this school year. My school is opening completely to all students 100% starting August 4th and have no options for teachers like me to get ADA accommodations to teach online or to limit class sizes. My class sizes range from 18 to 22 students each period for 6 out of 7 periods a day. That's over 100 students I will come into contact with on a daily basis, not to mention fellow coworkers and support staff around campus. Please help me to better manage this ever changing world by pushing back the start date for students to August 17, 2020.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Katy Parsons

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Justin Allen <allenjc511@gmail.com> on behalf of Justin Allen  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:05 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony for Returning to School Aug. 4 and Differential Cuts

Dear BOE,

Thank you for allotting Aug.4-Aug 14 as half days for students. This allows us, as teachers, to have additional prep time to prepare for teaching during this pandemic. However, I do not feel this is enough time for preparations. This is due to the need for communication among principals, teachers, faculty, and staff to all get on the same page. I would ask that you give us an additional week to collaborate with data teams, curriculum coordinators, etc to ensure the online and in-person success of all students. You must remember, some teachers will be having students in class and online at the same time and this has hardly happened before in the HDOE. My request would be full-time learning starts on Aug. 24, 2020 and Aug. 17-20 would be dedicated to teacher preparation. We do not have school on Friday, Aug. 21 due to Statehood Day. During this preparation time, students and families can work on ensuring they have proper internet access, routines, technology, etc to learn either online or in-person at physical school.

The next topic of discussion is the Differential Cuts. I am a mathematics teacher on Maui. I do not benefit from the differential pay. To be honest, if the cut to differentials for hard-to-staff schools, Hawaiian Language Immersion, and special education teachers would ensure that ALL teachers wouldn't be furloughed or have pay cuts, then I am sure the majority of teachers in our union would back this differential cut for the 2020-2021 SY. However, there is a major problem, in that there isn't clear guidance or information on where this money that would be "saved" from the differential cuts would go? Are we completely clear of potential pay cuts for all teachers? The estimated cost was \$16,585,000/ semester for these differentials, bringing the yearly cost to \$33,170,000 just for the differentials. Where would this money be going if the DOE was to take \$33,170,000 out of the pockets of teachers that are dedicated to serving their students day in and day out?

We, as teachers in Hawaii, are already severely underpaid. We currently have 6% of our teaching jobs unfilled and roughly another 3% filled by non-licensed teachers. This pandemic has effected everyone here on the islands and around the world. Decisions regarding the pay of other families aren't easy decisions to make. I applaud you for sitting in the chair you are sitting in and making decisions that you know will somehow receive backlash. However, if you cut the differentials, without directly benefitting the students and teachers in Hawaii, only the students will be hurt. Also, when do the budget cuts stop? As I mentioned earlier, we are underpaid as teachers compared to the national average for salary of teachers and the cost of living. What do you think will happen if people in power take away the differential pay and furlough/pay cut the teachers in Hawaii as well?

Teachers will leave. So, please be clear on where this potential \$33,170,000 is going and your future plans to maintain the professional teachers the DOE currently has. In the end, we as teachers, are already working more than 1 job, going back to school for further education to reclass, and trying our best to make ends meet currently. By valuing us, you are showing you value the future of Hawaii, and that is the children that are in the public school systems here.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Justin Allen  
Maui High School

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Marlene Medeiros <mkmedeir@hawaii.rr.com> on behalf of Marlene Medeiros  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:05 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** TESTIMONY

Aloha e,

My name is Marlene Medeiros and I teach at Kea'au High School on the island of Hawai'i. I am reaching out to the BOE to plea for a push back in reopening Hawai'i public schools. For the most part my BIG concern is that fact that the DOH and HIDOE has not taken into consideration whatsoever the health and well being of school faculty/staff and most importantly our keiki. Just know that when teaching staff, faculty, and keiki begin to contract COVID-19 it will be because of poor decision making based off of your decision to reopen schools. The harsh reality here is when there are deaths associated with COVID-19 within our schools then that can weigh on your conscience and the decision that you folks made. I'm not sure if you are ready to have to deal with that, especially if it is our keiki that get infected and then potentially die due to this MAJOR threat.

Secondly, we as educators are in the dark of how implement a hybrid type of teaching schedule as well as distance learning. Most of us have not even received any form of PD regarding "teaching" in a distant/virtual learning environment. This is crucial for educators to be effective to semi effective when teaching in a virtual platform. It's almost as though the decision makers, HIDOE, BOE, DOH and our superintendent are just passing off the buck to the our administrators who have no clue how to pursue opening their schools. Like you folks have no clue what educators and administration are dealing with regarding how to safely open schools because the decision makers are making decisions too quickly and not really being problem solvers here, it's the blind leading the blind.

If you do decide to reopen schools too early then I personally request that ALL of you attend our public schools to monitor our health and safety as well as be a part of our school communities, after all, when schools become infected with COVID-19 so will the rest of our communities thanks to your rush to reopen schools. Cases of COVID are on the rise people so get prepared for the worse when schools reopen too soon without great thought, training, and real problem solving/planning. Mahalo for your time and possible consideration concerning this important decision for our keiki!

Me ke aloha pumehana,  
Marlene Medeiros

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** renette Garma <f\_renette@hotmail.com> on behalf of renette Garma  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:05 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Returning to School (postpone the start date)

To The Powers That Be,

I have always believed that the safety of my children along with providing an education is one of the top priorities of the Department of Education. As the date draws near for the opening of school and I hear from educators that they are not sure what will happen or how things will work, or they are not prepared causes concern. I have not questioned the decisions of the department as I realize that everything is unknown. However, I respectfully request that you consider extending the opening of school for the year 2020 to ensure that the educators are confident that they are able to teach in a safe environment.

Sincerely,  
Renette S. Garma

Get [Outlook for Android](#)



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Ken Sato <knjsato7565@gmail.com> on behalf of Ken Sato  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:06 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** testimony

Dear BOE,

I am writing to you to urge the board to push back the reopening of school for students. We are simply not ready. Teachers, custodian, and staff have not to be trained at all. We just hired 2 new teachers on our grade level. We will have to teach them the curriculum let alone COVID protocols that we don't even know ourselves. What do I do if my students test positive? What do I do if a child's parent tests positive and is awaiting results? Does the child still come to school knowing they might have been exposed? What happens if I test positive? Do all my students get tested? So many questions with no answers. Dr. Anderson said yesterday that he is starting to gather a committee to work on health guidelines for school. Are you kidding me? Working on guidelines now? They just can't produce a document and expect us to understand it. We need time to read and ask questions to see clarification. We don't even know how to wear or clean our PPEs. I've been watching YouTube to learn. You see how ridiculous this is. Wait, what PPEs? Many are on backorder with the rest of the world. We need more time! Teachers will take more aggressive action if needed, especially because our lives depend on it. One mistake or mishap because we rushed will have devastating consequences. Please listen to the teachers because we are the only ones who really know what will happen in the schools. The bubble concept will not work. There are too many other bubbles that will mix such as bathroom bubble, bus bubble, family bubble, sports bubble, friends bubble and afterschool program bubble. The only way to contain this is to do distance learning until we have a vaccine which seems promising. Don't know why Dr. Park is saying that we want to shut down schools. No! Schools can reopen but in a safe way. DOE chair said it gave students and teachers time to bond. I'm sorry but for the sake of my children and elderly parents, I will not be giving hugs or even getting close to my students. They will probably sense my fear and anxiety all day in our enclosed classroom of 22 students. We will have to pray every day that it won't be our classroom that has to shut down. Dr. Anderson said he is willing to bet that we will quickly see positive cases in school. Then why are we opening school this way? I just don't get it. You can't let two people, Dr. Park and Anderson make safety decisions for over 300,00 people (students, teachers, staff). They are not using science or even common sense. If you know we will see rapid cases, then what's the point of sending us in a classroom? To test out their contact tracers? To see how many will get sick or die? Many teachers will no oppose a strike or a sit-out. We will do whatever it takes to save our lives. Too many teachers have already died and it could have been prevented by doing distance learning. We have options!! I can see if we didn't have options but we do. Please rethink this very carefully because many lives will depend on your decisions.

K.S

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Bryce Tomatani <bryce.tomatani@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Bryce Tomatani  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:06 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov; boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

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.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Mayumi Fukuoka <fukuoka0@icloud.com> on behalf of Mayumi Fukuoka  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:06 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** HSTA salary differential

Aloha Honorable Board of Education Members;

My name is Mayumi Fukuoka and I am an ELL 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.

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. I am a veteran teacher working 23 years and still need a second job to support my income. When I started teaching, I was a single parent with 3 small children. I was working 3 jobs just to support myself and my children. I could not take any courses to move across the salary class. I just moved up my first class with 15 credits through the 21 hrs. How is it fair that a teacher working less than 10 years is making more than me? It is very depressing- I Am supporting myself and can never retire! I am 64 years old. 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.

Furthermore, we need to delay the opening of the school year with students. We are still having 6 rotating periods a day. There is no "ohana bubble" concept in this model with EAs pushing into several different classrooms working with different students. I just found out that I would have to also push into different classrooms for part of the day. I am in the high risk category due to my health conditions and disabilities. I fear for my health as well as my family- I have a daughter and grandson who had to move in with me due to the economic situation of not being able to afford rent.

Our students will not be eating in classrooms. Some will be in the cafeteria while others will have to sit on the grass areas. This situation does not control the social distancing. These students will mingle and share food. There are no hand sanitizer dispensers on campus. Custodians were not given PPE supplies. The added demands to comply to the safety and health regulations is impossible if there are no funds at the school level to hire more custodians.

We have a substitute shortage - prior to this pandemic. Teachers could not participate in dept PDs/ collaboration days if they could not secure a substitute. Now with this pandemic, substitutes are not going to want to work as many of them are retired teachers or are in the high risk category. This also poses a problem with the concept of the school ohana bubble especially in the middle and high schools.

Teachers need more time to be properly trained on the protocols, trained on the distance learning platform and making or redoing school curriculum and pacing guides. This is impossible to do during the 9 days of half days with students. This is poor planning - students starting school when teachers do not have a clear curriculum plan for distance learning and or the other models of blended/ hybrid.

Please support them and find a way to make teachers and their students a priority during the challenges of Covid 19.

Mahalo,  
Mayumi Fukuoka

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** cwethall92181 <claudiawethall@gmail.com> on behalf of cwethall92181  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:07 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

To whom it may concern,

With all respect, I am concerned about the decision to have teachers and students return to school after our numbers continue to climb and our active cases are higher now than they were when we closed the schools the first time.

I beg you to reconsider the decision to open schools on August 4th because I'm afraid that this is detrimental to EVERYONE's safety and the education of our Keiki. If we open on August 4th, teachers will be forced to become mask police and make sure students are keeping their distance and will not be able to teach the students effectively while trying to figure out how to incorporate quality online instruction. Teachers have been given ZERO information about the expectation of distant learning and there have been few trainings offered for those who need support. If we were forced to close the school, teachers would need to use online platforms without having adequate training. We need time for teachers to train, plan, and prepare for distant learning so every teacher feels confident teaching their students safely.

I love my students and hope to see them soon but the thought of having them return to school and social distance, wear a mask, etc.. is not going to be easy despite our constant reminders. Before the pandemic, it was a struggle for our Kindergarten students to use the restroom appropriately, wash their hands, keep things out of their mouths and not pick their noses on a daily basis with frequent reminders. There is no way that we can beat ukus let alone this illness that they may not even show symptoms for. It's only a matter of time before a we get a positive case at school and I don't feel safe going to school without a detailed protocol in place. What if my child's preschool has a positive case? Would I have to quarantine? Would my whole class have to quarantine too? What about the grade level? Or building? "Waiting to see what happens" is not only unprofessional and inadequate but devastating to teachers who are now being placed on the 'front lines'.

My school has decided to have AB schedules so we are supposed to teach in person 5 days a week, online 5 days a week, while having ELL and SPED students all 5 days a week with possible pay cuts in the future?! I'm sorry but I already put in 9+ hours every day and went in to work in my classroom every weekend BEFORE the pandemic. I am not going to sacrifice my families health so I can work 2-3 times as hard for less than what I am making now. To be honest I am currently looking for other means of employment to support my family and already anticipate having to quit or move to the mainland at some point during the school year if our wages decrease.

Please do not make us return so the spread relies solely on the teachers when we haven't been trained or given clear expectations. That is unrealistic and completely unfair. We need to take the time to do this right. Prioritizing our students safety isn't asking for that much. It's too soon. We aren't ready. Please consider pushing the student start date back and making the DOE accountable for everyone's safety.

Thank you for your time,  
Claudia Wethall  
Kindergarten Kumu at Waihe'e School

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Joann Kimura <joann.kimura@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Joann Kimura  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:08 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

I am a second grade teacher at a school in Waipahu. It has been very concerning to me that we will be starting school in two weeks with the number of COVID cases increasing. This is a risk for the students, families, staff and teachers statewide. At what point do we deem the school as unsafe? Will a set number of students, staff and teachers have to get ill? It is inevitable that it will come to this. This virus is by no means under control. We have no handle on it, and the numbers will escalate tremendously with the opening of schools. Are we willing to let what happened in New York, (when schools were kept open beyond what they should have), happen here?

I do agree that the economy needs to get back on track, but also feel that there are valid reasons for the union's position about delaying the opening of school. The students' and school personnels' health and safety are being jeopardized. Dr. Kishimoto's address to teachers emphasized the need to put the students first. Is jeopardizing their lives, really putting them first? She said it's time for teachers to get out there like the first responders, store workers, etc. She mentions about being committed and reflecting on the reasons why we became educators. I definitely am a committed teacher, who gives my all for the best of my students. I know, however, that I didn't choose this career knowing that it would include risking my life. Truly caring about our children of Hawai'i, I think, involves caring for their health and safety first.

Dr.Kishimoto claims that everything is in order and schools are safe to reopen. The public knows that this cannot be the case. With COVID increasing in numbers, where students are asked to stay 6' apart, wearing masks... is this what we are saying is safe?

There are no easy answers in this situation. Asking students, teachers and staff to risk their lives shouldn't be an option. With the direction that this virus has been heading, it's a disaster waiting to happen, which will force closure once again. It is inevitable. How many people will need to get infected? How many must give their lives? Is this truly the path we want to take? I don't think it is.

Sincerely,  
JoAnn Kimura

--

JoAnn Kimura  
Teacher - Gr.2  
Honowai Elementary School

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Sunshine Badua <sunshine.badua@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Sunshine Badua  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:08 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Delay opening of schools

Dear BOE,

I am a parent of three children in the 4th, 6th, & 9th grade. I have chosen to have my kids do 100% distance learning. When I called their schools today to inquire about distance learning, there are so many unanswered questions because the school does not know how it will work at this time. It is so obvious that the schools are NOT prepared to start on Aug. 4th.

I chose distance learning for my kids because I feel the schools are not safe at this time. There are many concerns that are not addressed as a parent regarding health & safety of my children. My children will be in a lot of social bubbles & will be at risk of getting the virus regardless of the A/B schedule.

I am also an inclusion teacher in elementary & I have not been trained at all on how to keep myself & all students safe. There will be 14 people in my classroom each day with a blended schedule because 2 SPED students require a parapro. 10 students & 4 adults in the classroom everyday while maintaining social distance is not possible. The rest of my colleagues in the grade level will have 12 first graders while maintaining social distance. That is not going to work!

Please delay the opening of schools on Aug. 4th. Teachers need more time to plan & parents need peace of mind. You are forcing everyone to go to school & live in fear everyday.

Thank you for your consideration & understanding!

Mahalo,  
Sunshine Badua

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Tanaka, Doonaree <dtanaka@inouye.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Tanaka, Doonaree  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:08 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

[Testimony.BOE@BOE.Hawaii.gov](mailto:Testimony.BOE@BOE.Hawaii.gov)

I am a preschool special education teacher and I am writing to voice my concerns with the planned opening of schools on August 4. I believe that teachers need more information and more training before opening our schools.

I have received no guidance of what this will look like but I am expected to move furniture, change furniture and pack up my classroom to make room for distancing.

I have seen press conferences that say children are less likely to become ill. What about the teachers? As an older teacher with an underlying health condition, I love my job but I am considered high risk. My special needs students are very young and do not understand social distancing. Higher risk. How do I social distance from a child who needs toilet training, is crying or having a meltdown? What PPE is needed for a teacher who comes in close contact with children? Will this equipment be provided by the school?

I am particularly concerned about military families who come from different duty stations and may or may not have quarantined before sending their children to school.

If a staff member or a member of their family becomes ill we contact the DOH, but what happens at the school level? Do we shut down a classroom, a building or the entire school? How many people have to become ill before the decision is made to shut down an individual school or the school system in general?

Will teachers be tested and if so, how often, where and at whose expense?

Will special education teachers be expected to teach both face to face and distance learning as well as doing IEP meetings? Preschool teachers have no prep time. We have no duty free lunch. When will we receive training for distance learning?

So many questions and no answers. How can we return to school?

Sincerely,  
Doonaree Dowd Tanaka



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Alex Saad <alexanderjsaad@gmail.com> on behalf of Alex Saad  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:09 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Good evening,

My name is Alexander Saad and I am a PLTW teacher at Ewa Makai Middle 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. As an educator with Asthma, I worry for students in the same situation and who have other underlying health issues. As a robotics teacher, I fear my students having to share equipment after each class. And as a resident of Hawaii, I am concerned about bringing home COVID-19 to my home where there is a newborn baby. Through my time spent in California this summer, I have seen first hand the increase in spikes in my own hometown of San Luis Obispo. As a result, the county is on the watchlist from the CDC and can only teach online this first semester. I fear that as cases spike throughout the United States, Hawaii will be just as susceptible as my home. If the state of Hawaii is still under quarantine, then I believe schools should also postpone reopening until cases decrease in number and there are more policies are implemented to protect teachers, admin, and especially the children. The last thing I want as an educator is any of my children to contract COVID-19. Until cases drop, more safety procedures are adequately explained and implemented, only then do I believe that schools should reopen.

Thank you for your time,

Alex Saad

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Tina Lopez <mrsronlopez@gmail.com> on behalf of Tina Lopez  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:09 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

**RE: 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,

First, please allow me to thank you for all that you're doing. I do understand how much work that you're doing. We are in unprecedented times. Mahalo nui loa.

Would you please consider the delay of return of students to campus? I am a classroom teacher, and I do not know of the protocols to keep both myself and my students safe.

While I am concerned that I may infect a family member at risk, I am more afraid of keeping my students in my special education resource room safe. In my classroom, I have multiple students with autism. Two of my students have one on one assistance. The students require the adult in close proximity. One student has not worn a mask yet. How do we keep the adults safe?

I cry daily thinking about the risks for those in my classroom. I have created some procedures for safety in my classroom. However, I am not a medical professional. I do not know how to keep anyone safe.

Besides the one page document on the DOE website that offers generic procedures, I have not seen any specific safety guidelines.

I urge you to please delay the return until procedures are in place to keep everyone on the school campus safe. Thank you again for your work.

Mahalo Nui Loa,  
Tina Lopez

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Poni Napuelua <hakaleleponi@gmail.com> on behalf of Poni Napuelua  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:09 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

To the Ladies and Gentlemen of the Board of Education,

My name is Cecili H. Nāpū‘elua, School Based Behavioral Health/Behavioral Health Specialist, DOE.

Meeting: General Business Meeting

Agenda Item: Opening of Schools Plan

Position: oppose

As a BHS who works for the DOE, I have not been trained in anyway as to how to conduct my job duties while at work physically. During the closure of schools last quarter until now, we have received trainings on tele-health; none on sanitization processes, rules of what to do should a staff or student become ill while in school. Also, with the minimal to no plan of any kind as of yet as to what we are to do, who’s sanitizing?, how often?, and how to control for non-class times such as before and after school, recess, and lunch times, we are expected to put all of that in place, feel safe at work with employees coming from all walks of life (extenuating factors, we don’t know where people go or what they do in their time away from work).

What type of PPE will be provided for myself and students? What are the safety guidelines and procedures that I should follow once I leave work and then come home? I have not been trained in any way on how to counsel students (who may be experiencing a wide variety of behaviors from shutting down and not talking to throwing tables and chairs) from six feet away. All my non Covid-19 training of how to be supportive, how to build rapport, and how to assist students, as well as my 13 years of being a BHS has not prepared me for counseling students from 6 feet away. It goes against everything I have ever been taught/done; counseling-wise.

What was the point of receiving training on tele health when now we are all expected to be back at work physically? School leaders have the burden of making decisions for ENTIRE school campuses. Schools historically have been a breeding ground of illness. How is every single employee of every single school campus going to be properly trained by August 4th? How are students going to be trained by August 4th? How are students and teachers expected to teach and learn in high-heat classrooms as air conditioners are discouraged by the CDC and open air is best for ventilation? I know all too well that social and emotional health are important aspects of human-life, but the threat of Covid-19 and the reality of cases being even higher than when schools initially shut down last quarter, social and emotional health has to remain secondary to physical health.

WE CAN DIE FROM CORONA VIRUS AND SO CAN OUR CHILDREN!!! THAT’S NOT OKAY!!

I have already been a part of the front line to be there as support for students and staff should a student or staff member die. The living are affected! In ways that are unthinkable and unimaginable.

It is not safe for anyone to go back to school. Minors or adults. If Corona Virus is not going away, then isn’t it time we start seriously looking at innovative ways of providing education? The back to school “order” is ridiculous! Absolutely ridiculous. Yes people need to go back to work and yes children need an education, but

we are more than ill prepared at the moment. We have not been trained, Covid 19 cases are on the rise, and if the board, the governor, and his team move forward with the decision to open schools on August fourth as announced a few weeks ago, with ill prepared school staff and no plans in place, my prediction is this: that schools will reopen, there will be a rise in cases and schools will be shut down again. Isn't it time we become more proactive and smart and stop treating school employees and students like guinea pigs? It doesn't sit well with me to "wait and see" and be reactive. We have to be proactive, make plans, protocols, and procedures FOR EVERYONE on all school campuses, have meetings, run throughs, and whatever else BEFORE opening up schools.

Please do not open schools until the case numbers have dropped significantly for an extended period of time, and ALL SCHOOLS FACULTY, STAFF, AND STUDENTS have been provided training and have gone through the trainings. Until then. Play it safe! Are any of you completely comfortable with sending your children back to school physically? Do any of you work at a school and feel 100% safe going back to work with no plans in place? wondering.....

Me ke aloha,  
Poni Nāpū'elua

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Leanna Agcaoili <leanna.agcaoili@gmail.com> on behalf of Leanna Agcaoili  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:11 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Aloha Chairwoman Payne and Hawaii Board of Education,

My name is Leanna Agcaoili, and I am a third grade teacher at Mayor Joseph J. Fern Elementary School in Farmington Complex. I am writing to you in regards to my concerns of the DOE's comprehensive plan for reopening of schools.

First of all, my concern is the DOE and DOH's lack of a transparent comprehensive COVID-19 action plan in the event of an employee and/or child infected with COVID-19 during school hours. Although Dr. Park has shared that the CDC guidelines are well thought out, I respectfully disagree with my clientele. My families reside in multi-generational homes and/or apartments in a large housing community. Many of my seven- and eight-year-old students get ready independently for school due to their home life situations, and attend school even with flu-like symptoms without the parents knowing. When attempting to reach parents/guardians, many times a child stays in the Health Room the entire day because there is no adult to pick up the child, therefore, having to walk home alone at the end of the school day. How will our school nurse stay safe if this occurs? How will our other students stay safe if the child is sitting in the Health Room all day?

Secondly, our school has received little to no professional development related to distance learning strategies within our complex area. Yes, teachers had the option to voluntarily observe through the Summer Learning Lab. But as a teacher who taught within the Lab, I had a 2-hour training to prepare me for distance learning of 80 students. Although I am fortunate for the experience as a Hawaii State Teacher Fellow, many teachers from my school have not received any training. We are currently teaching ourselves through a teacher-led technology PD together. There has not been formal training conducted statewide where all teachers will receive the same training together. As a grade level chair, my teachers are looking up to me for a plan of action and I am having a hard time guiding them with the lack of training I myself have received.

Knowing that a prominent private school hired an epidemiologist made me wonder as well if our own state epidemiologist will be observing all of our schools. Will she be able to attend and learn for a full-day wearing a face mask in a 90°F+ classroom? Will she assess in-person our physical learning spaces prior to students returning to campus? Will she train schools herself on protocols to prevent COVID-19 and if it occurs on campus? If she is comfortable with sending her own children back to school, then I wonder if she'll feel the same if we ask her to provide the same attention and care to all of our health and safety.

I truly miss my students, but I would like the peace of mind that my family, colleagues, students, and I will be truly in a safe-learning environment with the proper training provided to all Hawaii DOE teachers.

Thank you for your time and considerations.

Sincerely,  
Leanna Agcaoili

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Jenna A <jma33712@gmail.com> on behalf of Jenna A  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:11 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** TESTIMONY

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.

I am absolutely enraged to hear that the BOE is requesting to discontinue the special education differential. Last year, Superintendent Kishimoto agreed that action needed to be taken to ease Hawaii's critical special education teacher shortage. During the meeting, Kishimoto and other board members pledged to fund the differentials from existing HDOE money if state lawmakers did not fund it for next school year. This proposal completely breaks that pledge and negatively impacts thousands of educators and children. If this proposal goes through, there will be a surplus of special education vacancies and thousands of children suffering because they are not having their needs met with a qualified educator. The negative effects of not having a qualified special education teacher will be astronomical and will include many special education lawsuits.

Having been both a general education teacher and a special education teacher, I can say with absolute certainty that the workload of a special education is much greater. It is a mentally, emotionally and physically taxing occupation. There is an enormous amount of paperwork and additional responsibilities that go into being a special education teacher. I am constantly working unpaid overtime to complete what needs to be accomplished! There is not enough time in the school day to complete the work load. I am taking my work home and finishing individualized educational programs, working on assessments, special education evaluations, collaboration with service providers, planning IEP meetings and consolidating various pieces of data into the late hours of the night. In addition, the students in a special education setting have high needs and require much more on a daily basis in the classroom.

The 10k special education differential is what has kept me AND MANY OTHER special educators in the classroom. If I knew about this proposal earlier, perhaps I would have applied to other jobs. If this differential is taken away, I may have to leave the special education field for good. The differentials have already made a HUGE DIFFERENCE in recruiting and retaining special education teachers. I can not fathom how it would make

sense to take away this differential from the special education teachers. WHY WOULD YOU CUT A PROGRAM THAT WORKS? IT DEFIES LOGIC. PLEASE RECONSIDER THIS PROPOSAL.

Thank you,

Jen

[Jma33712@gmail.com](mailto:Jma33712@gmail.com)

Special Education Teacher

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Rachel Silverman <rbsmurray@gmail.com> on behalf of Rachel Silverman  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:12 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Consider this when making decisions about schools in HI

To whom it may concern,

I am deeply concerned with the issues of pay differentials and opening of our schools in our current pandemic.

"Teachers are arguably the most important members of our society. They give children purpose, set them up for success as citizens of our world, and inspire in them a drive to do well and succeed in life." UoPeople. The foundation of character and life-long learning is fostered by dedicated teachers in an education system that is constantly changing. The COVID19 pandemic has increased the difficulty of our jobs exponentially every day. To say be prepared to teach in an uncertain format, with training forthcoming, in a teaching situation that may change daily makes teaching exponentially harder and also exponentially increases the stress we are already under. To suggest cutting our pay and putting many of us in a financially unstable situation is untenable. We are already considered underpaid. The value of education you demonstrate in your choices will have consequences that could be felt far into the future by teachers, our students, and our society as a whole.

I am extremely confused with how our situation now, which is worse than when we closed in March, makes it okay to open schools. Does the Center for Disease Control (CDC) not still recommend people should not be gathering in groups greater than 10? Have we not just learned that children 10 and above transmit the COVID19 virus just as easily as adults? Are you willing to accept responsibility for deaths of either a child(ren) or a teacher(s) because you couldn't wait 3-6 months for a vaccine or successful treatment regimen that reduces the chances of transmission and/or increases the probability of recovery. Is time only a factor when in the face of imminent danger? Do we actually have to have people die before courageous action is taken to ensure the safety of all? Our Justice system is built on the concept that incarcerating one innocent individual is so unacceptable that we let many guilty ones go free. And yet we are willing to risk the lives of 10s of thousands of teachers and students.

I hope you take into consideration my testimony before making your decisions.

Sincerely,  
Rachel Silverman

Sent from my iPhone



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Danica Walsh <hokulani19@gmail.com> on behalf of Danica Walsh  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:12 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Regarding Action Item H

Aloha BOE,

I am an elementary special education teacher on Maui. I am deeply worried about returning to school during a pandemic. I have a 2 year old son and live with my 70 year old mother who is diabetic, has high blood pressure and a pacemaker. If I return to work in an environment that has rushed to reopen and is not prepared, the consequences of me getting Covid will most likely be deadly.

We are not ready to return. We did not sign up to be martyrs for education.

My job entails close proximity to children 95% of the time. I work with students who act out, bite, spit, scratch, and have no desire to stay in a forward facing seat with a mask on for 6 hours.

It is completely ludicrous to expect that of these children.

We need to delay reopening schools face to face.

For now we need to start with 100% distance learning and gradually return to “normal”.

Our school and teachers are not set up to deal with all the “what if’s”.

I personally have received ZERO training on how I am expected to do my job and handle these kids while maintaining 3-6ft of distance.

How am I supposed to handle children with severe behavioral challenges while maintaining this distance? What if they are running down the street (which many young kids do)? What if they are attacking themselves or another? Am I supposed to just stand back and watch??

We need training!!

How am I supposed to maintain a “bubble” if I am an inclusion teacher that floats to multiple different classrooms??

There are so many unanswered questions.

We are not ready.

I don’t want to quit.

But I also don’t want to have my mothers or sons death on my hands because I was FORCED to work during a full fledged PANDEMIC!!

Please delay reopening face to face. I beg you!

Danica Walsh  
Wailuku Elementary School

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Christopher Castillo <christillo90@gmail.com> on behalf of Christopher Castillo  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:13 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony for teachers

To be 100% honest it breaks my heart that we have to be writing this.

That we as a career choice have to stand up to be treated as equals.

First off I would like to address the pay cuts and the differentials...

Like I work at a low income school on the coast in which many teachers have continued to come and go like a revolving door. In my 7 years teaching there, only like 5 of us remain and the rest are ready to retire or have left. Every year we have had teachers come and go. I am one of those teachers who consistently think about leaving after my 4th year because it is much harder. A big enough percentage of my paychecks go to supplying my room with enough supplies because my kids don't have it. It covers enough for snacks and food because my kids come to school or go home hungry. My current pay with the differential is enough for me to survive on my own and support my kids. By survive, I mean bare minimum. I don't go on trips, I don't buy super nice things all the time, I barely get my car fixed because I can't afford it nor do I go to the doctors as much like I need to after donating my kidney because I don't have the luxury to afford another bill on the side. We have already had a big chunk of our staff retire early or just quit because they just can't do it anymore... You want the schools to be filled with certified teachers, yet you are willing to let us hire permanent subs or TFA's with no education backgrounds to teach our children. That already tells a big story on the value of teachers. If that pay cut or the differentials get cut, I honestly have to say that I know teachers including myself are gonna have to look for other options to survive and it may not be in the lines of teaching anymore.

Now on to opening up the schools? How did the plan change drastically from waiting til cases went down and having 4 weeks of no cases or significant cases to schools are ready to open? Yes our kids need to go back to school, yes they need quality education but if we go back now without a real plan is that going to be quality? I work at a school with no nurse and lots of sick kids. AND when kids are sick and need to go home no parent is there to take them because they are working. Who is going to help them? What is their support if someone on my campus is positive for covid and everything shuts down again? What happens to the rest of the school? Why is it ok for everything else to have teleworking or telemeeting because it is too dangerous to meet in person but for our kids it's worth the risk? Are our kids worth the risk? Are their families worth the risk? What is the actual plan that is going to keep our kids, our staff, and everyone else safe? What about parents who come to pick up their kids? What about families that come to pick up their kids? What if we are not informed if someone is sick at home? I work in a community that tried distance learning as well and it didn't work as great because so many of my kids didn't have the resources like the internet to get on. What about subs? they will either not want to work or have multiple interactions with multiple people not knowing if they came into contact with someone positive or not? Or what if they eventually test positive? Then you have to close down all classrooms and inform all people who that person subbed for? I don't believe that we have an actual plan to open schools again. Why can we not delay the start of school and give teachers more time to plan, schools time to plan? You expected us to plan now over summer? I am trying to figure out when teachers and all the staff were invited to the table of the discussion on how to reopen the schools safely.

I have so many questions that it would take even more space on this email.

Please...for the sake of everyone...rethink your decisions.

Chris

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** G Oka <gokamoka@gmail.com> on behalf of G Oka  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:13 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

My name is Grant Oka and am teacher at Pearl Ridge Elementary School.

I'm testifying on the State of Hawaii BOE's decision to start school with students before all of the details and procedures are set and mandated on the safety of students and teachers. I truly believe that schools are NOT ready to open with students. Yes, we understand the 6 foot distance rule. That students and faculty need to wear masks to try to be safe. However, that's just the physical aspect.

Teachers have not received enough training on distance learning and haven't had enough time to plan with their grade levels and school to be ready to effectively teach our students. We are being required to do full 180 days of teaching, but with students not all coming back to school everyday, how will this be possible? We are not doing our students justice and not giving them the full education they need to succeed if we don't have the time to plan and collaborate. Pushing back the start date of school will allow schools to plan for this.

My other concern is that safety procedures are not fully outlined and decisions are being left up to schools on how they think they can keep themselves and their students safe. There is no such thing as an "Ohana Bubble" for our students. They will cross paths, bubbles will cross before, during, and after school. Their extra curricular activities outside of school will cross bubbles. It's not a matter of IF schools will all close and go to full distance learning, but WHEN. Which students and teachers will catch COVID? Who will be the first victim? How many will be victims? I pray there will be no tragic stories of those that catch it. Only time will tell, but will the BOE take that responsibility?

How many students need to catch COVID before a class, or school shuts down? What is the procedure to follow? Leave it up to the schools? We are NOT health experts. What if a teacher caught COVID? Who will teach their class? Do teachers have enough sick and personal days to cover? Is that our fault and have to fend for ourselves and our safety? You are not on the front lines. You will not have to physically and personally have to face these challenges.

Safety procedures in a pandemic should NOT be "optional" or left up to schools who are not experts. If given more time, schools and teachers will be able to do their best to plan to teach distance learning because I feel we will be back to stay at home and 100% distance learning before the school year ends. Teachers will be responsible for teaching the best we can during this pandemic, but we should not be responsible for trying to figure out how to handle the safety and lives of students and faculty from catching COVID.

There needs to be more time to figure things out before we open our school's doors to students, faculty and COVID.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Stephanie <aloha@waiihawaii.com> on behalf of Stephanie  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:15 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Return to School

Aloha,  
To Whom it May Concern

It is not good to have Hawaii be the guinea pig for the rest of country, Its better to see how other schools handle and do what what works.

Wouldn't it be better to start of distance learning, then create a solid plan and have in person mix?

I feel that would be better for many reasons and WHEN a second, third wave hits.

They say this is still the first wave.

That way there is more preparation for future events.

It is always better to be more prepared than not be ready.

Teachers and all staff , need proper prep, detailed mailed forms?

This is peoples lives, and no one knows the future.

Starting mixed after Labor Day or even later, second quarter, gives everyone some time at least.

The turtle wins the race.

Mahalo  
Stephanie

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Rebecca Marsh <rebeccamarsh108@gmail.com> on behalf of Rebecca Marsh  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:16 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** TESTIMONY

To Hawaii BOE,

I am a high school teacher on the Big Island of Hawaii with underlying medical conditions. School is set to open to students in two weeks, and it is NOT safe. I feel that the DOE is willing to risk my safety and the safety of my students and their households. I am faced with the agonizing decision of reporting to my job (which I love) or keeping myself safe. I should not have to make this decision, especially when we have the ability to go to distance learning and eliminate this risk.

I have been hearing talk of the classroom being part of an extended safe "bubble." This is RIDICULOUS. As a high school teacher, I will be exposed to multiple classes every day. At my high school, students will be with one bubble while they wait for the bus, one bubble on the bus, another in period 1, another in period 2, another in period 3 and another in period 4, every day they report to campus. How big of a bubble is that? In addition, there is no clear enforceable mask policy, and no way to enforce social distancing during passing, bus rides, bus stops, recess, bathroom breaks and the many other "unstructured" minutes in the day. And, at my high school, even with the current plan of half our students reporting on a given day, that means the potential mixing of 600+ kids and staff, every day they report. Anybody that claims a safe bubble can be maintained in that situation is either grossly ignorant or lying.

I have been a teacher for 14 years, but now I feel backed into a desperate corner. I beg you, do not open schools to students on August 4th. Keep me, the students, their households and other staff safe by letting us teach online, from home. We can log on five days a week, and do the best job we can, while staying safe from Covid-19.

Rebecca Marsh  
High School Teacher

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Keri Anacker <kerianacker@gmail.com> on behalf of Keri Anacker  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:16 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 Keri Anacker and I am a School Psychologist on Oahu.

In spite of new data showing they were effective, the BOE aims to defer millions of dollars in shortage differentials that the Hawaii State Department of Education (HIDOE) began in January. New figures prove differentials worked. According to the department's data, the number of teachers transferring into special education positions for the upcoming 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. Why would you demolish a program that is proving to be beneficial in multiple areas?

As a school psychologist, I receive a shortage differential and am grateful for it. When I was applying to work here and learned of the differential, I considered it a perk and it enticed me to accept the position over others. To me, the shortage differential tells me that the state acknowledges that we are understaffed but we are being rewarded for doing hard work. It makes me feel appreciated and it gives me an incentive to go above and beyond in my work. Taking away our shortage differential would personally be a let down. It would make me feel undervalued and would deter me from working for the DOE long term as I had hoped. When talking to prospective new hires about the perks Hawaii has to offer, I often bring up the shortage bonus; it makes me feel proud to be a part of a program that recognizes the difficulties of working with a shortage of employees. Please reconsider.

Thank you, Keri Anacker

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Opihi Jadetyra <ediek808@gmail.com> on behalf of Opihi Jadetyra  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:17 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Reopening of school

Aloha,

With the opening of school right around the corner there are many unanswered questions that nobody seems to know how to answer or wants to answer.

At our school, who's responsibility is it to take visitors, delivery people, staff & students temperature? My arm span is pretty short as I am less than 5 feet tall and do not feel safe or comfortable being so close to people, especially strangers? I am not a medical professional. When people come into the office from and AC car their temp is low and not accurate. Also, how do we keep things confidential if they do have a fever and we temp them in front of other people and ask them to step into another area? Isn't that against FERPA rules?

How do we handle the multiple forgotten items that parents bring into the office? Jackets have crusty sleeves that the students use to wipe their nose and mouth, water bottles that are not washed daily, lunch boxes that are not wiped clean on a consistent basis, shoes, glasses, hearing aids, instruments, filthy kumon bags and many other personal items. How are we to deliver these items? Some days there will be over 20 items that need to be delivered.

Again, I am not comfortable with handling personal items that could have bodily fluids on them. If we take them and put them on the counter, the counter needs to be disinfected. If it touches another student's personal item, that item is contaminated and could potentially contaminate another ohana bubble.

What do we do with all of the students that do not get picked up on time? We usually hold them all in the office so they are supervised and safe. Our usual count is around 12 or more daily. Our office can hold 3 people if they are standing against the wall and 6 feet apart. What do we do if a parent or delivery person walks in? Or a child is waiting there to be picked up for an appointment? Where will all these people go? How do we safely distance everyone and the staff?

If someone calls in sick from our office, how do we know that they are so called "safe" and just had a cold? Do we all stay home until they get tested for covid? DO WE ALL STOP WORK AND GO TO THE DOCTOR? WHAT IS THE PROCEDURE?

Why is that it seems the only people that seem to matter are the students and teachers? There is NO CONCERN for the custodial, cafe or the office staff.

How do we get a lunch count for the cafe with the distance learners? Seems like a lot of wasted food if you have over a 100 distance learners to make lunches for and its never picked up.

We are rushing to get a school year open and many schools do not even have class list, policy and procedure handbooks or even know who is teaching the distance learning classes?

How are we to do our jobs efficiently when we are doing so much more, taking temperatures, distancing people in the office, directing people where to go, answering ANGRY and SCARED parent explaining policies And not having answers for them.

Calling each classroom at the end of the day to release a student when their parent is there to pick them up? Yes, the office ladies will take about 30-45 minutes a day helping get the kids to their cars after school. Times



that by 4 people and 5 days, that 10 hours a week just calling students to their car. 10 hours lost where we should be doing our daily work?

How about birthday goodies? Are these still going to be allowed in the school? Some of these things are homemade.

In general have all custodians been trained for COVID cleaning? Just having the cleaning products doesn't mean that its being properly used. Did they measure the right amount of solution to be diluted with water? Are they changing their cleaning towels consistently or using the same one to clean with in multiple areas?

Who know what is going on and who can answer these questions? Shouldn't we all be on the same page? Why are we rushing to push our children back into school? Many people live in multiple generation households, how can we send our kids to school knowing we might be bringing something home that could kill a family member?

Could we just stop the insanity and come up with proper procedures before opening school?

You speak about the ohana bubble. What about our real ohana?

Mahalo for listening.

Edie Kamioka  
Mililani Ike

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Helena Costa <keanuenue@gmail.com> on behalf of Helena Costa  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:17 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

I am writing on behalf of myself, and my fellow teachers, to postpone the return of the keiki to the classroom.

Teachers care about children. We work hard, often many hours beyond our contract. We invest in the kids and become very attached.

We are not asking you to postpone because we are “lazy” or “scared for nothing”, as many are now saying to us. We are asking because YOU are not prepared. We know this because teachers are consummate preparers- a huge portion of our job is anticipating risk and preventing problems before they happen.

We are asking because we work this job year in and year out and we know the limitations of our work environment. We take our promise to families to keep their children safe extremely seriously. We know that we will see kids, and staff, and families get sick or worse, because our buildings are old, or small, or don't have windows, or share one bathroom for 200 kids. We know this is an airborne disease. We know it can affect and be transmitted by children- the science is showing us this.

We have not been trained in any virus protocols, we have not been given guidance on how/what/when for quarantines, we have not been provided any ppe, we still have not been given clear answers on what distance learning should look like should we be asked to start it up again.

What we have done is spent our own time this summer (unpaid) trying to attempt switching our curriculum over to digital (with no guidance), and pushing desks around to try to maximize space in the classrooms, and spending our own money buying fans and masks and other things that should have been provided already. We go back NEXT WEEK- where are the supplies? What a slap in the face that the DOE is not listening to any concerns we have, but rather pitting the families we care about against us, because we raise valid concerns.

You are not prepared. If keiki get sick, or teachers or parents or kupuna pass, it will be 100% on you for pushing false promises of safety to the public and being okay with the stance “infections will happen”. If distance learning tanks, it will be 100% on you for not providing the time or the guidance to develop the lessons and framework. Such work takes time, and you undermine the validity of it when you assume it can be pulled out of thin air.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Maha Smith <grizzcubs@yahoo.com> on behalf of Maha Smith  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:19 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Dear Board of Education,

It is imperative that we prioritize the health of our children and the adults who work with them. To do that, we really must push back the opening of our schools. I'm terrified to send my 7th grader back to his middle school, and as a teacher who is at high risk of covid complications, I am extremely worried about returning to such a risky environment. Please show us that you care for our children's health by delaying the start of school.

Thank you for choosing to do the right thing,  
Maha Weeks

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Leilani Nomura <lnomura08@gmail.com> on behalf of Leilani Nomura  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:19 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Dear Sirs:

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 DOE teacher with the State of Hawaii and have been teaching for 25 years. I am currently teaching at Aliamanu Elementary School. I am concerned about the reopening of the schools for SY 2020-2021. The Board of Education needs to delay the opening of schools because the Hawaii State Department of Education and the Department of Health needs more time to properly create and implement health strategies to prevent the spread of COVID-19, and schools need more time to prepare educators for an online enrichment program.

Teachers are setting up their school rooms without some type of guideline from the State of Hawaii - Department of Health. Parents are asking questions about distance learning but the schools can't answer them because the schools don't know the available options for them. This is all very confusing. We can not rush to open our schools. The health and safety of our students and teachers are important.

Sincerely,  
Leilani Nomura



Virus-free. [www.avg.com](http://www.avg.com)

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Maile Ann <maileanngidget@yahoo.com> on behalf of Maile Ann  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:20 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

On Action H. Board 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.

Maile Ann Kauo  
Kapaa Elementary  
K-5 Reading Intervention  
(All grades in Small Group and Computer ) RTI Tier 3

Aloha, the school opening date should be detained. After speaking with a fellow Oregonian Educator, he claims that Oregon has decided to not open school yet due to the unpredictability of the virus. Interestingly enough, he also compared Oregon to Florida and Arizona, and said that this specific North Pacific Region had extremely low numbers in cases, unlike the two latter states mentioned. (We were looking at statistics as this virus is of global significance!)

Like Kauai, Oregon is clean. People are heeding rules, respecting distance n face covers, things are spread out and the land is looking green , - so cases are few. AND! Oregon has decided to wait for the opening of school! This is one of the safer places to be, yet they take caution like everywhere else. To be safe. To be free someday.

I, too, agree that school should not open yet for at least a mo. due to the following reasons:

1. Teachers, as first responders, have not had the training of first aid, seen practice, or get supply ready in dealing w/ possibly viral students. The teachers need to know the process of the stay at home protocol regarding length of stay, ONLINE learning (which is another huge topic, teaching from the whatt?) curricula to offer, inclass curricula to emphasize on if stipulated, communication w/ home, etc. These things should be ironed out before the students return, so parents know what they are dealing with and what choices they may have to send a child to school or not. Time, we need more of it for the teachers to organize please.

2. Hawaii being a melting pot of the Pacific, as NY is to the outer States, creates a gateway of to and fro passengers. I worked in tourism at Smiths Fern Grotto and Coco Palms before teaching, and know that tourism is our number one market in HI. But what are the options if 40 new cases a day are found in Oahu w/ the airlines opening up? Living in paradise will lure others here to escape surely.

Even w temp checks and swabbing at the airports, someone's friend(s) or relative(s) are bound to come here and infect someone, perhaps a student who already had a little cold from swimming or was asthmatic. (Like many are) Now thst child is sick and passes it on. Not if, its a matter of when and who? So, if all become at risk as airlines are allowed to fly, and schools are not organized to handle this pandemic (dictionary: of a disease outbreak prevalent around the Whole World), let's wait until the teachers are better prepared to teach the children and handle the Pandemic. By the way, we heard the word epidemic, which means a disease outbreak within a community. And the word part pan is in Pandemonium, which means wild confused disorder. Are we not seeing people act more aggressively since the outbreak? related underlyingly to the COVID-19 responses of frustration, etc? Is this pandemonious pandemic to be made scarier for us than need be?Is

this worrisome setting something we would want the parents to think about as they rear their child? We would make things worse by opening too early and not having answers and means for problems that will arise.

3. Lastly, children are often the most sensitive and intuitive people of us all. They know when we are suppressing things, stressing, getting annoyed, and they mirror us back. They can even feel the weird electric frequency that somehow connects us even though the distancing and trying to interact with masks separates us. So, you see it is sad for the children. How much fun is fun? Too much fun? No more tag..keep thinking of the outdoor keep apart games. Bring your water bottles? Still OK to use the fountains? Not all kids wash hands ever? We will be reteaching n making bathroom visits too?

All in all, it is sad for all stakeholders involved to open on 4/29. Let's wait a month. Why not? There is simply too much dialogue, things to iron out, and let's look at success models in other States or Countries where we can adopt a plan or strategy from them too! Why recreate the wheel? Time is needed to research the new 'dis ease.' Meaning 'Without Ease.' If school opens as planned, we all will be in 'dis ease.'

In summary, we must teach that this style of learning may be a bit different, yet positive. Have Faith that it is Temporary, and we can do this if we follow the rules.

But those that make the rules for us? Would you please make all of us, your stakeholders, lives a lot easier and smooth by giving us more time to prepare to open school? Please? Thank you for your time and consideration.

Kindly Yours,  
Maile Ann Kauo

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Malia Hanakahi <malia.hanakahi@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Malia Hanakahi  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:20 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Testimony on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii BOE 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.

Aloha, My name is Malia Hanakahi and I am a Kindergarten teacher at Leihōkū Elementary School. With the start of the school year quickly approaching, and teachers returning to school happening in about a week, I believe the opening of school should be more thoughtfully planned out. Here we are, 2 weeks from opening and still, nothing set in stone. What is the game plan? I feel there are more questions than answers. The upcoming school year will be my 8th year teaching. Most teachers will tell you, they spend hours each Summer planning and prepping for the school year. Unfortunately, I haven't been able to wrap my head around or spend time planning because things are always changing. Yes, children benefit from being in school and as a kindergarten teacher, I know that physically being in school is paramount to learning. However, I feel VERY uncomfortable. Ok, children are low risk, and technically people in my age group 20's-30's are lower risk as well. BUT, I have a history of asthma and flu related pneumonia. I also have two young children at home. As a mother, I am already worried about myself or my family getting COVID-19. My parents watch my children when I am at work. They would be considered a high risk category...what happens if i contract it, bring it home, and then they get it? All of this is and will continue to be on my conscious day in and day out. I heard in a recent press conference that it will fall on the community to practice their social distancing and limiting contacts in order to keep our schools safe...Well, if you take a look around at any beach on the weekends, you'll see this is NOT the case. Parties of 100 people all over the place. With COVID cases rising, I do not feel safe exposing myself to 20+ families each week.

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Christine Asuncion <asuncione003@gmail.com> on behalf of Christine Asuncion  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:20 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

My name is Christine Asuncion and I am a Special Education Teacher at Stevenson Middle School and I 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. As a Special Education teacher our job requires us to go over and beyond what is normally expected of us. We spend endless hours of our own time trying to do paperwork just to meet deadlines. Therefore, we should finally get compensated for what has been long overdue for many years. If this is taken away I can see many teachers leaving especially now with all of what is expected of us with the opening of the new school year. Please support our teachers for all that they do for our children.

Mahalo,  
Christine Asuncion  
Stevenson Middle School



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Linda Kaneshige <linda.kaneshige@gmail.com> on behalf of Linda Kaneshige  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:23 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Do NOT delay the reopening of schools

To whom it may concern,

I have two school age children. A first grader at Momilani Elementary and an 8th grader with ASD at Mililani Middle School. My son has been fortunate to be able to return to school since June 8th. My daughter however has been out of school since the beginning of March. She has missed the social interactions with friends and does not learn as well online as she can in-person. We are lucky that my son was able to go back to special education services with his wonderful teacher Mrs. Ashley Potter at Mililani Middle. Prior to this he has had a hard time engaging online and didn't seem motivated at all to do much online learning. My son has been able to keep his mask on from the time he gets on the bus at 7:30 to the time he gets off the bus around 12:20. I can understand the apprehension of some of the special education teachers as Mrs. Potter said she has one student that won't keep a mask on at all. My daughter has been at Kama'aina Kids since June and she loves being with her peers. She wears a mask everyday to Kama'aina Kids and doesn't have a problem with it. The staff and other students also comply with keeping their masks on. She is looking forward to going back to Momilani Elementary.

I urge you to NOT push back the start of school. If we don't start school now, then when will we? At what point will teachers feel safe? When cases are at zero for 4 weeks? When a vaccine is available? I work in healthcare and we are constantly exposed to patients that may be potentially sick. It is our responsibility to protect ourselves as best as we can. There will always be risks involved. We cannot protect everyone and we cannot indefinitely delay life from moving on and children from learning and growing. If the start of school is delayed those learning days are lost forever and won't be made up. I hope that you can work out the demands of the HSTA with them. Of course we cannot say what will happen if one student becomes infected because that will be determined by the Department of Health on a case by case basis. If we wait until all the parents need to go back to work then how can they go back to work if there is no one to care for their child? I am fortunate to have my parents to help me with my children, but there are many here in Hawaii that do not. Most of the other industries have gone back to work, with modifications of course. It is time to put our faith in others to the test. We must do what's right and wear a mask when we go out. Not attend big get togethers. If we all believe in each other, protect ourselves, and our community, we can take care of our keiki and our teachers. Don't send your kid to school if they are sick. We, as a community must come together. Our families have planned to return to school August 4th. Please don't let the kids down. It takes a village.

Sincerely,

Linda Kaneshige

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Renee Hiranaka <crhiranaka@hotmail.com> on behalf of Renee Hiranaka  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:25 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Reopening of schools

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter as a parent who is NOT comfortable with the opening of schools on August 4, 2020. My child will be entering 7th grade and my grandchild 6th grade. I am asking you to please please hold back on reopening of schools!!! I cannot take the risk of sending both my child and grandchild to school and being exposed to COVID-19. For one, my grandchild has asthma which makes him at a higher risk of infection; second, my parents live on the same property as us and they have autoimmune and health issues. It is not the right time to have all these children placed together in school and increasing the risk of exposure. As a tax paying citizen, this just makes me sick to my stomach. It's like you're using our children and teachers as Guinea pigs to see how it plays out. Our teachers are already overworked and underpaid and now you want to throw them out there to risk their lives. I'm begging you to please reconsider pushing back school openings until our teachers have the correct resources and training needed to protect themselves and their students, the correct training for teachers to implement online distance learning, and a plan to will keep everyone safe.

Thank you for your time and allowing me to voice my concerns.

Sincerely,  
Renee Hiranaka

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Mariah Weidenbach <mariah.weidenbach@gmail.com> on behalf of Mariah Weidenbach  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:25 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Hello,

I am a teacher in a special education class and am a young teacher but have health conditions that make me high risk for complications due to COVID19. My family has begged me to quit fearing for my life if I return to work. I am still considering what I am going to do.

I work with children with severe disabilities who will not socially distance or wear masks. According to IEPs they will go to various classrooms in almost every class in the school making the classroom bubble meaningless. So all the safety measures that are in place do nothing and do not work for my class. If I have a headache or cough I'll need to stay home and a sub whose been to countless classrooms all over the district will be at my desk and beyond "pop" our classroom bubble. (Suggestion- COVID testing subs regularly).

My students can't tell me if they have a headache, sore throat, extra tired or suffer loss in taste and smell. They are usually non-verbal. How do I screen them for COVID 19? I can't. Another safety measure that when put into practice is meaningless.

Furthermore they have behaviors such as spitting at me, biting me, hitting and hurting each other and themselves. I constantly need to physically prompt them. They often need assistance toileting as well. Even simple drawing tasks require hands on support so social distancing even between adults and children will be minimal. For these students as well as some gen ed students with behaviors simply telling them to socially distance does not work. They just won't do it if they don't feel like it. What do I do then? What safe guard do I have? Do I risk my health and possibly my life to stop aggressive behaviors or running away.

I am not a medical professional like a nurse, with real PPE and training to deal with infectious diseases. My classroom isn't a hospital. I don't have short exposure to other people from different households with an air system made to minimize the spread of infection. It's all day in a small class with a fan. The students touch legos and barbies and lay on mats and bean bags to calm themselves. They pick their nose and wipe it on the wall then another kid walks by and touches it and rubs their eye. I will sanitize as best I can but I don't think I can guarantee that surfaces are clean all the time. It's not like we're getting extra time to clean in addition to prepping online learning and rethinking the entire way we teach to not include peer interaction. I can normally look into a parents eyes and say "I will keep your child safe." But I can't do that this year. Everyday is Russian roulette with the virus and our health. My family does not think my death is an acceptable risk. I'm a teacher but I'm also a daughter, a wife, a sister.

Parents we're surveyed to favor in-person learning back when positive cases were almost zero. That has changed.

We need to take time to really think through this opening so that we can get it right and no one has to risk their life. No one should take the chance to also bring the virus home to their families (which I live with 2 grandparents of age 85). Would you be able to forgive yourself if you were me?

Push in-person learning back and do 100% safe distance learning for a time more. Do more research, talk to teachers about the practical application of these safeguards. Do a run through. Talk to fsc teachers and counselors about how they can be safe. Find what works in real life. PPE that works and kids will wear. Give us realistic ways to stay safe and teach. Or we could have a vaccine by the end of year. Promising cures are coming out. We can not just “see how it goes” and adjust as we go. That’s not good enough. People could die.

Furthermore, taking away the stipends that we teachers desperately need in order to make it in Hawaii’s high cost of living will surely make us all consider if it’s worth the risk and the immense stress. So many jobs are easier and pay the same and don’t require a degree. They are also currently taking more precautions for their workers. I can’t even step up to the zippys counter to order because that company is protecting the cashier and there is a barrier to ensure social distancing. A manager at Panda Express can start at \$60,000/yr. A manger at zippys starts at \$40,000/yr. As a new teacher I started around \$32000/yr. I was going to switch out of special eduction until the stipends were started last year. THEY WORKED. I stayed. Think about what teachers did when the pandemic started. With no direction or training on it, we put together distance learning within a matter or days. And I did it gladly for my students as all teachers did.

We deserve a livable wage to go along with our masters degrees and decades of experience.

Thank you,  
Mariah  
MEd

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Ashley Henion <hstahype.ahenion@gmail.com> on behalf of Ashley Henion  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:26 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Delay restart

To whom it may concern,

My name is Ashley Henion and I personally feel that we should delay the start of school. August 4 is too soon! I get that we knew the date but with the stop and go with decisions that are being made, it's hard to have a clear focus of things. Which then makes it difficult for our admin and ourselves to plan ahead.

Due to needing to take care of things in my own life, moving, my health, and my family, I was unable to complete preparations as needed.

I strongly feel that we should delay the start because NOT ALL SCHOOLS know what their plan of action is. There are still many questions left UNANSWERED that need to be addressed throughout our schools. There needs to be time given for training to prepare for what has never happened before.

It is too soon! With the number of cases rising, tourists, finances, etc. there needs to be a delay in restarting school; despite saying, "it's okay to return."

Our job is crucial. It is not fair that people who are NOT teachers say that we can return to school, it'll be fine, with complaints of parents needing to return to work and such. What about the teachers that have their own kids too?!

That's not fair. We are not ready!

Personally, I also need to make sure things are in place if something should so happen with my health. I am at high risk and I am only 32! I need to have accommodations per my doctor. I am still needing to set this up. I know I AM NOT THE ONLY ONE. We need to have more time to take care of this and plan our teaching better, given the circumstances.

Please delay the start of the school year AND STOP CUTTING THE FUNDING! It is imperative that we STOP CUTTING funding to our EDUCATION SYSTEM.

Mahalo for your time,  
Ashley Henion

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** miss nike <ms\_nike\_808@yahoo.com> on behalf of miss nike  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:26 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Please delay student report to school date

To The Board of Education,

I am a middle school teacher in the Honolulu district. I kindly ask the Board to reconsider allowing students to report to school (face to face) on August 4th to protect teachers, students, and their families.

I am extremely scared of contracting the virus and passing it on to my infant child and to my elderly parents. I was so scared when my child had a stomach virus last month. For her and/or my parents to contract the virus because of me will just break my heart.

I will do more than my best to teach virtually from my classroom so that my students do not fall behind. Please reconsider and delay the August 4th report to school day. Thank you for your consideration!!

Smiles!! 😊

Kelli Miike-Lee

Middle School Teacher

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Samantha Ka'ōpua-Fitzgerald <kaopuafitzgerald@gmail.com> on behalf of Samantha Ka'ōpua-Fitzgerald  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:27 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Aloha,

My name is Samantha Ka'ōpua-Fitzgerald and I am writing on behalf of myself a teacher at Ke Kula 'o Samuel M. Kamakau, LPCS and my husband, Ronald Ka'ōpua-Fitzgerald, a teacher at Wai'anae High School. We are testifying on Action Item G and on delaying the opening of schools.

I work in a Hawaiian language program and my husband at a hard-to-staff school. The retraction of the pay differentials will negatively impact our financial stability and will make it extremely difficult for us to provide for our family/live in Hawai'i. In addition to this, we are extremely worried about the lack of COVID-19 protocols in our education system. We are afraid to return to work. We fear for our safety as well as the safety of our students. We strongly urge you to delay the opening of our schools to allow us the proper time and training to navigate through this global pandemic/fearful/difficult situation.

Mahalo,

Ron & Samantha Ka'ōpua-Fitzgerald

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Liana Nakazawa <liana.nakazawa@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Liana Nakazawa  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:27 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**

Aloha,

This is Liana Nakazawa and I am a special education teacher at Kapaa Middle School. Receiving the differential has made a huge impact on remaining in my position. I have often thought about transferring into another teaching line but with the differential pay, I have decided to stay in special education. I have recently completed a Masters program in education and continue to work on professional development courses. With a retraction such as this, it will negatively impact myself as well as my students. As a working mother of 4 children, this deferential pay increase really helps my family financially. I humbly ask that you reject the proposal and keep the differentials going as they have made a big difference in many lives.

Mahalo,  
Liana Nakazawa

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Laura Wittig <lwittig2017@gmail.com> on behalf of Laura Wittig  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:27 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Regarding the HSTA proposal to delay opening of DOE schools

Please **do not delay** the opening of DOE schools. **My own personal opinion** is that students really need to be in school to learn. Virtual learning is not a one size will fit for all initiative. To date, the number of children that tested positive for COVID19 in Hawaii is relatively low. The school preparation to provide a safe environment is by far better than what one confronts everyday outside of the school grounds. There are so many oxymorons I have observed including police officers not wearing masks or keeping 6 feet apart, not even from their partners, and the one I really find amusing is the person outside with a mask around their neck while they are smoking a cigarette. Lastly, with all the changes since March, how is this affecting parents that need to work and cannot do work from their home?

Thank you,

Laura Wittig  
Kauluwela Elementary School

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Richard Kusumoto <rsgmk@hotmail.com> on behalf of Richard Kusumoto  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:29 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

To Whom It May Concern;

Many people have some major concerns about reopening our public schools on Aug. 4th. I am one of those people.

With our covid cases rising in our country and our state, is this a truly wise decisions to be making? Are our teachers fully trained to handle all the covid problems that may arise with the students in school?

I'm almost certain most of the teachers were not required to take or attend any classes about covid during the summer because they would have had to pay out-of-pocket expenses for these on their own. Could the DOE not have made such classes available to these teachers to prepare them for the opening of our schools?

Is it not possible to delay the opening of schools for a couple of weeks so our teachers can receive the necessary training for covid and do the proper restructuring of the classrooms as well? Isn't it better to be fully informed and prepared before opening up schools.

Please reconsider the reopening of schools on August 4th. It would be a great disservice to our teachers and student at this time.

Even worse would be the spreading of the viruses to family members if one of the students became infected and brought it home to family members.

Sincerely,

Gloria/Richard Kusumoto

Kalama Intermediate and Baldwin High School

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Christie Sasaki <craftsasaki@gmail.com> on behalf of Christie Sasaki  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:29 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Christie Sasaki and I am currently a Student Services Coordinator at Barbers Point Elementary. I am writing this letter in regards to the opening of schools for the school year 20-21.

Having started my position on July 1, 2020, I have seen firsthand the long hours of planning and effort being put forth by the teachers and administration of my school. I truly believe that it's too early for schools to start with in-school learning. Educators need more time to plan as a school how to make school a truly safe environment for all students. Teachers need the ability to return to school on July 29 and work with their administrators to make sure there are definite plans in place to meet CDC guidelines. They also need the ability to work together as grade level units to ensure that all students will be able to access the learning they deserve.

I thank you for your time as you consider this. I believe you will make the right decision for our keiki. School can be the biggest source of Covid being taken home to our vulnerable kupuna and those with weakened immune systems. I cannot imagine the pain that each family will encounter as they receive the news that a loved one has contracted Covid and the source was a child attending school.

Thank you,  
Christie Sasaki

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** jamierabusitz@gmail.com  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:31 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Hello,

I do have a few concerns about reopening on Aug.4.

I am concerned about getting enough training for this new way of teaching and learning in just a few days on top of the other training we usually have to do.

How will school meals be provided? Will there be recess? How will we supervise the children during this time?

What if you are working with a child that refuses to keep their mask on?

What happens if a staff member tests positive that you may have been in contact with, do you now have to take a test and everyone you are in contact with including my family, or only if you have symptoms, but if you wait and do become symptomatic what happens then? If we become positive, we have to stay home from work, will we have to use all of our sick time? What if you don't have enough?

What about when it comes to signing in for the day where several teachers and staff are waiting at the same time? Do we now have to stand and wait 6 ft apart?

As an EA I sometimes am in contact with students from different classes, We also sometimes help assist the children off the bus and hold their hands to assist walking to the cafeteria? How do we do that if we're supposed to remain 3-6 ft apart? Will there be more hand sanitizer stations set up around campus? What type of PPE will be provided to the staff and students?

I don't feel like there is enough time to have all these questions answered before then.

Thank you for allowing me to voice my concerns!

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Eileen Carr <eileentea@gmail.com> on behalf of Eileen Carr  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:31 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

To Chair Payne and the Honorable Members of our Hawai'i 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.

My name is Eileen Carr and I am a 4th grade teacher at Kualapu'u Public Conversion Charter School. I have just moved to Molokai from Honolulu, where I taught at Manoa Elementary School. This will be my 5th year teaching with the HDOE, and my 21st year teaching in total. Moving to a Tier 4 hard-to-staff complex area is not a decision that I took lightly, with the increased cost of living, geographic isolation, and high-needs student population. The pay differential absolutely contributed to my decision to move from Manoa to Molokai.

I am writing to ask for your support as we move forward in a most chaotic and uncertain time. Please do not reduce teachers' salaries, and please do not discontinue teacher shortage differentials. Pay cuts would have a devastating impact on our already critical teaching shortage. Public school teachers in Hawai'i are already nationally acknowledged for our shamefully low pay. We consistently vie for last place when it comes to teacher pay adjusted for cost of living (see WalletHub's explanation [here](#) and further explanation [here](#)). Honorable Board Members, we are all here because we know the value of a strong public education system, we know the importance of building and sustaining a strong and devoted teaching force, we know the benefits of quality public schools for our keiki, and we know that our schools are only as strong as their individual components.

We need you to stand by our teachers, and we need you to urge the governor to find a better way to balance the state's budget than reducing teacher pay. We know that other ways of balancing the budget exist, and we need you to advocate fiercely for our state to continue paying teachers their current salaries.

I am absolutely not in this profession for the money, but I will not be able to survive on the expensive island of Molokai in the expensive state of Hawai'i if my pay is further reduced. I accepted a \$20,000 pay cut when I relocated to the HDOE from the NYCDOE, but I don't know how much lower a 21-year veteran teacher consistently ranked as "highly effective" can go. Before coronavirus struck, I was already working above and beyond the call of duty to serve my students and their families the best quality education time and energy could afford. In the time of Covid-19, I worked tirelessly to transform my curriculum and pedagogy into something that could be relayed virtually, through a screen and keyboard. My 4th graders published two editions of a 100% student-edited, student-written, and student-illustrated virtual newspaper in which every single student published multiple articles (link [here](#)). I look forward to providing my students on Molokai with similar opportunities for high-quality education and life experience.

In the time of Covid-19, I will do whatever it takes to provide my students with the best education possible, in the safest environment possible. I beseech you: please stand up for our state's incredibly hard working public schools teachers, and do not allow our pay to be reduced. There are other ways to balance our state's budget than to take more away from some of our state's hardest working and highly essential public servants. Public school teachers have proven themselves to be incredibly valuable throughout this pandemic, and we need you to stand up for us now more than ever. Please

use your vote to demonstrate your acknowledgement of our efforts and contributions to society, and please continue to advocate for increases (not reductions) to our pay.

Thank you for your time and support.

Aloha,

Eileen Carr

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Kecia Mcdonald <kecia.mcdonald@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Kecia Mcdonald  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:34 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** differentials

Aloha and thank you for your consideration of this testimony.

My name is Kecia McDonald and I teach at Kealakehe Intermediate School in Kailua Kona, West Hawaii. The school where I serve is in a hard to staff complex, and is also on the list of the top 10 schools in the entire state which are underserved and under staffed due to the chronic teacher shortage. More than 10% of our teaching staff is made up of underqualified and/or long term substitute employees. I speak today on behalf of myself, a single mother raising kids for whom the differential makes a huge difference. I am also speaking about the colleagues whom I have seen stay with the DOE because the differential makes a difference for them, and some have moved to Special Education positions because they feel the pay increase warrants the extra work involved with those positions. As a parent and a community member it is difficult to see year after year, generation after generation of our highest need students such as Special Education and EL learners being taught by the newest, least experienced and least capable teachers. My own school has seen a 20% staff turnover year on year, and the first positions to be vacated are the Special Education and EL lines. These lines are usually filled by Teach For America corps members, student teachers or very newly qualified teachers. They are good people and they do their best but when we send brand new and inexperienced teachers into the most arduous positions, we are setting them up for burn out and failure. I have been encouraged to see veteran teachers returning to Special Ed lines thanks to the incentive of the differential and I hate to see us regress back to square one. It's heartbreaking. Hawaii schools get a bad reputation because these systemic inequities continue to persist. I am proud of my school, proud to be a public school mom, and I have fierce loyalty towards my colleagues. We have to break this cycle of under serving our highest need students or we will never deserve the trust and respect from the communities that we serve. I realize these are exceptional times, but it is always the right time to do the right thing. COVID has highlighted so many inequities in our system, it's time to start repairing and building. Education is the best hope for Hawaii's future.

Thank you.

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Christopher korsak <imiloak@yahoo.com> on behalf of Christopher korsak  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:34 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

### **This School Year is Unprecedented and Dangerous**

Aloha!

I have been a veteran public middle school science teacher for the last 29 years, and have been coaching, counseling and educating for more than 40 years.

I love teaching and would normally look forward to starting a new year, teaching the wonderful subject of science.

However, this year is different and dangerous.

Are we not playing Russian roulette with our students? We know there will be an outbreak in a school somewhere. Are we really willing to take that inevitable risk? As a Honolulu District teacher I am afraid for my students and for my family.

There's so much that we do not know about this virus. Before we bring kids back into the classroom, we have to know much more. Wouldn't it be wise to wait a month or two until we know more about possible permanent neurologic and pulmonary damage, or until we have some therapeutics or even possibly a vaccine? The bottom line is that we need to know more about this virus and the implications for contracting this disease. As a science teacher, evidence, observation and facts are important, and we're just beginning to learn about the coronavirus's infectious characteristics.

On a personal note, I have an 88 year-old father that I am taking care of, and a brother who's in chemotherapy and is the father of 11 year-old twins. I am seriously thinking about taking an extended leave of absence, or, in lieu of that, resigning. I personally cannot take this risk, and neither should my students and my fellow teachers.

**Christopher Korsak**



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Shari Odo Ikeda <shariann88@gmail.com> on behalf of Shari Odo Ikeda  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:35 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony in regards to item G

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing to you in regards to the shortage differentials.

I am a special education teacher at Kailua High School. I am appalled by the idea of eliminating these differentials based on this proposal. Special Education is a hard to staff position as many teachers get burnt out with the numerous amount of hours spent on creating and implementing IEP's, creating specially designed curriculum and extra hours with our special learners. Many teachers have made the crossover from general education to special education based on this proposal, which has been great as it is an area that tends to have a lot of unqualified teachers due to the shortage. Many have also moved to a hard to staff school based on the proposed differential.

This does not seem fair as now we will not receive the differentials that we were all promised. How is it that a promise that was written, signed and approved by the DOE, BOE and legislature can simply be taken away?

I ask you to follow through with your promised differential for this year.

Mahalo,

Shariann Ikeda  
Special Education FSC teacher  
Kailua High School

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Clint Labrador <sakai7825@gmail.com> on behalf of Clint Labrador  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:35 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

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 language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

I am currently a special education teacher on Molokai at Kaunakakai Elementary with 18 years experience. At my school there are currently 3 vacant positions that are filled with long term subs. At our high school, prior to the latest negotiations, many teachers were going to retire. However, because of the recent pay differential compensation that was agreed upon, they ended up staying. Teacher shortages are truly affecting our island of Molokai. Our high needs/risk keiki are not getting the education they deserve, considering they have social/emotional and academic challenges. Cutting our pay will not help the situation. Please consider other options other than cutting our differential which would seriously affect teacher retention and recruitment. Our keiki deserve a quality education.

Mahalo,  
Clinton Labrador  
Special Education Teacher  
Kaunakakai Elementary School

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Leon Jabs <ljabs@maili.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Leon Jabs  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:36 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** I give my all....  
**Attachments:** I give my all.docx

Please take the time to read the attached letter. Thank you.

Aloha Kakou,

My name is Leon Jabs. I have been a teacher in Hawaii for 15 years. All of those years have been at Maili Elementary on the Leeward side. I live in Kaneohe but I make the drive every day because it's important to me.

Most people gasp when they find out where I teach and where I live. Usually, they ask "Couldn't you find a school closer?" "Sure." I most certainly could, but I don't want to. I don't want to because I love the students I teach. The fast learners, the average student, and yes, even those rascally ones. Sometimes, those are the ones I remember and appreciate the most.

I also love the staff that has stayed there throughout the years. We always have teachers leaving every year because truth be told, it's tough to teach at our school. A bonus to entice teachers to come and others to stay was definitely a step in the right direction.

Now I hear there is talk that some folks want to take it away. What a slap in the face that would be. As teachers, we hear people (not all people) say things about us constantly having to pay out of our own pocket for things for the students. I stopped adding it up because it was just too much of a task.

People say things about how wrong it is for us to have to pay out of our own pocket, but do they really understand and believe it? Do they think it's so easy to just say "No! I'm not gonna buy another pencil, boxes of crayons, or more folder paper just so my students can have what they need in order to succeed."

Any teacher who was really "in it for the kids" knows that even though they would like to be able to say that statement and stick by it, they can't. Teachers don't teach to become rich. Teachers teach because they want to enrich.

Before I started teaching, I had my own business and I made about 30% more than I currently make as a teacher. Alas, something was missing. I had to go back to school to figure that out. I'm not sure how it came to me but as soon as I thought of what career path to follow, I knew it. I was meant to be a teacher.

The students I teach, need me as much as I need them. Some of them don't have a positive male role model in their lives. That's where I step in. I can't tell you how many times I've been called "dad" or "papa". There has even been a few occasions when I have been called "mom." The look on the student's face as soon as that word came out of their mouth is priceless. That's much like our time with these students. It's priceless.

The respect I've received from my students throughout the years is greater than the respect we teachers seem to be receiving from those above us. Whether it's the DOE, the BOE or the superintendent, the lack of respect you're showing us is....sad.

Some folks think it's okay to disrespect or degrade us by wanting to take away one thing that helps us ensure we have a chance to step in to support our kiddos when a family can't. I know that the majority of teachers would say flat out that they are not a teacher for the money.

While there are some teachers that do make a decent salary, that's after years and years of being a teacher as well as years and years of going to school themselves. This needs to be heard.....By saying that we are not in this for the money is **not** a green light for those that have the power to take away that money. The extra money is something deserved, something earned and something needed!

The U.S. is no longer on top of the education system list. Do you know who is and who has been ranked #1 for several years? Finland. A big reason why is because the folks in Finland respect the teachers. Not only respect, they **revere** them. They hold teachers in higher esteem than doctors and other highly paid professions.

Our public won't show us the respect that is deserved unless it starts with you folks. Our education system can't make the turnaround that it needs to unless it starts with you folks. Give us the respect we deserve. Not just deserved, but earned as well.

Please listen to our voices.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Maria Shanahan <mariagshan@gmail.com> on behalf of Maria Shanahan  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:38 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** SLP Testimony

Dear BOE,

As a Speech-Language Pathologist, I am concerned about the very limited training that is being offered for related service providers prior to the reopening of schools. I provide services for around 40 students on multiple school campuses. Traveling to different schools, I could potentially be exposing myself, my students and my family to a host of different school "bubbles." Our guidance has been to primarily do telepractice. Telepractice is a very significant shift in methodology compared to service delivery pre-pandemic. While telepractice is being offered as the safest way for us to deliver services, there is currently no plan as to how to train us to do so. We have been asking for training in telepractice since the end of the 2019-2020 school year, and have been told that the state and district are just now starting to think about trainings. It is very unlikely that the needed trainings will be available prior to the August 4 return of students. Our superintendent has stated repeatedly that quality trainings are being developed for teachers. Related service personnel deserve the same opportunity and should not be expected to self-train for a completely different way to deliver our services.

Furthermore, I worked ESY this summer. My colleagues and I had to beg and track down staff to collect every cleaning supply, mask, face shield, etc. we received, which was ultimately inadequate to do our jobs safely. We were asked to screen students, but I do not want the burden of responsibility for sending a sick student home, potentially for two weeks. I am not a trained nurse or doctor and thus unqualified to make health judgments that could potentially result in a student staying out of school for two weeks, thus impacting the student and his/her family.

In regards to physical distancing, the offices at my school sites are quite small. Historically, pre-pandemic, we took students in groups of three to four and sometimes larger. Given the current requirements, it will be difficult to see students in groups while maintaining physical distance in a small space. If the preferred method of service delivery is indeed telepractice, as I mentioned above, it will be nearly impossible for me to meet all legally mandated service minutes for my students. It also recently came to my attention that the expectation is for special educators and related service providers to screen all students with IEPs and/or 504s to assess their current skills compared to pre-pandemic and then participate in team meetings to potentially modify services based on the results of said screenings. The expectation is that this will be completed by the end of the first quarter. This is simply an impossible request. To hold meetings for 40+ students and meet their services minutes, while continuing to assess and write evaluation summaries for new referrals and catching up on those that were paused during the pandemic is a major workload concern.

Finally, as you are surely aware, there is a major staffing crisis for speech-language pathologists in Hawai'i. If the BOE wants to retain the already skeleton speech-language staff these concerns must be taken seriously in addition to the concerns of all of Hawai'i's valued educators and related service providers.

Mahalo for your consideration,  
Maria (Shanahan) Cappello, M.S., CCC-SLP  
Kaua'i District

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Marc <mnmswong@hawaii.rr.com> on behalf of Marc  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:41 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

I am writing to testify 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 Maunawili school and have been with the HIDOE for 21 years. I feel the DOE has not adequately prepared teachers to teach students in these unprecedented times. While there were some professional learning opportunities for teachers, there were many teachers who were not able to participate in those trainings. Teachers need more time to prepare for teaching in a blended learning model. The half day trainings are a good start but not nearly enough. The half day only allows for an additional hour and a half each day. Teachers need full days not an hour a day. Postponing the start of the start of the year is necessary to enable teacher and student success in this new learning model.

Thank you,  
Marc Wong

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Lea Kitamura <leakitamura@gmail.com> on behalf of Lea Kitamura  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:42 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony: Teacher Compensation

Dear Members of the BOARD OF EDUCATION:

My name is Leatrice Kitamura. I am a 13 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 am single handedly taking care of daily expenses, and student loans, while supporting my child as I prepare for her upcoming college expenses. It is even harder now with the COVID-19 pandemic where the price of goods are astronomically higher in our rural communities.

In the last few months, these differentials have made a world of difference. I was able to put more into a savings account that would be used to buy a home. And I was able to give my daughter the opportunity to go on a school trip, which would let her see where our country started, while giving her enrichment activities and experiences. Even though this trip was postponed, I was proud to be able to give her this opportunity, which might have not happened if not for these differentials.

In addition, I felt amazing, to be valued and recognized as an educator, and I was proud to see our leaders supporting us, and the work that we have been doing; teaching the future leaders of tomorrow.

Thank you for taking the time to read this testimony.

Mahalo for your time and understanding,

Leatrice Kitamura, Hamakua District, Hawaii Island



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Cindy <cindy.l.fong@gmail.com> on behalf of Cindy  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:42 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony, Re-opening of school concern, July 23, 2020 meeting

Aloha BOE,

Cynthia L. Fong, Teacher at Hilo Intermediate School

I am very concerned with opening of schools on Aug 4 for students. Yes, open for teachers and give them time to plan, figure out how to teach in an engaging manner using technology work on expectations and protocols for the school day etc. We will have 2 days of time with our Admin that also has to go over the usual new school year stuff, much less pandemic issues.

Guidelines and policies are not in place from the state and what they do present, appears to change regularly. Information and guidance from the state has been either non-existent, minimal, or incredibly late.

I have been part of a summer advisory committee to help our school open up and honestly, it has been difficult because simple questions cannot even be answered (like attendance - how do we do that with virtual schooling yet still teach? What are the protocols for sanitization, are there posters, kids dropped off sick purposely by parents, time to do actual professional development to figure out how to teach virtually?). Despite all the time and effort we have spent planning (which currently is being done on a voluntary basis), schools have been left on our own to figure it out and then, we can expect changes to be made with minimal notice that will require us to change all our planned procedures simply because we were given no guidance despite the asking for it.

This is no way to run an organization.

We have been left to our own devices, which is fine to an extent, but not OK as an organization that needs continuity. Further, memos produced by the HIDOE are not available to a majority of us after the HIDOE transferred us to google suite from lotus but still uses lotus for memos. This rollout was terrible, done haphazardly and now, many of us cannot access our lotus easily, so the communication protocols were broken on the move. We have no idea of what's going on in a timely manner, yet the state HIDOE is still placing documents here and expecting that we know what's going on. Communication from the higher ups is sparse and contradictory, which is why, as an HSTA union, we've been asking for written guidance along with meeting we'll before the last school year ended.

Summer PD has not be widely available or known on distance teaching, or if it has, to selected groups of teachers or on your own time. Teachers cannot always be expected to do their own PD for free, which is a constant expectation made of us, while also taking care of our families or working a second/third job.

We are trying to collaborate so we can provide a unified and robust opening. I fear this will not be the case. We want to see our students and prepare them for their futures - but not at the risk of our health and safety during this pandemic. We are within 2 weeks of opening, we will see even more COVID viral transmissions as it gets spread and incubates within our school population.

Medically, I'm a high risk person and I am feeling increasingly uncomfortable about returning to school because most people do not adhere to wearing a mask or proper hygiene. Further, wearing a mask is not mandated though it has been stated by knowledgeable public health folks, this is what we all can do until a vaccine is available. If history is any indication, we've got another year or two and 2 or 3 more waves, though we've yet to get out of the first wave. I can't change public opinion or actions, so that leaves me to avoidance. I'm not interested in being a statistical point.

Please delay opening during one of the hottest months in which no air conditioning will be available and give teachers paid time to develop, learn and practice teaching online. Most of us did not sign up for virtual teaching, yet we are expected to do so magically.

Always,

Cynthia L. Fong

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Lauren Black <lblack@ilima.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Lauren Black  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:42 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Lauren Black/ intermediate teacher/ Ilima  
BOE Meeting  
Agenda item VI-D  
Oppose

The stress of staying healthy on top of limited resources, lack of training and reworking our whole curriculum is completely overwhelming teachers all over the state. When schools shutdown back in March: 1. Number of cases were significantly lower; and 2. We were told that schools will reopen after two weeks of no community spread. Why shutdown in March, yet urge to reopen now?

I also live with at risk people in my home. What if I am exposed and bring this home to my newborn baby. I would be devastated. I feel uncomfortable, stressed and scared to go back into my classroom and be around hundreds of kids daily coming in and out of my classroom. A new study published says kids ages 10-19 can spread COVID just the same as adults can. That is terrifying because developing 12 and 13 year olds will not always adhere 100% to CDC guidelines and safe practices. Please consider holding off in-person learning until we are more prepared and know more about the virus or there is a vaccine.

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Ronson Lopez <ronsonlopez05@gmail.com> on behalf of Ronson Lopez  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:42 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Aloha,

First, please allow me to thank you for all that you're doing. I do understand how much work you're doing. We are in unprecedented times. Mahalo nui loa.

Would you please consider the delay in the return of students to campus? I am the son of an educator and a 10th-grade student myself at Waipahu High School.

In March of this year, we stopped going to school. On the 13 of March, there were only 2 confirmed cases of Covid-19 in our state. As of July 21, there are 25 new Covid-19 cases. It does not make sense to go back to school when the cases of Covid-19 are not decreasing. The reason for the rise in cases is the lack of social distancing in our state. Going back to school does not help and aid us in social distancing.

I urge you to please delay the return until procedures are in place to keep everyone on the school campus safe. Thank you again for your work.

Mahalo Nui Loa,  
Ronson Lopez

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Darci Singlehurst <darci.singlehurst@gmail.com> on behalf of Darci Singlehurst  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:43 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony: Action Item G- SPED Differential

Aloha,

I would like to provide testimony on the importance of continuing to fund the SPED shortage differentials. This was a promise made to Special Education teachers, and to go back on that promise now would be very harmful. Decisions were made, financial decisions, based on that promise. I don't have the luxury to 'go back' on my decisions. Taking away the differential now would create financial hardship for me. I was promised that the funding would continue, one way or another, they would find a way. Now I'm fearful of what may happen and the damage it will cause. I think teachers will leave in droves, exacerbating the original shortage problem to something far worse.

Back in the 90's, we were put under the Felix Decree. This happened in part to lack of qualified SPED teachers. By undoing this now, you risk putting us back in that type of situation. Teachers will be angry, unable to stay afloat financially, and will quit. I'm pretty sure the financial repercussions to the State of Hawaii were far more serious under the Felix Decree, than deciding to continue with this pay differential.

Please do the right thing and do what you promised. Continue to fund the shortage differentials, for the teachers and for the students. Do not try and put the COVID shortfall onto the backs of our most vulnerable students!

We all deserve better!

Darci Singlehurst

Windward District DHH Itinerant RT

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** kona kanani <konakanani@yahoo.com> on behalf of kona kanani  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:44 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Kory Toyozaki, special education teacher at Lehua Elementary. I am testifying on:

1. 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.

and

2. 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 reason for this email is to urge you to please continue the differential pay for classroom teachers in Special Education, Hard to Staff Geographical Locations, and Hawaiian Language Immersion Programs. This differential pay is THE reason I did not pursue a regular education transfer opportunity. Writing IEP's, attending numerous meetings, and completing progress reports are only some of the additional responsibilities we have been doing on our own time, with no extra pay. Many hours taken away from our families that can never be replaced. After 24 years of teaching, we, special education teachers, were acknowledged and rewarded. It would be devastating if a discontinuance were to take place.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express my concerns regarding the August 4 reopening date. My elementary aged child attends a different school from me. How is it that either of these schools' principals can answer my questions regarding what full distance learning looks like? As a teacher I don't know what my responsibilities will be, as a parent, I don't know what my child's school is offering. How can I make a decision on what's best for me and my family? I have to register my child for A+ by Wednesday, July 22. How can I know what to do without knowing if my child will be

attending school? Too many unanswered questions. Please, put the health and safety of our state first, find the answers before reopening our schools.

Mahalo,

Ms. Kory Toyozaki

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Kendrick Farm <farmk@hawaii.edu> on behalf of Kendrick Farm  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:46 PM  
**To:** Testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony (RELATING TO SCHOOL RE-OPENING)  
**Attachments:** BOE TESTIMONY .docx

Please see attached:



TO THE STATE OF HAWAII  
BOARD OF EDUCATION

Catherine Payne, Chairperson  
Kenneth Uemura, Vice Chairperson

GENERAL BUSINESS MEETING

NOTICE OF MEETING

Thursday, July 23, 2020

1:30 p.m.

**Virtual Meeting**

RELATING TO SCHOOL REOPENING

POSITION: **OPPOSE SCHOOL REOPENING**

Aloha Chair Vice-Chair and Board Members,

The COVID virus is an adversary for which we were not prepared to face and the manner in which transmission occurs. It was easy to take for granted about the little things such as not needing a mask to go outside. Yet unfortunately, this is our new reality that we must face, and with that comes changes. This leads me to the important topic of opening the schools.

Having all grades and all schools open is a policy that I cannot personally support. There will be challenges at all grade levels to ensure social distancing requirements and that hand washing along with other safety measures are in place. I feel these measures cannot be met in the dynamic environment of a school setting. Not to mention there are schools in which student populations far outstretch school capacities. We have not discussed when students will get into confrontations how then will that be dealt with beyond looking at the framework of Chapter 19.

As for now, distance learning even with all its problems may have to be the best solution until a viable vaccine is produced. Policies toward expanding broadband access statewide via federal grants programs before COVID should be considered. More time is needed for proper planning, let us not just open the schools for the sake of opening them arbitrarily on August 4<sup>th</sup>. Safety above all must be at the forefront of the policy framework. I do not personally fault any parent, teachers, staff, or any other supporting personnel having misgivings about re-opening at this current time.

With full disclosure I make this testimony personally, yet as a Board Chair with Schools like Farrington High School as part of the jurisdiction, this matter will be a topic of discussion to be put on the agenda for our next community meeting in August. Thank you for taking the time in reading this testimony.

Mahalo,

Ken Farm (Speaking in my personal capacity)

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** GB Hajim <hajim@hawaiiantel.net> on behalf of GB Hajim  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:47 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Cc:** christina.kishimoto@k12.hi.us; phyllis.unebasami@k12.hi.us  
**Subject:** Do not re-open the schools in August for in-person instruction

21 July 2020

Dr. Christina M. Kishimoto  
Superintendent  
Department of Education  
State of Hawaii

Dear Dr. Kishimoto:

My name is G.B. Hajim and I am a parent has an 15-year old child at Hilo High.

I am writing because I am 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"<sup>[1]</sup>. 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.

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 child to in-person classes.

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

1. A distance-only online class option for all schools;
2. Delaying the opening of schools until at least 4 weeks have passed with no new Covid cases in our state;
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.

I 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 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.

Malama pono,

G.B. Hajim  
27-2430 Hawaii Belt Rd  
Papa'ikou, HI 96781

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Vanessa Picon <vanessa.picon@gmail.com> on behalf of Vanessa Picon  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:47 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

My name is Vanessa Knoepfel I am an educator at Kahalu'u Elementary. I am testifying on 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 to COVID 19 Response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees. I very concerned about the lack of preparation and response by the Hawaii Board of Education to prepare teachers, staff and families for reopening schools. In just two weeks I will be expected to teach my students and yet I cannot prepare because I don't know what the safety protocols are. There are many unanswered questions that were supposed to be addressed according to the Memorandum of Understanding. Please take action immediately for the sake of the health and safety of our community.

L

Please include your name, and your school or workplace if you're an educator, or school that your children attend. Please note that submitted BOE testimony is posted online for the public to see so please be cognizant of what you include in your submission.



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Amber Wong <amberwon@hawaii.edu> on behalf of Amber Wong  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:48 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** A mother of SPED student asking you to reject cutting SPED and Hawaiian Emersion teacher's pay

Aloha Board of Education,

This has been a horrible crisis for everyone. The pandemic has altered our lives forever. We cannot get any of that time back. I want to start by thanking you for doing your best to keep our children safe and help our teachers get through a difficult and quick transition to online learning.

I am the mother of a 13 year old son (+ 3 younger children) who was diagnosed with ADHD at 7 years old. We had to remove him from a private school which he loved because they "could not provide him with the support he needed." It was heartbreaking and he did not understand why he had to leave a place he loved. When he began in public school he became well known among the teachers due to some of his impulsivity and things he did. The SPED teacher, Brenda Herron, immediately understood him. She was strict yet she was patient and kind. She came to his level and worked with him how he could learn best. I am crying re-telling this story because it was a mother teaching my son, giving him the gift of learning that I couldn't give him. I am not teacher material. SPED teachers have such a special place in the school. How could you de-value them by cutting their pay? The very place where we trust to send our children to for learning, growing and thriving and you would slash them in the gut to try to pay for the shortfalls of a pandemic we never saw coming?? How could you be so heartless? Slash your own paychecks. Slash the senate and the legislatures pay checks. How about they all don't get paid for 4 month straight like the many suffering out there and how about them being the ones who have to try to call unemployment every day only to get a busy tone or be hung up on by an automated machine? As soon as I found out schools were closing I told my supervisor I would have to cut my hours to be with my children. If you value our children so much, then pay their teachers more than what they deserve so you can keep them and so that more will want to do this work.

Mahalo for your time,

Amber Granite

--

Mahalo,

Amber Granite

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** elbadua@gmail.com <edison.badua@gmail.com> on behalf of elbadua@gmail.com  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:48 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Delay opening of Schools

To Whom It May Concern,

As a parent of three young children, a healthcare professional and a wife who's a teacher, I am writing this letter to reconsider in delaying the opening of schools due to the recurring pandemic issues. Personally, I am extremely concern and am NOT in favor of having my children attend school on campus only to expose themselves with other students who maybe at risks and asymptomatic. I am NOT comfortable sending them and that's why I opted them to do distant learning to prevent them from getting exposed to Covid and later face the consequences. Like any other parents, safety and staying healthy are my greatest priorities for my family and YOU should too.

Again, I implore you to reconsider, not because it feels right to open the school at this time, but do it for the safety of our community as well. Mahalo.

Sincerely,  
Edison Badua

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Tiffany Davis <tiffanydavis.edu@gmail.com> on behalf of Tiffany Davis  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:49 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** "Testimony"

I am a teacher at Lincoln Elementary school and am writing to share my concern for the reopening of school. Although the staff at my school are working tirelessly to get out the information and schedules teachers need I still feel ill prepared to provide a safe environment for my students. Our classrooms are not set up to provide the distance we need to teach the 15 students assigned to our room . I have numerous unanswered questions and fear for the safety of my family.

Sending students back to school is another band-aid solution to a much greater problem. As a school we need time to set up our classrooms and receive training on how to best support our students during this time.

Before school reconvenes I would like to know

- When will the State of Hawaii's Department of Health provide written guidance on the reopening of school buildings, which the HDOE 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? I believe 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?

The district has rushed head first into sending out information that has not been well thought out and is missing important details. Allowing a push back for the students' start date will allow the district and schools to set up clear procedures and protocols to make a more effective transition back to school.

-“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,”- Rosenlee



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Dawn <rdpel@hotmail.com> on behalf of Dawn  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:49 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Distance learning should be a last resort option for the majority of students. I think students should return to the classroom in some form as soon as possible and before we open up the state to mainland visitors. School openings should be determined by complex or school and take into consideration what is happening in the geographical area. Our school is prepared to accept students with CDC recommendations in place and we will receive needed training before school begins. Being on an outer island and in communities where we are compliant with regulations should make it safe for schools here to open. We need to meet and connect with our new students and teach them how to work online ASAP, should the need arise again. Thank you.  
D. Pelletier Naalehu Elementary

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** LoriAnn Iwata <loriann.iwata@ymail.com> on behalf of LoriAnn Iwata  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:50 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Delay the opening of Hawaii Public Schools

This is a challenging and frustrating time. I'm sure all teachers and students want to get back to school but we are living in a different time.

Teachers need to be trained and briefed on situations that may arise before school starts not when it starts.

Although we don't want any student to loose out on education, isn't it better to loose a bit of time out of the school year then someone's health. A person can always work hard and make up for lost time but a person can't work hard to get their health back ... or their life back.

I'm reality there is no bubble. If a child gets sick with Covid19 or a teacher get sick with Covid19 ... it will expand passed their class or cohort group further then anyone is thinking right now. If siblings and cousins all attend the same school and are all in different grades and classes ... and one gets sick ... if they all live together or interact with one another ... that's well beyond the bubble. So many would be exposed.

Teachers need time to understand what the plan is before children enter the school grounds. It's not just having an extra nurse on campus that will make things better ... what is the protocol for all schools? What is the plan? There are still so many questions that need to be answered. I don't want a roundabout answer ... I want an definitive answer.

Pushing back the date to open up to tourism doesn't have anything to do with school, it has to do with the rising number of positive Covid19 cases on the mainland especially in the state's that a big number of visitors come from.

Children should know that their health and well-being are important. We don't want them to grow up careless. We want to show them what being responsible looks like. This pandemic is not to be taken lightly.

We all want to be around ... to be healthy and alive to keep educating our keiki. Let's do what's right ... hold off on the opening of school ... allow teachers to get trained on the protocols ... then prepare in the best way we can.

Thank you for your time and understanding.

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Kaelee Sanchez <2mrs.sanchez@gmail.com> on behalf of Kaelee Sanchez  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:51 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Aloha Board of Education,

My name is Kaelee Sanchez, I am a teacher at Kahuku High and Intermediate, and my son will be attending Kahuku Elementary as a second grader this year. I am testifying today 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.](#)

At the moment, teachers feel like we will be thrust into a high-risk environment with minimal safety precautions and little promise of enforcement and support for the guidelines we have now. We all miss being physically in our classrooms; we miss teaching; we miss our students! We are willing to learn new teaching strategies, and we are happy to follow new health and safety rules. We have been doing our own research, participating in meetings, and planning the best we can, given the circumstances. Our schools are working overtime - trying to figure out how we can re-open safely. Kahuku High and Intermediate has planned a hybrid schedule, mandated mask-wearing and social distancing, and has promised regular sanitation, but despite all of these positives, we wonder - How?

How will this hybrid schedule (or 100% online option) be effective, when most teachers have not been trained in EFFECTIVE strategies to engage students and ensure learning in an online environment? If there is training that will be offered in our limited teacher work days at the start of the year, how will we have time to put these new techniques into practice in a meaningful way? How will mask-wearing and social distancing be enforced outside the classroom when we already have limited staff? How will students learn in the classroom while socially distanced and while wearing masks without access to their own technology (we do not have enough computers to offer all of our students their own, and I am sure that we are not the only school with this problem)? How will we provide masks for students who cannot or will not bring their own? Will regular COVID testing be available to students, teachers, and staff to ensure that we can limit the spread of the virus when it inevitably arrives on campus? If I feel ill, it is responsible of me to not come into work until I know my symptoms are not a result of COVID; I would never forgive myself if I put one of my students, coworkers, or their family members at risk. But does that mean I will be using all of my sick leave or more this year (I have a second grader and 3yr old twins, and they bring home all kinds of viruses)? Does that mean that I will have to be calling in subs frequently? How will that impact my students' learning? How will we ensure that we have enough subs who are adequately trained (we are already short on subs)? How will I (not a health-care professional) be doing "visual checks" of my students' health (as stated by the superintendent)? How are these "visual checks" going to be effective given the fact that we are still learning about all the symptoms of this virus? How will "visual checks" not be discriminatory to students who for an example, have allergies or naturally flushed faces? How are visual checks even helpful when many people (especially young people) can be asymptomatic carriers of COVID? Personally, I am not in a high risk category, however, many of my fellow teachers do fall into this category, and I am extremely worried for their lives. It is not right that these wonderful teachers are being asked to pick between their lives and their job. It is not right that I feel like by keeping my job, I am risking the lives of the people around me.

As I stated earlier, I have a son going into second grade. I am a high school teacher, so I do not have experience teaching younger children. However, from my experience as a mother, I can assume that our younger students will be even harder to manage and keep safe than our older students. How will a teacher of these young children

ensure that they social distance, keep their mask on, and stay in their Ohana bubble? If they are also doing a hybrid plan or half-days, and I am not on that same schedule, how will I pick up my son from school? Am I expected to send him to A+ (like I have in the past), when I have no information that clarifies to what extent they will be following health and safety mandates?

We all wish we could go back to school and work without worry. As a teacher, I understand the importance of education and of students being at school for their physical, social, emotional, and mental well-being. However, this is a very different time; we are dealing with a new pandemic - one that we still do not fully understand! This is all the more reason for us to ensure that we are opening our schools SAFELY. With training, teachers and counselors can provide students with social, emotional, and academic support virtually while we do the work to open schools the right way. At this time, there are too many unanswered questions to start school in person. We can get back lost learning, but we cannot get back lost lives. I urge the Board of Education to delay opening school until we can honestly say that we are doing ALL that we can to keep our students, their families, school staff, and teachers safe.

Respectfully,

Kaelee Sanchez

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** kim balles <kolohe32@gmail.com> on behalf of kim balles  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:52 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.**

I am concerned about my son starting his first year of kindergarten in an environment where the faculty and staff at the school still have many unanswered questions. Schools are suppose to be a safe place for kids and at this point in time, school isn't safe! Teacher and faculty are not trained as far as how to respond or what the procedures are for when someone in his school has COVID! As a parent, I'd want to know if my son had any chance of exposure and I believe that everyone should be informed! This sounds like it's not the case and for these unsure reasons, schools are not ready to open. Delay opening of schools for the well being of our keiki and to protect our amazing teachers!

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** xiazen <xiazen@aol.com> on behalf of xiazen  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:53 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Pandemic Safety Training

We were informed by internet about some things that can, may, and will be conducted before and during school hours but not enough information and training was shared to make me feel safe to be in the educational environment to help with the education of our children and students. There was also some miss represented information as well as information that I feel is not meeting our safety as well as our students and their families.

Sent from my Samsung Galaxy smartphone.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** thewaterchapter <thewaterchapter@gmail.com> on behalf of thewaterchapter  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:53 PM  
**To:** testimony.Boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Uphold Special Education Teacher Bonus.

To whom it may concern,

I have been in the field of special education in the state of Hawaii since 2008. Over the past 12 years, I have seen countless educators and support staff leave this field due to it simply, “not being worth it anymore.” We serve in a field where getting hit, pinched, bit, spit on, etc. daily and lack sufficient training.

To take away this retention/incentive bonus will only bring mass lawsuits to the state during a time when we are already expecting mass lawsuits due to “failure to provide compensatory services” for our students. This year will be an absolute mess for special educators and if this retention bonus is taken away, you’ll bet their will be a mass exit of some of Hawaii’s best educators within our beloved field.

Do not defund Special Education more than it already is. Thank you.

Sincerely,  
Brett McHenry M.Ed BCBA candidate

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Jackie Provance <jprovance48@gmail.com> on behalf of Jackie Provance  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:53 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Delay of school

To whom it may concern,

I am not in favor of opening our schools in 10 days. I have been teaching for seven years in Maui and know our schools and teachers are not ready to open our doors for students. There is still no protocol for masks and no protocol for what happens when a student or teacher tests positive for COVID-19. With students returning from mainland, are schools informed of students that need to be in quarantine? One of my greatest concerns is having to be on campus during while my students are learning from a distance. Teachers from group A, will be exposed to work from campus from a closet or office space while another bubble of students, group B, are on campus. This exposes the teacher to an entire new group of students and puts them at risk. It also exposes group A with group B when students from one group return to campus. I am afraid the conditions at our school will leave most responsibilities of COVID up to the teachers and put them at risk. Teachers have not been included in decision making and feel responsible for building healthy relationships with our students from brick and mortar as well as from a distance. 4 days of prep is not enough time to hash out all "back to school" protocols to make our schools safe and build positive relationships between stay and administrators. There is so much training needed to keep our schools safe for kids. Please consider pushing back our start time and planning for a safe return to our schools for students and staff during this difficult time.

Mahalo,

7 year Maui Teacher

Sent from my iPhone



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Susan Shinkawa <susan.shinkawa@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Susan Shinkawa  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:54 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Re: Concerns about returning to school

I forgot to mention another concern (sorry, sent it prematurely). I work with students that are violent and use physical aggression toward others because they just don't know how to express their needs and wants appropriately. Students who use physical aggression or violent have mental health concerns and/or been victimized like being sexually or physical abused or witnessing domestic violence.

How will I handle such crisis when a student is being violent and physical towards me or a staff or to another student? How do we apply the health and safety of the acting out student and others involved during a crisis? There is no guidance to address this.

Thank you,  
Susan Shinkawa  
Behavioral Health Specialist  
School Based Behavioral Health  
Leeward District-Hawaii State Department of Education

On Tue, Jul 21, 2020, 8:20 PM Susan Shinkawa <[20051935@k12.hi.us](mailto:20051935@k12.hi.us)> wrote:  
Thank you for allowing me to share my concerns about returning back to school.

One major concern I have is I have not been formally and properly trained to safely perform my job at schools. I am a behavioral health specialist that provides counseling to identified students in multiple schools. My services consist of individual and group counseling, in-class support, consultation, and crisis interventions. Reading the DOE Health and Safety Handbook July 2020 does not clearly state what I need to do to keep students, staff and myself safe while doing my job. The guidelines on that handbook appears generic and not specific to my position.

Will I be formally and properly trained to safely perform my job before August 4? At this rate, I am not too confident that I will.

Other concerns like if I have the option to provide virtual telehealth/counseling during this upcoming school year instead of doing face to face and who's going to enforce all these restrictions (e.g., physical distancing, hygiene, screening, etc.).

I know that returning back to school is vital for our students' mental health. I want students to return back to school. I want to return back to school. Our students deserve and has the right to learn in a safe environment. Let's make sure that we do that!

Thank you,

Susan Shinkawa  
Behavioral Health Specialist  
School Based Behavioral Health  
Leeward District-Hawaii State Department of Education

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Katrina Kanemoto <kkanemoto78@gmail.com> on behalf of Katrina Kanemoto  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:55 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

To the Board of Education,

I am writing to you to testify 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 believe that schools are not prepared to open on August 4 and the openings of schools should be postponed until the DOE and DOH have written guidelines on how the DOE and DOH will ensure a safe educational environment for both teachers and students. As a teacher, I feel unprepared for the upcoming school year as I have not received any trainings and do not know what safety guidelines that we are supposed to follow.

Another concern that I have is the DOE decided to have all K-2 students come to school everyday. My school had voted on Model B which was a blended rotation that would have been 1/2 of my class each day. This would have been a safer environment where everyone including adults could social distance 6 feet apart. My colleague and I have 17 students for each of our classes and cannot fit 17 students with 6 feet distancing in our classes. We were told that 16 desks could fit 6 feet apart in our classrooms if we took out most of our other furniture. With the 16 desks squeezed in the classroom, there isn't room for 6 feet spacing for the teacher's desk or the front area where the teacher teaches. There also would not be a 6 feet spacing for our ParaProfessional Educators. The DOE is creating an unsafe teaching environment by telling schools that all lower grade students need to be in school everyday. The DOE agreed with the HSTA to follow the 6 feet spacing but, they make it difficult for schools to follow when they tell schools that all K-2 students need to attend schools everyday. We were told by our principal that the budget is tight this year and that schools now had to pay for substitutes for teachers with the school budget instead of the state paying for the substitutes. If schools have more expenses, how will they be able to assist teachers whose classrooms can't fit the lower grade students that the DOE is saying needs to come everyday? My friend at another school is in the same situation. She said she and her colleagues have about 18 students in each class and that her students' desks are against her desk because there is no room in her classroom. Lower grade students and teachers are not receiving the safety that they need in their classrooms and the DOE is not providing budget assistance if they are telling schools that all K-2 students need to be in school everyday. Superintendent Kishimoto said summer school was successful, but she did not tell the public that summer school classes only had 6-8 students which is half of the size of the classes that she wants to be in school everyday when the school year begins. If the DOE agreed to the 6 feet distancing rule, and they want all K-2 students to attend school everyday, they need to provide schools with the funding to hire more teachers so that everyone in the classroom has a safe learning/working environment.

Please put yourself in our situations. Would you feel safe going back to work and not knowing the safety guidelines or being fully trained on what procedures to follow if certain safety situations occurred? Would you feel safe being in a classroom with 17 students where you couldn't have social distancing of 6 feet all day? Will the State and Board of Education be liable if we are to catch Covid

from our students because they insisted on sending the entire K-2 grade levels in crowded classrooms where teachers and other adults could not get their 6 feet of social distancing and we bring it home to our family as my parents are high risk? Will the State and Board of Education also pay for our medical expenses if we are to contract covid at the workplace? I would appreciate it if the Board of Education made sure that all safety measures are implemented before schools opened as a preventative for an outbreak and to keep teachers and students safe at school.

Sincerely,  
Katrina Kanemoto

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Michael Kline <mikekline999@msn.com> on behalf of Michael Kline  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:55 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.](#)

I have taught for 21 years as a Special Education teacher on the island of Kaua'i. I am nearly 60 years old and have asthma. I love teaching and have been teaching as a Special Education preschool teacher the last 16 years at Kilauea School. Because I care deeply about my students with disabilities and feel for their parents who have to work, I have elected to teach them in person 5 days per week starting in 2 weeks so they can get the IEP services that they need. However, I do this with much caution. My partner of 26 years and a close friend both of whom I live with, are 70 and 76 years old respectively and have chronic health conditions. These past number of months I have taken social distancing very seriously and only ventured out of my house to exercise and shop for food. Under no circumstances do I want them to be infected from my contact with the children I teach nor do I want to become infected. I realize that I am taking a risk by teaching in a couple of weeks. I will use extreme caution with the eleven 3-5-year old children that I will teach, but I am mindful that they are very young, impulsive, touch everything, and when one gets sick, we all usually get sick. I am also aware that part of my job is toileting them as well because some are not potty trained, which requires close contact.

With this said, I believe it is prudent to put all the safety measures in place first so that we and our students are as safe as possible. This summer I have not had any training as to the safety measures that will need to be put in place. I have not arranged my room yet to allow for social distancing nor do I know what is required. I don't believe that the 4 days we have before students come to school is sufficient to be prepared, to have the Covid 19 Response Team meet, to prepare my room and paraprofessionals that are in my room, and etc. Schools need more time to put safety measures in place so that it is safe for teachers, staff and students to come to school.

I ask that you consider giving schools more time to make our schools as safe as possible before students start.

Sincerely,

Michael Kline  
Special Education Preschool Teacher  
Kilauea School

Island of Kaua'i

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Korina Leong <korinaleong@gmail.com> on behalf of Korina Leong  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:55 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Aloha,

I am a mother of two children who attend Waiakeawaena elementary school. I do not think that the schools should reopen and have face to face class time. Our school was given the option for online or blended but that really isn't fair or safe for the Kids or teachers and staff to have to deal with all the children. We ended the school year all online and we can definitely start the school year all online as well! Until we have zero cases in the state we should not be opening up our state. People should continue to stay home.

Mahalo,  
Korina Leong

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Megan Escalona <megan.escalona@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Megan Escalona  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:55 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** testimony

My name is Megan Escalona. I am a teacher at Waiākeawaena Elementary School in the Hilo-Waiākea complex on the island of Hawai‘i. 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 implore the State of Hawaii and the Board of Education to delay the opening of school buildings to students. Teachers will be most at risk when the schools reopen and the fact that our health, safety, and wellbeing is not being taken into consideration is absolutely appalling. We as teachers should not have to risk our health, safety, and wellbeing so that schools can reopen on August 4th in order to help boost the economy. Two weeks is not enough time to clear the air about what is necessary to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in our schools and to make sure that schools are safe. We cannot rush this process.

In a recent special update message video posted by the Hawaii Department of Education on July 21, 2020, Superintendent Kishimoto "assured" us that all schools are outfitted for reopening. However, the HIDOE has failed to answer questions that are important to reopening our schools. Where are the guidelines from the Department of Health that clearly outline how schools should reopen? Why are students being offered 100% distance learning options and teachers are not? How do we visually check for signs of COVID-19 when we aren't medically trained to? What if the students are asymptomatic? What happens if a student in my class tests positive for COVID-19? Does my entire class have to quarantine? What if my class has to quarantine but my students have siblings in other classes - does that entire class (teacher included) have to then quarantine too? Or vice versa, what if my student's sibling (in a different grade, class, or even school) tests positive, does my class then have to quarantine? Who will "teach" my class if I have to quarantine? Why are we in such a rush to get students back in school by August 4? How can we get them safely back in school when there are so many questions left unanswered?

I am also not prepared to do 100% distance learning. I have not received any type of training to be successful in distance learning, how can I expect that from my students? What does 100% distance learning look like? Where can I get training for this should we have to close the schools again?

Our health, safety, and wellbeing must be a priority! We must not rush to reopen the schools if it is unsafe. Please delay the opening of public schools on August 4.

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Darlene Cadiente <koscina72@yahoo.com> on behalf of Darlene Cadiente  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:57 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony/action item H

My name is Darlene Cadiente. I am a teacher at Kaleiopuu Elementary School as well as a parent of an upcoming freshman at Waipahu High School.

I am writing this testimony to urge the government and DOE to delay the opening of schools which is scheduled for Aug. 4 2020. It is evident that the schools are NOT prepared to SAFELY receive students, faculty, staff on campus. Amidst this devastating pandemic, the state has not come up with sufficient answers to our questions regarding our safety and health. How can we focus on learning when we, as teachers, will be focused on our students's safety as well as our own? We need more time to prepare for our SAFE return to schools.

I am a caretaker of my 80 year old asthmatic mother and my older brother who has a serious heart condition. I am very afraid of my son or myself being exposed to the virus and then bringing it home to my family. If I get ill there will be no one to take care of my mother or brother. Face to face instruction at this time is just too dangerous!

PLEASE I urge you to really think about the safety of our children and educators at this time. Hold off on opening the schools until we can get proper training, PPE, and health guidance . Our keiki's education and mental health are important but their lives and the lives of our educators should be of the utmost importance at this time! OUR LIVES MATTER! Don't open up schools yet!!!!

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Christa Lopez <lopezchrista17@gmail.com> on behalf of Christa Lopez  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:58 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

**RE: 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,

First, I would like to thank you for all that you're doing. I understand that you are doing a lot of work. We are in uncharted times.

I'm writing to you today to delay the return of students to school (in-person). My name is Christa Lopez, I attend Waipahu High School and will be a senior this year.

Although I would like to attend my senior year in person, I need to be sure that there are safety measures in place at my school. I need to be sure that teachers are equipped on how to keep me and my fellow classmates safe the moment I walk on campus.

The first two weeks are going to be half days so teachers can have the other half to train, but I think it would be wise to push the start day back two weeks. Let the teachers get the appropriate training before you allow students back on the campus. Before the first day students and teachers should already know the DOs and DON'Ts of school.

My mother is a teacher at Pearl City elementary, and she is worried about keeping her students safe as-well as herself. She has not gotten proper training and she is doing the best she can with what she knows from research. She did a 21st Century program and Extended School Year program at her school this summer. Some of her students wore the same mask everyday without washing it. This is not the students fault, but students could possibly be wearing infected masks.

My father is a high risk patient. I have two other siblings in school, my family can't afford to catch the virus and potentially transmit it to him.

I would love to go back to school and see my friends, to see my teacher, but I can't possibly go knowing that my teachers don't have the training to keep me safe.

Besides the one page document on the DOE website that offers generic procedures, my mother and I have not seen any specific safety guidelines.

I am urging you to delay the return until procedures are in place to keep everyone on the school campus safe. Thank you again for your work.

Mahalo Nui Loa,  
Christa Lopez (Waipahu High School-Senior)

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Joelyn Mafnas <joelyn.mafnas@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Joelyn Mafnas  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:58 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony Regarding Cuts to Shortage Differentials  
**Attachments:** Testimony Regarding Cuts to Shortage Differentials.pdf

Aloha,

Attached is my testimony regarding cuts to shortage differentials..

~Joelyn Mafnas

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.

July 21, 2020

Hawaii Board of Education

Aloha and Hafa Adai! My name is Joelyn Mafnas and I am a 3rd grade teacher at Maili Elementary School. I am originally from Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands. I graduated with my Bachelor's of Science degree in Elementary Education from Chaminade University in 2006 and obtained my Masters degree in Education from Framingham State University in 2009. After graduating from Chaminade, I moved back home and taught for 13 years. However, moving back to Hawaii has always been in the back of my mind.

In November 2019, I made the move back to Hawaii, my second home. On December 30, 2019, I received an offer from Maili Elementary School for a classroom teaching position. In that offer was the teacher shortage differential, which made Hawaii's cost of living less daunting, especially having just moved to the state I now call home.

If this differential were to be taken away, I cannot foresee the financial burden I would inevitably feel, having such a big amount taken away from my only means of income. I cannot fathom the mental, physical, and emotional struggle that I would deal with daily, all the while trying to give my best to my students.

Unfortunately, with all of that said, there is a high chance that if the differential was taken away, I'd have no other choice but to move back to Saipan. I love Hawaii, especially the school that I am employed with; however, if push comes to shove and I cannot afford to stay here comfortably, Hawaii may lose another highly qualified teacher.

Sincerely,  
Joelyn Mafnas  
3rd Grade Teacher  
Maili Elementary School

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Inga Park <ingapark@me.com> on behalf of Inga Park  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:59 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

My name is Inga Park Okuna, and I am a school counselor at Kalihi Uka School and a parent of a junior at Roosevelt High School. I am writing regarding the opening of schools and the plan to have students on campuses on August 4<sup>th</sup>. There is an overwhelming concern by educators and parents that we are not ready to have students on campuses. Teachers have not received agreed upon written guidance from the Department of Health on important details for keeping everyone safe. Many schools do not have written protocols in place for handling situations in which students, staff, or family members have COVID.

Additionally, teachers need training on providing distance learning so that it will be successful. We did our best in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, but it taught us that we have a lot to learn. We need time to build the skills necessary to do 100% distance learning in a way that engages students and provides for the instruction they need.

We understand that parents need childcare and that there is a growing concern over our economy. We also predict that a second wave is forthcoming and we will be shuttering our schools again. If we rush into this ill prepared, we will likely be major contributors to a second wave.

I am hopeful that you will listen to the concerns of your teachers, dedicated professionals who dearly miss their students and value their education, health and safety. We want our students back in school, as soon as it is safe to do so. It will not be safe to do so in two weeks.

Thank you.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** David Tateyama <lakaru94@yahoo.com> on behalf of David Tateyama  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:58 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** 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 res

Aloha,

I am writing to share my thoughts and testimony about the aforementioned in the subject heading. Having been a substitute teacher for about 18 years now and married to a school teacher, I have seen many changes and adjustments made by different schools over the years. Each of the changes were for the good of the students. Often taking the necessary time to make thoughtful decisions about those changes. I have taken many long-term assignments and have become good friends with many teachers, administrators at various schools. I know what it takes to put in countless extra hours into a profession that is often underappreciated and criticized.

While I am all for reopening the schools, I do not feel now is the right time to do it. There is no guidance or clear-cut plan. Its like going to play a game without a game plan. Without clear cut direction so everyone is on the same page there are too many areas of uncertainty. One cannot plan for every contingency and one can "what if" to death anything. However clear guidance needs to be established so everyone can feel comfortable. I understand that many teachers due to financial reason will probably fall in line and try their best with given circumstances. I know of several teachers that are already using their own money to purchase items to help keep themselves and students safe with the fear of returning to the classroom with out any proper training or clear guidance.

My fear is although we want to keep our children safe, we are jeopardizing the health of our teachers. Many falls into the high-risk categories and have been teaching for so long not because they want to, but because they love too. By opening too soon the State will run the risk of losing all these great experienced teachers due to concerns that seem not to be heard. I feel teachers are not saying we should not open, but I feel they are saying we should open safely and smartly. I know of a teacher who applied for accommodations but was denied due to technicality in teachers' contract which stated they must be in the classroom. Under normal conditions I would probably agree, but these are not normal conditions, and we all must adjust to a new normal. Change is always hard to adjust too, but change is necessary. Hold off rushing back to school until all parties have a clear cut vision what needs to be done. Let us think about what is best for everyone, teachers, students, parents, and the community.

Thank you for your time

David Tateyama

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Chelsea Oho <theohos96786@gmail.com> on behalf of Chelsea Oho  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:59 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

My name is Chelsea Oho, and I am an educator at August Ahrens 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 believe we should delay the reopening of our schools until further training and protocols are in place. At this uncertain time, I am not comfortable with returning to school when many questions like if a student's family member is tested positive for COVID how does that affect the school? What happens when a teacher/student test positive? These procedures have not been shared to reassure there are proper safety measures in place.

In regards to preparing our curriculum, we need time to reevaluate our instruction for both face to face and distance learning. This time, discussion and training has not yet taken place because of the changes that continue to occur. The lack of training and time to prepare will result in being unprepared should the move to distance learning. At this time it appears to be reactive and not proactive; therefore, should delay the reopening of schools until these questions on procedures are addressed.

Mahalo,  
Chelsea Oho

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Sonya Purba <sonya.purba@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Sonya Purba  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:00 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

In regards to action item H, I am writing this testimony requesting that we delay the opening date of school. We are simply NOT ready to start the school year up in regards to being prepared to address COVID matters in the school setting. As of July 21, 2020 no trainings have been offered to us. We have no background knowledge on how to address COVID in the school setting. Clarifying questions have been posed to our administrator and we have not received any responses.

Ohana bubbles were mentioned. Every school is taking precautionary measures to assure that the students are placed in "ohana bubbles." Our school is not following these guidelines. Currently we have resource teachers servicing combo grade levels. We also have EA and one to one supports that are servicing multiple students in various grade levels. There are also pull out services on campus such as reading success and speech that will compromise the so called "ohana bubble."

I do not feel comfortable returning to school without proper safety measures in place. We have not been informed of any information or been given the opportunity to prepare or have any type of training. Knowing that I am going to be exposed to 24 families and not have a so-called "ohana bubble" makes me feel nervous. Compromising my health, my families health just doesn't seem fair. Please take into consideration our health, our students health and our kapunas health.

Mahalo

Sonya Purba  
Kamiloiki Elementary  
3rd grade teacher

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Heather Paulino <paulinomohs@gmail.com> on behalf of Heather Paulino  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:01 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Please push back the date to reopen school buildings. I am a teacher and we are NOT ready to welcome students back to classrooms. Our schools are scrambling to put makeshift plans into place. Nobody knows what to expect, and it's utterly unsafe. Administrators are struggling to find available PPE. Teachers have not been trained in distance learning or sanitation standards. Cases are on the rise. Teachers are terrified, and several will be leaving this year because of that fear, and a sense that their health and even their lives may be threatened. Please consider not only their concerns, but those of students, parents and loved ones who may be affected. Please come up with a phased plan to open when it's safer.

Teachers can provide effective distance learning when lessons are obligatory and for a grade. We cannot judge the online lessons based on 4th Quarter last year when teachers were only allowed to provide enrichment work and it didn't affect grades negatively.

Please. Please push back the opening of school buildings. Please.

Heather Paulino  
Moanalua High  
Honolulu

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Jessica Lopez <11lopez.jessica@gmail.com> on behalf of Jessica Lopez  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:01 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

**RE: 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.**

Good evening,

I would first like to thank you for all that you've done during these difficult times. With schools shutting down officially in April to keep everyone safe, my family and I appreciate the effort it took to make that happen.

As a concerned daughter to a teacher and sister to 3 younger siblings, would you consider the delay of return of students to campus?

My mom was not trained to take precautions in a classroom to keep students and herself safe. Not only does that affect my mom and her students, it would affect my siblings tremendously. While being at different schools, it is not ideal that their teachers would be taught how to do it. How would they be safe? How would they ensure that students and teachers are following protocols when none were taught?

Being safe is a big priority in the household when we have a dad who is at a higher risk at getting coronavirus. My mom and siblings would be at three different schools and without the proper knowledge and protocol being set, they are exposed to catching it too.

Please consider this letter so that we can keep my parents, siblings, teachers and students safe and delay the return of students to schools. Mahalo nui loa.

Thank you again,  
Jessica Lopez

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Edene Hadap <edene001@yahoo.com> on behalf of Edene Hadap  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:02 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Delay Opening Public Schools

Dear BOE:

I'm writing to urge all BOE members to please delay the opening of Public Schools.

I already lost a loved one to COVID in a care home facility. These facilities have far more sterile environments than a school-yet we keep losing our precious Kapunas. So imagine if our little ones take home this dreadful disease to their multigenerational homes-we're going to have an overload at all our hospitals. About 11,608 teachers and 180,837 students risk being carriers. Even if only a fraction become in need of hospitalization or a ventilator-we would exceed what our hospitals are capable of handling.

I have been going into school everyday since my school opened up our classrooms to teachers. I've been packing away most of my Science supplies to make distancing space for 18 students to sit 6' apart. I understand all my days and hours of hard labor have been voluntarily. This effort has taken me three weeks of working 8-10 hours per day. This has caused me to be concerned for my colleagues who were unable to come in during the summer to prepare for social distancing and they'll only begin to prepare on or after July 29th because usually we begin to receive opening day information, curriculum collaboration and prepare for our virtual open house.

That will become the first day that we will officially be given instructions on COVID related matters. Each school is unique in every aspect. So there is not one plan that will accommodate all schools. As teachers, we have so many questions that's geared towards our different situations. This is why I feel unsafe because we do not have a streamlined process in place with all of our daily doings on campus.

For instance, how will only 3 custodians disinfect all high touched surfaces throughout the campus everyday plus maintain their normal job duties? I'm told that's a room cleaners job. Most schools have a big shortage of room cleaners, usually we only get our trash cans emptied.

In elementary schools, we're providing educational Ohana bubbles to prevent the spread of COVID schoolwide. But our school provides specialty classes to visit every classroom. So by contact tracing terms-we are possibly infecting the entire school population.

These and other thoughts have yet to be solved to be able to offer a safer environment for all our students, teachers, staff and our Ohana at home-which all leads to our community.

Thank you for keeping safety as your priority in all public schools.

Sincerely,  
Edene Nagai  
Wilson Elementary School  
STEM Science Teacher

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Simone Ezzy <simone.ezzy@gmail.com> on behalf of Simone Ezzy  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:02 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** differentials

As a special ed teacher living in Hawaii I can say that the differential given to us last year made a huge difference for me. It quieted a buzzing which I didn't even know it was bothering me in the background - The background buzz of Anxiety related to time and finances. The additional income made my second job less necessary, And weekends were spent being able to focus on preparing for the week, resting, and spending time with my son. I still maintained the option of working, but that fact that it had become an option and not an absolute necessity made the times when I did pick up the extra work more enjoyable. As a single mom, it had been many years since weekends felt regenerative.

I have appreciated the bonus and hope it may continue throughout the next school year.

To the Honorable Board of Education,

I would like to testify 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 return students to in-person learning in school buildings until proper safety protocols have been communicated to families and teachers, and until adequate training on distance learning and safety protocols have been taught to school staff.

Why is the DOE rushing to open schools when the TRUTH is that they have not fulfilled some of their contract promises in the MOU? As quoted from the HSTA,

Nearly one month ago, HSTA reached an agreement on a memorandum of understanding (MOU) about schools reopening. Yet the HDOE has still not fulfilled their side of the agreement.

We have repeatedly asked for important details, such as written guidance from the state Department of Health (DOH) on the reopening of school buildings. The state even agreed in contract language that such guidance would be provided before schools reopen, yet it has not been provided. Testimony before lawmakers and news conferences do not equate to comprehensive written and endorsed guidance from the DOH. Health Director Bruce Anderson told lawmakers last Thursday Gov. David Ige asked him "just today" to convene a panel of experts to determine the trigger points for opening and closing schools. It's unclear whether that has happened with just over a week before educators are supposed to report back to their schools.

Secondly, the superintendent claims that teachers have received training throughout the summer. That statement is misleading. A

small fraction of teachers participated in voluntary professional development regarding virtual learning over the summer. Yet many teachers have told us they were unable to participate or not even aware that training took place.

The HIDOE also claims students will have access to a 100-percent distance learning option. To date, nothing has been published by the HIDOE on how this option would be accessed or utilized by families. Some initial reports from school principals redirected families to E-School as the official platform 6-12 grade students could use. This guidance is simply not true. E-School is only a supplementary program and not designed or approved to replace the curriculum provided at a student's home school. The department has provided no guidance for K-5 students' access to 100-percent distance learning options.

"We are two weeks away from school buildings reopening to students, yet critical questions remain unanswered. Educators are still confused and unclear on the necessary measures and steps needed to reduce the risk of COVID-19 spread in our schools," Rosenlee said.

While the HSTA has continued to work in good faith with the state, HIDOE, and public charter schools throughout the summer, we continue to ask the following questions:

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?

As of today, teachers have yet to be trained in COVID-19 safety protocols and distance learning for an online teaching environment, which in all probability will and SHOULD be the norm for the foreseeable future to ensure the health and safety of our children, teachers and community members and businesses statewide. Schools need time to safely prepare for reopening following STATE MANDATED guidelines that have yet to be released in adequate form. The DOE's poor leadership and lack of foresight by insisting that schools are safe to reopen, while purposefully leaving many of the decision-making issues to the individual schools (in order to avoid any liability at the state DOE level) has been the main contributing factor for the confusion and frustration leading up to the reopening of unprepared schools across the State.

Teachers are AFRAID to go back to work under these potentially life-threatening workplace circumstances, and the DOE is not only purposefully minimizing teachers' concerns for the safety of their workplace environment, but they have the audacity to say so without having any classroom teaching experience. Dr. Park and Dr. Anderson are basing their thoughts on schools reopening based on their medical background, and that's fine in THEORY. However, it is then up to the Superintendent to take their recommendations and apply them as much as safely possible in a classroom in order to

keep people safe in the school setting. My question is, how can this be done when the Superintendent has NO classroom experience? And despite this glaring fact, she dismisses the countless teacher testimonies that state how it is pretty much impossible to keep children in a school setting safely distanced from each other for hours on end.

Why has a statewide distance learning plan not been developed and rolled out to schools? Was time since April not enough time to at least have a basic plan in place? Given the possibility of a COVID resurgence, and the relative safety of at home environments, per Dr. Park, this should be something that is publicly shared and encouraged to all parents.

I will note that I have heard anecdotal evidence from school parents that some principals have been outright refusing to offer at-home distance learning options to those requesting it, in a DIRECT violation of lines 174 - 177 of the Board's own School Reopening Resolution that they adopted in June, as well as lines 173 - 175 of the DOE/HSTA re-opening memorandum agreement. This is the fault of the Superintendent not communicating options properly lower in the chain of command.

Teachers are not baby sitters, despite the desires of government officials desperate for the workforce to resume haphazardly. Making teachers choose between their safety/well being and their desire to return to teaching students is a false choice. Don't let the department continue to change the discussion to this false conflict!

The community wants schools to open, but do it SAFELY. We want a specific PLAN to give to principals and teachers, as well as students' parents, and until that is delivered, we the community are asking to delay students' return to school buildings. Honestly that's not asking for a lot when our students and staff safety, and possibly lives, are at stake.

Thank you for your time.



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Shawkate Nikitin <shawkate.nikitin@gmail.com> on behalf of Shawkate Nikitin  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:03 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Shawkate Nikitin's Testimony

I am very concerned for the safety of our students, as well as, myself and my family. I like to use the wisdom that God gave me and say that reopening the schools is not wise.

1. The numbers are going to spike, causing another lockdown. 🙏
2. Teacher shortage: Teachers that are afraid will retire because they may not get the opportunity to see retirement or enjoy it. ☐
3. We do not have a solid plan nor do we have proper training to handle a large student population in the mist of a pandemic. 😊
4. I've heard people say we are robbing students of their future by doing online distance learning. If the students physically come back to school, some of them won't have to worry about a future. 😊
5. As an Education Assistant, one of my main responsibilities is to work one to one with students that need help. 🙏
6. What happens when students (with behavioral issues) retaliate against a teacher or student? I can see them licking door handles, coughing on others purposely and doing things to jeopardize the life of another. How are we suppose to enforce social distancing? 😊
7. What happens when students can't wear their masks all day due to a medical issue? (They could possibly lose consciousness) 😊
8. What about the teachers and principals becoming overwhelmed by scared and frightened parents? Parents are going to want special accommodations for their child which means more time taken up doing IEP meetings. ☐
9. This Coronavirus is very real. I know two people that died from the Coronavirus. I have a cousin that was infected but she survived. 🙏
10. How many people will have to be infected or die for the schools to close or remain closed?
11. Online distance learning was mentally and physically draining but I rather do that than to reopen the schools and risk more exposure. 😊
12. If we had a vaccine, PPE, proper training and a good systemic approach, I would say reopen the schools but we don't.

I am not exactly thrilled about all the meetings we are going to have in the future. ☐🙏♀ We are going to constantly have to keep readjusting.....more readjusting means more meetings.....more meetings means more risk of exposure. 😊

Reopening the schools means more headaches, phone calls, emails, quitting, complaints, meetings, frantic parents and legal actions. Are you prepared for this?

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Melyssa Ching-Goya <melyssa.ching@gmail.com> on behalf of Melyssa Ching-Goya  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:04 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

I am both a parent and an educator for the DOE.

I would like to know why we are going back to school with COVID-19 cases on the rise? Our numbers were much lower when schools were shut down in March. Feels like we're sending teachers and students into a very unsafe environment, especially since COVID-19 can be asymptomatic.

Many of our students live in multigenerational households. If our students contract or spread COVID-19 at school, we all take it home to our families and that would be devastating. Why can't we do distance learning until cases decrease? What happened to Governor Ige's statement back in April or May about not returning students back to school until there are 30 days with no new cases? Please honor what was said before.

I've seen an array of different schedules for different schools. We are two working parents in our household, how are we supposed to work and keep up with our kids' differing schedules? We have no back-up family to rely on. We have young kids that we can't leave alone at home.

We need answers.

Melyssa Ching-Goya  
Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Kimberlee Baldrige <baldrigek23@gmail.com> on behalf of Kimberlee Baldrige  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:04 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

I disagree with these statements. I think the biggest problem we have is that people can't make up their minds! We want in class, we want virtual. We need 3ft, we need 6ft. Masks full time, masks when unable to social distance. At my school, we have a secure plan in place that most of our parents are very happy with. We have a safety committee, our desks are arranged 6ft apart, we have student days scheduled out and we have protocols in place to disinfect our classrooms. I am ready for our schools to open up. Now is the time because if we wait longer, we will have all the tourists coming back in. If we need to move to distance learning eventually, then fine. But we need this time now to establish relationships with our students and teach them how to properly navigate the virtual world. If we kick off with 100% virtual, it will be a disaster because so many kids and families can not do distance learning.

Kids need to be in school. They need that safe zone, that socializing, those teachers and friends ready to help them through whatever they are struggling with. I am a parent myself and my kids are struggling with having to stay home. They need that interaction, they need that face to face learning environment, they need that consecutive routine.

Now is the time to get back into the classroom, teach our students and help them learn to do distance learning should we need to take that path. If we open later, it will be disaster

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** trina oato <trinaoato@yahoo.com> on behalf of trina oato  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:04 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Dear Board of Education,

My name is Trina Oato and I am a Special Education Teacher at Queen Kaahumanu 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.

I have been teaching special education for 21 years and have seen numerous special education teachers leave the profession. The DOE cannot continue to fill special education teaching positions with substitute teachers. The keiki of Hawaii deserve highly qualified special education teachers, as well as teachers willing to work in hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion teachers.

I am asking you to please continue to fund the differential pay for these teachers so that we can continue to attract highly qualified teachers to teach our keiki.

Mahalo,  
Trina Oato

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** l.wong <l.wong@hawaiiantel.net> on behalf of l.wong  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:06 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Request Delay Of In-Person Learning due To COVID

To Whom It May Concer:

I am writing as a concerned, elderly resident of Oahu.

Please consider delaying the start of in person learning for our public schools.

Our State numbers for positive COVID19 cases will potentially increase with the scheduled start of school on August 4, 2020.

Currently our daily numbers are in double digits which means the virus is still being transmitted/spreading even with contact tracing and quarantine ongoing.

Why do we want to expose our public school students, teachers, staff administration, cafeteria workers and their families to this virus?

We are told there is a teacher shortage. Is there a big enough pool of substitute teachers to draw from? Then again, substitutes may not be needed because the whole class will be out on quarantine. This brings me to another point in question. Is the State prepared for contact tracing of this magnitude?

Hawaii may be the first in the Nation to open in person public schools, but we may also be the first to up-close. We will definitely be a fine example to other States on why in person schooling should not happen with the virus not under control.

Just today reporter, Allysin Blair, with Hawaii News Now reported "a State program designated to search for hidden cases of coronavirus has revealed an alarming new surge of virus in the community". State epidemiologist, Sarah Park, stated it was "definitely a concern". Lt. Govenor, Josh Green, stated overall testing has only detected a fraction of what's out there.

HSTA is saying our schools need more time to prepare for a safe environment and take into account concerns from teachers and parents.

Being elderly, I will be more at risk living in a multi-generstion household with a teacher and school age grandchildren

With all said, please delay the start of in person learning at our public schools till a more safe and healthy environment comes about.

Sincerely,  
Laurie Wong  
Ph: 808 754-2536

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Kimberly Kaneshige Cullen <kkaneshige@hotmail.com> on behalf of Kimberly Kaneshige Cullen  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:07 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 Kimberly Cullen and I am a concerned teacher at Waipahu Intermediate School, which is a large school in a community that is heavily affected by Covid-19. By seeing 120+ students, 60+ students a day, 5 days a week, I will be exposing myself, my students, and my family to potentially being infected by Covid-19. Although students are in A and B bubbles, I will be the common factor between the bubbles, so all students would potentially be exposed. It was mentioned by Dr. Bruce Anderson that they are expecting cases in schools right away. Am I just crossing my fingers that it is not one of my students or my school?

Why are we rushing to open schools during a global pandemic that has taken so many lives? Can we not give online teaching a fair chance at least for the first quarter? Online teaching was not given a fair chance during fourth quarter last year, because teachers were unprepared and students were not graded. If we take the time to prepare teachers now and hold students accountable, it can work.

I agree that students need to get back to learning, but what use is learning now if they cannot use it later? We need to protect them now so they can use what they have learned later.



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Mollie Bruhn <kmbruhn02@gmail.com> on behalf of Mollie Bruhn  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:07 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Delay the Opening

Aloha,

I am a parent of an incoming 7th grader at Kahuku High and Intermediate, as well as a 2nd grader at Kahuku Elementary. My daughter recently attended summer school with a small amount of children in her class, plexus glass around them, masks worn, along with shields worn (for both teachers and students). She missed school so much and I thought what a great idea this was and how I was very happy with who was helping teach her class.

I began to get sad when it was coming down to the ending days, because I knew that I didn't want to send her or my son back to school. I know that our children need social interactions, physical movement, and academics that were not capable of giving to them. I know why they needed to go back to school, but that was because it was manageable.

During the fall I worked at my child's school and I witnessed kids who came into school sick as could be. A child sent on Halloween to participate in the parade with a fever. My daughter had meningitis when she was 6 weeks old, so fevers are something I don't take lightly. I wouldn't send her to school and make her suffer or others as well, but who is to say parents will do the same.

We've been on a hold trying to figure out when school was starting back up and now we finally know, and as always we are not prepared. We can not expect our teachers to be able to have a plan implemented in that short amount of time for the safety of our children as well as themselves. We have teachers who are older with underlying conditions, we would be putting them at risk. We love with my Dad who is 71 and could possibly be out at risk by being exposed even more.

It's too early for the kids to go back and yes I see it from all points of view. I know parents have to work and I know what are kids need, but even that is a struggle because of the schedules not being the same for all children.

There is a lot to put into perspective and we as a team need to put the best interests of our kids as well as the teachers first.

Thank you for your time.

Mollie Bruhn

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Chad Callan <chadcallan@aol.com> on behalf of Chad Callan  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:08 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Opening school safely

I am concerned for the safety of my kids and the teachers among increasing COVID cases. Please consider the delay of opening or go with online only first.

Chad Callan  
Kailua HI

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Acacia Awai <acaciaawai@me.com> on behalf of Acacia Awai  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:09 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Hello,

My daughter will be a senior at university laboratory school (ULS) I ask that you consider delaying the start Date for returning back to school.

The DOE talks about the new bubbles our children will be placed in. When the entire state was asked to quarantine In March our family did that, making trips for groceries and work our only outings. It is still a way of life for us now. The bubbles our family is being asked to join on Aug 10 is not going to be safer than the one our daughter has been in since the beginning of the pandemic. Will the BOE or DOE Send out some kind of questionnaire to the families in your/our child's bubble to get a sense of how safe the bubble actually is?

We aren't ready for this reopening. You're telling us to send our kids back to school, but We shouldn't have to do it with Blind faith.

Thank you

Sent from my iPad

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Joelle Kramer <joellekp@gmail.com> on behalf of Joelle Kramer  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:09 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Aloha kākou,

I am writing 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.

I am a teacher at Moanalua HS and a parent of a preschooler. Everyday we have been having our daughter practice putting on a mask and face shield, keeping her distance from people, even her friends, and sanitizing her hands frequently. We do this to protect her and protect others from the spread of COVID19. It breaks my heart to even have to order masks and face shields for a 3 year old. It breaks my heart she can't play with her friends normally. It breaks my heart that she knows we can't do our normal activities because of the germs.

As a teacher, to reduce the risk to myself, my family, and others, I want a better plan to open schools. The plan we have in place is not comprehensive and does not address the needs of all parties involved. I'm advocating for a delay of the return of students to allow for more preparation and more training on healthcare protocols.

As of right now, there is no plan. Period. We do not feel safe.

I am also 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 husband is a Special Education teacher. We are a two teacher income family with two kids. Making ends meet here in Hawaii is hard. The cost of living is continually on the rise with no sight of it slowing down. With the addition of our second child and our daughter entering preschool, the extra compensation was a blessing to our family.

Discontinuing the extra compensation would deter qualified teachers from accepting positions most in need. If our students are a top priority, they deserve qualified teachers. Qualified teachers deserve fair pay. We are not paid fairly, however, the extra pay is a step in the right direction.

I am advocating to keep the extra pay for teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

Do the right thing for our students and teachers.

Mahalo,  
Joelle Kramer

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Kaitlyn Aure <kaitlyn.aure@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Kaitlyn Aure  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:09 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony- Postpone In Person Classes

Aloha Board of Education,

It is astonishing to me that, in a time of crisis, this is the third letter I have written begging and pleading for you to take care of our people. Our schools are not ready to open, let me repeat our schools are NOT ready to open, and I cannot believe that this is even an option with COVID-19 cases rising throughout all of the islands and scientific data pouring in proving that it in fact impacts children. Last year there were approximately 180,000 students enrolled in the HDOE. If you calculate the potential of students impacted in relation to 31% of 54,022 Florida children infected that would lead to 55,800 students you so willingly expose to the disease. Now these cases range from mild impacts to severe, but data suggests that regardless of the "level of severity", it can lead to lifelong complications that could indefinitely impact our students' lives. Is going back to school unprepared and unprotected really worth it? Now, take what Bruce Anderson said in the meeting with our Senators about how it severely impacts "only" 1 in 1,000. Well, with 180,000 keiki, that calculation alone would mean you could have the blood of 180 children on your hands. I would never sacrifice my son for an education. We have the resources to keep our children safe and allow them to learn, but the teachers need time. Once again, our schools are not ready. We sincerely ask you to postpone the first day in person for students.

We are nearly a week from starting school and the teachers at my school are scared. We are scared for our own lives, scared for our families- significant others, babies, parents, and relatives, and scared that we may actually lose part of our school ohana. Could you imagine the trauma that will come along with the death of any of our students ohana bubbles? Could you imagine the sadness and anger they would feel if they took the virus home with them and gave it to their mom, dad, siblings, auntie, uncle, or grandparents? Imagine they lost their best friend. Or, worse case, a student died- someone's baby. Imagine a kindergartener so eager and excited to start school, contracting the virus, and dying. Parents shouldn't have to bury their children, especially when all of this can be avoided. Please do what is best for our people and, more importantly what is pono.

Mahalo,  
Kaitlyn Aure  
5th Grade Teacher  
King Kamehameha III

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Michelle Abe <mz.mamachelle@yahoo.com> on behalf of Michelle Abe  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:10 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Hello,

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 Michelle and I am a parent of 3 children. My oldest will be attending Kaiser High school as a 9th grader and my 2 younger children attend Kamiloiki Elementary school, entering grades 2nd and 3rd. There are so many unanswered questions that I have as a parent and concerns that I have on the "ohana bubbles" Bubbles are made to pop, they do not last forever. What happens if one child's classroom has a positive covid-19 case? Does my family need to isolate? Does that mean my other children cannot attend school? What happens to their classrooms? Do they isolate also as a possible exposure? These bubbles are not just confined to school classrooms. Children can be part of many bubbles. The list of unanswered questions that I have can go on.

My family and I have taken this pandemic seriously. We have social distanced since March. We only go to stores when we need to and to and from work. We do not go out if we do not need to. This was the governor's orders and we have complied. Even when communities have reopened we have chosen to stay home to lessen the risk of being exposed. Now, with the public schools reopening and no choice to 100% distance learn at either of my children's schools we are now going against everything that we have done to keep us safe. We now have to send our children to school. I feel like the past months that we have taken all of the precautions are getting thrown into the trash.

The points and questions that were brought up during the HSTA news conference are all concerns that I have as a parent. I am concerned for the health and safety of our teachers, my children and my family. It is too soon to reopen. It has been said that cases will increase and is expected once the economy reopens. No one is saying, that cases will increase and is expected when schools reopen. We all know that it is going to happen with so many kids and adults in one place at once. Why has this not been said and questioned? I am not okay with my children possibly being exposed to covid-19, especially with all the steps that we have taken as a family to lessen the risk.

As a parent, I do want my children back in school with their friends, to socialize, and to learn in the best environment possible. I do not want my children's health to be at risk as well as other children and staff of the school. I side with the HSTA in that school reopening needs to be delayed. We are not ready as parents and teachers have expressed that they are not ready to provide the safest possible environment for our children. I do not understand why safety isn't enough of a concern to delay the reopening of our public schools.

Thank you,  
Michelle A.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Sharlene Whang <leney\_gurl@yahoo.com> on behalf of Sharlene Whang  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:10 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Dear Hawaii State BOE,

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 Sharlene Whang and I am the Arts and Communications Pathway teacher at Roosevelt High School. Before I became a part of the CTE department, I was an English teacher at Kalani High School for five years, so I have experience in a “core” and “elective” classroom setting. I am not confident that the health and safety of students and staff are thoroughly thought through, which is why I believe in delaying the student start date.

As an English teacher I had students read books. Because of funding, we did not have books for each student so we used a classroom set. That means there were 30 books shared between 120 students. I had students contribute to group activities which allowed them to engage in conversation that elevated the perspective they took on a given text. Students would not be able to participate in small group discussions which allowed them to feel more confident in a larger group setting. I had students create posters and graphic organizers in groups so they could analyze text in different ways.

As a CTE teacher I have students work heavily in groups due to the amount of equipment available including cameras, tripods, microphones, and computers. Students huddle almost ear to ear staring at one computer watching the edits being made. Students also share papers such as storyboards, shot lists, and time schedules to elevate the quality of their videos which they share amongst their group members.

Overall, as a student-centered teacher who thinks of my students needs first I have always had a collection of school supplies like paper, pencils, pens, markers, scissors, tape, etc. for students who need it even if it is not for my class (which most of the time it wasn't). This will have to change.

These are specific examples of the ways in which students engage in learning that will be altered this school year because of safety. Students can't share books, materials, sit close together, talk close together, and learn in the ways they have been accustomed.

This is only a few examples of how my classroom will change. I wonder how I will be able to space out full sized iMac computers amongst my small classroom and have students 6 feet apart from one another while engaging in learning. I wonder how the equipment will get cleaned every period of everyday and how many wipes it will take to sanitize everything properly to keep it safe. I wonder how the DOE plans to support my school, my classroom, and my students in keeping all of these things clean so people do not get sick.

I wonder how many of these scenarios have even been considered and addressed before planning on reopening. If all of these factors are not thought of just in the classroom and not even other interactions in school-- such as bathrooms, passing between class periods, and meals-- than we are not ready.

Delay the student start date.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Kaitlyn Aure <kaitlyn.aure@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Kaitlyn Aure  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:10 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony- Differentials

Aloha Board of Education,

Pay cuts for teachers would have rippling effects. It's more than the personal impact affecting each teacher and our families financially, but cutting the differentials would make it impossible for some to stay and teach in Hawaii. Many teachers throughout the state barely make it by and as a result, we would lose a lot of the teachers who work in those hard to staff regions once again. Pay cuts will lead to further teacher shortages, from which we already suffer, in areas where they need teachers the most. That would further lead to the kids being taught by unqualified personnel. Every kid deserves a licensed teacher equipped to help them reach their greatest potential and who truly wants to be there every day helping them learn, grow, and develop individually. Teachers are the backbone of our nation and we help create every single profession. Not only do we provide them with academic lessons, but we teach kindness, compassion, and care. We help the students learn that their voices matter and they can achieve whatever they set their minds to. We help them learn that they can and will make a difference no matter their age and we teach them that they are our future. Our future is in their hands and they deserve a quality education. Help keep Hawaii's teachers in the classroom with our keiki. We already have so much room for improvement regarding education and we need your help.

Best Regards,  
Kaitlyn Aure  
5th Grade Teacher  
King Kamehameha III Elementary School

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Tamie Richardson <tamiemrichardson@gmail.com> on behalf of Tamie Richardson  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:11 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 Tamie Richardson and I am a SPED coach at Kaimiloa Elementary School.

As a special educator I am very concerned at opening up our school when we are not clear on the directions for how to proceed. What I mean is that many of our students with special needs NEED to be in school and receive one to one instruction with some prompting and feedback. How would we do this for students who choose distance learning? What are the procedures for special education for distance learning? How do we provide services appropriately which meet students' needs. We do not have ANY guidance for our teachers. We also have preschoolers who do not understand social distancing and require adults to hold their hands, change diapers and help feed them. We do not have any guidance for our teachers who need to do these things.

Our school has chosen a distance learning program, but have not been trained on the program. There are many things our staff will need to discuss and practice before students attend school, but we will only have 2 days if we give up our work days which we use for setting up our classrooms and planning our lessons.

I ask that state and DOE provide more guidance that is consistent for the whole state and provide us with more time to prepare for students to return safely to school.

Mahalo,

Tamie Richardson

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Jamie Psak <jamie.psak@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Jamie Psak  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:12 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Reopening of schools not safe- a disaster waiting to happen

Dear BOE,

I am Jamie Psak and I teach at Kaiser High School. I am speaking on behalf of myself and my peers at all grade levels. I am very scared to go back to school as our corona virus cases continue to mostly rise. We have a few days where the new cases numbers are not above 20 but it is not in the single digits either. Average them out and it is at least in the 20's through July. Our leaders reacted more when the numbers were less in March and we were able to keep it from jumping up, due to the strict limitations of social distancing and closing places down. However, as the curve was flattened, it seems our leaders became more relaxed. "40 something" new cases on 2 days this month, did not even make them blink. "Oh we expected that" was the comment from Josh Green. Then day after day, 20, 26, 21, etc. Really? I did not expect that at all. They say "no worries, we got lots of room in the hospitals." So let's continue to open close contact sports with no masks cause it is not a recipe for spreading the virus, large social gatherings down Kalukaua Ave and in downtown, right, perfectly safe behaviors this month but not in March, April and May. What new information do they have that we don't? The NBA and NFL players got it, so what makes our leaders think our kids/adults won't get it? Iolani already had a scare. Yet, that did not scare people enough to say NO to sports, for now. A temporary situation, cause well death is not temporary.

This "bubble" of safety is a joke. When kids go out with their friends after school, they are not in the "bubble". I just saw a group of young girls, maybe 8th-10th graders, looked like some kind of a team, taking pictures all together, no social distancing and no masks at the Coffee Bean and Tea. Their guardians were watching and letting it all happen. Then they come to school and expose everyone. Even teachers go out, or do things with their families so they can also bring it to school. The more contact with people you have, the greater chance of getting sick.

Keeping students in 1 single classroom all day, (elementary solution) keeps the viral load high. There is no air circulation in most classrooms, it is stifling hot too. This is such a health hazard.

I personally live with my 93 year old mother and I am having anxiety from all of this. I do not feel safe or protected with these ridiculous attempts being offered to us.

There is no plan to protect us. Just go to work and cross your fingers. What will 15 newly hired nurses do all day? They are not any help in my classroom or anybody else's until someone shows symptoms, well that is too late. Apple store has more safety measures than schools, because they take everyone's temperature and ask if you have a cough, or fever etc. before they let you into their store. Why don't we have that kind of safety? People have gone to work sick and infected others at the Bus, nursing homes and restaurants. Students come to school sick all the time. WHAT makes anyone think that people will be responsible for other's health?

Blaming reopening schools as a reason for not reopening to visitors is a cop out. Neither are safe. Our leaders need to say both are risky and make the right decision.

We CAN teach our students from a distance and make a difference. NO person even mentioned that most kids did not do the distance learning last time because NO grade was tied to it. Who would do it for nothing? The students who were not proficient did it and they became proficient, the kids who needed to use the skills to jump to the next level also did so. It was successful for those students who actually put the effort in. AND, teachers were working harder than if we were in class face to face. We answered every e-mail, made phone contact, attended virtual parent meetings and more. We worked all day, even at night and on the weekends to make sure we did not let our kids down. YET none of the news stories talks about that or interviewed teachers and asked our opinion about distance learning. Talk to the soldiers, we will tell the TRUE story.

It is no picnic to do distance learning, learning a lot of new technology is stressful for many of us, but we do it, for the kids.

HOW close are you to your work mates right now? Come and look at the size of the classrooms. 15 to 18 children in a very small room with low ceilings and no airflow. Come and join me or any of my peers especially at the elementary schools and see how safe or healthy you feel.

I ask you to delay the reopening until we get this virus under control for the safety and health of the entire State of Hawaii.

Thank you for your time and putting safety first.

Jamie L.Psak  
Health/Driver's Educator  
Henry J. Kaiser High School

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Kevin and Monique Souza <naeani@msn.com> on behalf of Kevin and Monique Souza  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:15 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Aloha all,

My name is Monique Kan-Souza and I am an elementary teacher on the island of Kauai. 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 do not feel we should be opening our schools yet, to our keiki or to their families and teachers' families. To date, we have had higher daily Covid counts than when we first closed schools down in March! Why would we even think of re-opening? I listen to the news nightly with my husband and I hear how the Department of Education says that teachers HAVE HAD training in how to teach online, and training on how to socially distance in a class and maintain a clean and safe atmosphere at all times. My question is, when has any of that happened? Teachers are all on Summer Break! While my elementary school principal has been really good about having voluntary Web Ex's a few times, they are simply to pass on information that he has, which as we know, changes all the time. We were offered online training webinars we could supposedly join, but the email was sent out to teachers at the end of the day in which they all occurred. And they were sent to our school emails and not done via a call out. Not all teachers check their email during the Summer. We have also had NO training in Covid, social distancing, or how to set up our classrooms, yet. I know we do have 3-4 days of work before the students come in, but that will be taken up with regular prep things and unpacking our classrooms, since we must pack them all up each summer for deep cleaning. Now we'll need to figure out how to set up desks 6 feet apart and what to do with the extra furniture and desks. The news should say we WILL be getting training, not that we have all had it. That is giving parents a false sense of security.

We also have not heard any clear procedure of what will happen when we learn a student or teacher tests positive for Covid. Will only that class shut down and go online? Will the whole wing? The whole grade level? The whole school? And why aren't students going to have their temperatures taken upon arrival? They do that at even a local take out restaurant, before you enter, and you are only in their small store for 10 minutes or less. We also have no "isolation room" on our elementary school campus. And what happens if the parent doesn't pick up their child for the rest of the day or gives a phone number that is not working or won't take any voicemails? This is the norm at elementary schools.

As long as teachers have not been FULLY trained in how to socially distance in their rooms, while they teach, at lunch, in the hallways, and how best to teach curriculum in half the time, schools should NOT re-open. As long as Hawaii keeps having new daily totals in the double digits, schools should NOT re-open. As long as visitors are not welcomed back to Hawaii yet, schools should NOT re-open.

Lastly, as far as the news claiming that children don't get Covid or don't get it too badly, that does not mean they won't spread it to their teachers. Many of us have children, care for our elderly parents, have spouses, are middle age ourselves or have our own health concerns that will be compromised if we were to get Covid. I shouldn't have to ask my doctor for an accommodation for my

health to do my profession. I did not sign on to be a teacher to be treated like a dispensable guinea pig.

Respectfully yours,  
Monique Kan-Souza

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Ihilani Szmodis <iszmodis@gmail.com> on behalf of Ihilani Szmodis  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:16 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

We are 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.

Dear Distinguished Members of the Board of Education,

As we watched the meeting between Dr. Kishimoto, the health directors and the Senate Committee on Education, it was painfully clear that we are not ready to safely open our schools to students on August 4th. While the senators asked valid questions for clarification and read emails from concerned teachers, most questions were quickly answered with responses that seemed to disregard the actual safety of students and teachers alike.

While we are both public school teachers, one of us has an asthma condition that already makes breathing comfortably difficult at times. Imagine being dependent on an inhaler daily to clear out your lungs to help with breathing and being forced back into work with covid cases on the rise. We know that carriers can be asymptomatic. While we are not allowed to take temperatures of students, rather we are to "look for signs that a student is not well." Really, that is our preventative measure? Teachers and students will be unnecessarily exposed to asymptomatic carriers before anything is detected. When asked about next steps for what will be done when a student, teacher or staff member tests positive, there are no straight answers. Basically, we wait for a consultation from the DOH and get tested. All the meanwhile, the possibly infected have gone home to multigenerational homes for who knows how many days on end.

Another very concerning point for us is how it has been insisted upon that we have been offered PD over the summer. Yes, teachers are offered all types of PD during the summer. That is not to say that we have all been offered PD on distance learning or blended learning and how to move forward with it. We have repeatedly gone through our work emails and we do not come across any offerings of PD specific to this. It may have been offered through PDE3 but without an email announcement, we assure you the many teachers not looking to earn credits during the summer are not going to log on to PDE3. If those in charge of our Department of Education took training teachers over the summer seriously, there would have been a much greater effort in getting the word out to all of us. We are ill prepared to successfully start off the school year in blended learning. We do not know how to use the Blackboard curriculum that has been "thrown at us" in the last week. We need training and time to plan BEFORE welcoming students back not while we have our students back already. We are highly educated, passionate teachers who want nothing more than to give our students a QUALITY education. We simply cannot do that at this time without proper training of blended learning and time to plan.

We have one last point of concern. While we would like to see that start of the school year for students pushed back, we understand the burden it puts on families who need to get back to work. As we are both teachers, we have no one locally to be at home with our 8 year old when she is not in school. In order to return to work, we had one of our father's fly out here from the mainland and self-quarantine in time to be able to do the parental duties of taking our daughter to school, picking her up and being with her when she is not on campus for school on Mondays. We are putting the health of our 74 year old father even more at risk, but it has become our only option. If anything happens to him while doing this "huge favor" for his family, it will haunt us for the rest of

our lives. Oh and in the meantime, we've updated our wills and beneficiary benefit designation because of the unnecessary risk we are putting ourselves in.

It is painfully clear that as a state, we are NOT ready to safely open our schools. Let's focus on properly training our teachers first, then educating our students with our BEST foot forward. We have worked so very hard as a state to protect ourselves over the last months. Let's not disrespectfully cast that hard work aside to become the nation's guinea pigs for school openings.

Respectfully,  
Justin and 'Ihilani Szmodis

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Angela Kan Hai <cn3angel14@icloud.com> on behalf of Angela Kan Hai  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:16 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Concern

Aloha, I am a special education preschool teacher in a FSC classroom! I am an asthmatic and my husband is on dialysis ! We are so afraid of the push to go back to work ! Teachers have worked so hard since Covid-19! None stop trying to accommodate our students! We give our heart and soul for our students!!! How dare anyone who wants to cut our pay !! SHAME ON YOU ! We work with our future ! We nurture and educate your children ! How does anyone expect us to continue to be in this profession! We are getting slammed from all direction! If you don't take care of us teachers ! I am afraid to think of who will be taking our places when we leave ? You will not find many people that risk their lives for our keiki!!! Please support us not discourage our passion ! Mahalo Angela Kan Hai

Sent from my iPhone



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Angie Glogovsky <aglogovsky@me.com> on behalf of Angie Glogovsky  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:17 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** School Reopening

Hawaii Board of Education,

I can not wait to see my students and be back on campus but with the current no plan I have numerous reservations :

Will staff be properly trained by [Aug. 4](#)? As an EA I start work July 30. There are no set trainings I am aware of for the three days before students arrive. The first 9 days I will be unable to attend any training unless going without pay. How are we expected to do our job to the best of our abilities when there is absolutely NO GUIDANCE. You are setting everyone up for failure.

How will physical distancing be enforced? I work in special ed pre-k. We have to change diapers. Our students do not understand social distancing, putting us all at risk. Our kids do not sit in desk, how are we suppose to keep them socially distanced as well as being socially distanced ourselves? The majority of our students rely on physical prompts.

We need to run am/pm sessions to enable as much distancing as possible. This schedule leaves no room for staff breaks, lunch or prep time.

I am concerned about the start date of August 4 without any set procedures or trainings in place. Why can't the start date be pushed back 2-3 weeks, so all staff is fully trained. I do not think there are any parents that would complain that school runs into June this school year.

Thank you,  
Angela Glogovsky  
EA/ PPT  
WAIKALOA ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Kelly E Duell, MA, NBCT <mauitechgirl@gmail.com> on behalf of Kelly E Duell, MA, NBCT  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:18 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.](#)

"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," Rosenlee said.

I teach at Kealakehe Elementary School, which is the largest elementary school in the State of Hawaii, with close to 1000 students preK-5th grade. We are double the number of students that the school was designed to handle and have little space in normal circumstances.

Ya'll want us to go back to school and risk our lives for the sake of the economy-that is the most absurd thing you have said yet! We are NOT essential workers! We NEVER signed up for putting our life and that of our families, on the line to teach children. This is NOT an expectation. We are NOT like a doctor or a nurse who knows when they enter that career, it could be life-threatening. THEN you want to cut our pay, take away our hard to fill position pay, and furlough us. By the time you do all that we will be living below the poverty line, or and don't worry about that you may catch covid and die! We are already underpaid and overworked, and now you want us to die for the DOE?! Why don't you teach fulltime in a classroom for this year? What? You don't want to put yourself in harms way? What? You don't want to risk your health or that of your family? Hhhmmm, but it is OK for you to force teachers to do what you refuse to do yourself! A good leader, leads by example and will never make anyone do something they are not doing themselves. I do not see this in any of the DOE people or the BOE.

Take a look around the world-how many countries had to re-shut down and close schools, and why was this? Because they could not open correctly and safely. The countries that did reopen successfully, there is a reason and Hawaii is NOT following their example! Look at so many districts on the mainland, they are 100% virtual for Fall semester to ensure the safety of all educators and students, why do you think they are taking this stance? Maybe because they care about their people. Hawaii is doing its own thing, the blind leading the blind. The decisions are idiotic at best!

Do not give me any of that crap about it is unhealthy for the children to be out of school; they are traumatized, they are struggling emotionally-well how do you think they are going to react if they are the one who spread covid to their classmates and teachers, who get very sick or die? How do you think they will "feel" when they see classmates and teachers not coming back to school because they are hospitalized or they died? How do you think they will feel when they have lifetime illness and injuries because some idiot adults, sitting in their big ivory tower decided the economy was more important than their lives? Did ya'll even consider these scenarios?

Please do not tell me teachers are allowed to teach virtually-that is NOT an option for any of us. If you utter the words that teachers can apply for an exception I will scream! I spoke to the Union and they said before Covid it was taking months to process, and now they think it will be around 6 months. So the choice is quit, use all your sick time, take leave without pay, all while waiting for a decision from the DOE, who has the audacity to overrule a letter from a medical doctor. Do you honestly believe the DOE is going to grant any exceptions, especially because there is a huge shortage? I think we all know the answer is no, they will not. DOE only cares about the almighty dollar.

The World does NOT know or understand Covid, there are constant changes in information, things that were a must last week or last month are not needed, i.e. wash all items you bring into your home from stores, now they are saying that is not necessary. We were told we needed to wear a mask when outside or exercising, now they are saying fresh air is necessary and wearing a mask while exercising can be deadly. We were told that even one droplet could be passed to another person, now they are saying you must be exposed for 30 minutes to the infected person. The changes are never-ending and you want us to go back to school!

The DOE has NOT given us any direction and has not answered any of our questions and concerns. Dr. K made boldfaced lies in the last BOE meeting: we were NEVER given any training on any of this; we have NOT been provided with PPE nor cleaning supplies; summer school teachers NEVER said things went well; she stated that 85% of parents want their student back in school, this cannot be true if 35% of parents have elected 100% virtual learning; she said 4th quarter was a success (how is she making this determination when there was zero data collected, no grades given, and teachers did not give any input. I can tell you it was a catastrophe at best and a large percentage of students did not participate at all!); and the list goes on; whenever she opens her mouth, she is telling a lie! She does NOT care about the teachers or the students, that is obvious considering she has repeatedly broken the MOU and has given no thought to our words. She is ill-prepared due to her lack of experience successfully leading any school district and she has NEVER taught in a classroom EVER! How can you, the BOE, continue to support her and why did you select her in the first place with her proven track record of misconduct, lying, dishonesty, stealing, and cheating?!

Go on Facebook and read all the posts from teachers and parents; there are hundreds/thousands of questions that the DOE has NEVER answered. Teachers are having anxiety and panic attacks about the exposure you are forcing us to undertake.

The "safety" precautions are a joke! Dump the liability on the teachers by allowing them to choose whether kids wear masks or not; besides all the issues that that is going to cause when some teachers do not enforce it and others do. CDC states very clearly that everyone should have masks on, but DOE says it's ok if a teacher doesn't want to have their students wear one-what is that?!

These so-called bubbles-what a joke! They are in this "bubble" while in their classroom, but when they go to recess, lunch, A+, ride the bus, go home, go play with friends, go to sports practice, these bubbles are popped. Only way a bubble works is if the people in the bubble stay in the bubble 24/7! That is common sense, which apparently the DOE does not have any!

Open schools so parents can go back to work is UNACCEPTABLE! We are NOT daycare or babysitters! A matter of fact, most us have more education than all the BOE members, the governor, and DOE management! Parents will NOT be going back to work because they have to be home with their children, who will only be in school 2 days a week. Parents are NOT going back to work because the majority of them work in tourism, no tourists, no jobs-that is fairly straightforward and I have a hard time understanding that you folks cannot figure that out!

My school principal told me Monday that she is cutting my Physical Education classes because they are not priority or essential. 1st: Physical Education is required in the State of Hawaii; 2nd our students need formal instruction taught by a licensed, highly qualified teacher to help them be prepared for a healthy life; 3rd: these children NEED to exercise for many many many reasons, and it does not make sense to eliminate these classes; 4th: if anyone thinks these students will receive instruction virtually with parents helping them, they need to have their heads examined because that will not happen, period. Our students do not have the equipment or space at home to receive instruction and practice proper skills. I could go on and on and on, but I am sure I am beating my head against the wall!

I was in a meeting where the VP stated that they were given very little money to make accommodations for covid. Where is the covid money that was to be used to help make schools safer? Did our stupid so-called fake leader divert the money as she has on so many other issues? Why is it that schools cannot afford to make the necessary accommodations due to lack of funding?! This is a slap in the face to all educators! Keep in mind she diverted ESSA funds that were meant to go to Physical Education, Art, Music to ELL-WTF is that?!

I have pages and pages and pages of more thoughts, feelings, and concerns, and would be happy to send you every last word, just let me know.

I am hoping teachers go on strike or do a sick-out; then let the DOE figure out how to educate the children without the teachers. Stop treating us like the rented mule! OUR LIVES MATTER!

I will not apologize for the tone of this email, as you folks need to know the truth for once, without it being sugar-coated.

Very unhappy educator,

Kelly E. Duell, M.A., NBCT

Please see below for further concerns from the teachers who are part of the HSTA Union.

Given the numerous unanswered questions and teachers scheduled to report to campuses on July 29, the Hawaii State Teachers Association (HSTA) has no confidence that our school buildings and classrooms are ready for students to open in a manner that minimizes the risk of COVID-19 spreading.

“Our schools are woefully underprepared to deliver a distance learning program should a school be shut down by the Hawaii Department of Health (DOH) due to the spread of COVID-19,” said HSTA President Corey Rosenlee.

Therefore, HSTA implores the state of Hawaii and the Board of Education to delay the opening of school buildings to students. The HDOE 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.

The coronavirus has created an ever-changing situation within our communities, and significant stress and fear for our students, parents and guardians, as well as all school staff. While the HSTA believes in the importance of ensuring students are provided instructional services in school year 2020–21, it should not be at the cost of a safe educational environment.

## **Department promises not kept**

Nearly one month ago, HSTA reached an agreement on a memorandum of understanding (MOU) about schools reopening. Yet the HDOE has still not fulfilled their side of the agreement.

We have repeatedly asked for important details, such as written guidance from the state Department of Health (DOH) on the reopening of school buildings. The state even agreed in contract language that such guidance would be provided before schools reopen, yet it has not been provided. [Testimony before lawmakers](#) and [news conferences](#) do not equate to comprehensive written and endorsed guidance from the DOH. Health Director Bruce Anderson told lawmakers last Thursday Gov. David Ige asked him “just today” to convene a panel of experts to determine the trigger points for opening and closing schools. It’s unclear whether that

has happened with just over a week before educators are supposed to report back to their schools.

Secondly, the superintendent claims that teachers have received training throughout the summer. That statement is misleading. A small fraction of teachers participated in voluntary professional development regarding virtual learning over the summer. Yet many teachers have told us they were unable to participate or not even aware that training took place.

The HDOE also claims students will have access to a 100-percent distance learning option. To date, nothing has been published by the HDOE on how this option would be accessed or utilized by families. Some initial reports from school principals redirected families to E-School as the official platform 6-12 grade students could use. This guidance is simply not true. E-School is only a supplementary program and not designed or approved to replace the curriculum provided at a student's home school. The department has provided no guidance for K-5 students' access to 100-percent distance learning options.

"We are two weeks away from school buildings reopening to students, yet critical questions remain unanswered. Educators are still confused and unclear on the necessary measures and steps needed to reduce the risk of COVID-19 spread in our schools," Rosenlee said.

While the HSTA has continued to work in good faith with the state, HDOE, and public charter schools throughout the summer, we continue to ask the following questions:

- When will the State of Hawaii's Department of Health provide written guidance on the reopening of school buildings, which the HDOE 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?

Teachers will be most at risk when schools reopen. They will be in close contact with dozens, and potentially hundreds, of children for multiple hours in a given day. Yet they seem to be more of an afterthought in the health director's overall concern for health and safety. In testimony before lawmakers last week, Anderson admitted, "The disease is far more serious for older people. That doesn't necessarily help the teachers, of course, or the faculty who are worried. But for the kids themselves the risk is relatively low for serious disease."

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Aimee Sze <quistis82179@gmail.com> on behalf of Aimee Sze  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:19 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Hi. My name is Aimee Sze and I am a high school math teacher at Moanalua High 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 strongly believe that the opening of the schools for students should be pushed back (at least a few weeks, possibly after Labor Day weekend).

At the beginning of each school year, all teachers start work about a week before students start. Teachers have a few days to prep and prepare and to listen to the administration's professional development plan. This upcoming school year is unlike any other year. Teachers need a lot of time to prepare for the new school year. The normal 4 days and even the "half" days after the current plan of students resuming on August 4th is simply not enough.

At the school I teach at, I am a "floater" teacher. That means I do not have my own classroom. I spend period 1 in H101, period 2 in M206, periods 3, 4, 5, 6 in G102, period 7 in H101, and then my homeroom/CAP period in M206. Unlike other years, I will have to speak to the main teachers of those rooms and we will have to take into consideration of each other's personal space and of the cleaning devices that we will need to share. At the moment, it seems like many teachers in the community have different ideas on how strict to be or which CDC rules to enforce. Mask required? Shield required? I personally want masks to be used but I do not know if the teachers for the rooms I will be floating in to use feel the same way.

For a variety of reasons, many teachers are teaching subjects they haven't taught for a while. I am in such a situation. I am trying to refamiliarize myself with the topics and the best way to make it easy for students to understand. What makes this year so much harder (and worse) to lesson plan is that many teachers (myself included) want to make videos of virtual lessons for students to follow. There is simply no time to do this with the August 4th opening for students.

Another thing I want to mention...

In the school year 2019-2020, I went to work while I was sick. I lost my voice and could barely speak for a couple days. My voice gradually returned. There were other days when I went to work with small colds.

That will not be allowed anymore. I am not the only teacher who went to work sick. Can you imagine the teacher and substitute teacher shortage there will be as teachers will have to call out sick? And that isn't even looking at the amount of teachers who are retiring early due to the current circumstances.

Teachers are 10 month employees. There are teacher positions that haven't been filled yet. The teacher shortage is real. We teachers need time to plan and collaborate. The normal 4 days and the "half days" (really like 2 hours which isn't much) isn't enough given the new circumstances.

Please help schools, students, teachers, administration by pushing back the student start date. Teachers, administration, custodial staff, etc will use the time to plan and prepare for the new school year with the new



circumstances. There are too many questions and scenarios that DOE has not made plans for and DOE has not kept to their part of the MOU.

Schools need more time to prepare. Please push the student start date back so that teachers, administration, and such have more time to prepare and plan.

Mahalo.

Aimee Sze

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Jennifer Kramer <jenkramerteacher@gmail.com> on behalf of Jennifer Kramer  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:19 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Board of Education Personnel,

My name is Jennifer Kramer. I'm a second grade teacher in the DOE. First, I want to thank you for taking the time to read this. Second, I want to tell you that I don't feel safe.

Yesterday, Catherine Payne from the BOE said that health and safety is our top priority in reopening schools. I'm concerned that while the Department of education signed a Memorandum of Agreement with HSTA, the Department of Health now refuses to put safety protocols in writing before allowing children into schools. To exemplify why this is so important, please watch the DOE's [Return to Learn](#) video at 19:20. Here, Dr. Park explains that if a student were found to have Covid-19 over a long weekend, we would only need to reassure people and no contact tracing or other protocols would be necessary. This directly contradicts CDC statements that the incubation period for that child would have been 2-14 days as well as guidelines that [schools should close](#) for 2-5 days.

I'm concerned that the public is being told that schools are going to be safer than they are. [KITV actually put out an article](#) on July 20 stating that Department of Education students would be subject to daily temperature checks, followed by a procedure for contacting parents if their temperatures are high. The article explained that there would also be visual checks and questioning by teachers. All of this may be true for some schools, but it is certainly not true for all of them. Each school makes its own decisions and many schools specifically do not allow temperature checks. In fact, teachers have been told that each classroom is an "ohana bubble" so we don't need to worry so much about safety protocols.

The governor stated yesterday that the state is opening up to tourism in September instead of August because schools are reopening in August. We have no clear guidelines as to what is going to happen if Coronavirus blows up in our schools and our state in August, September, or any time. We used to have an average of about 30,000 tourists a day. When Hawaii reopens to tourists, we should have clear, written guidelines to be in place to keep our fragile islands safe.

Many people are familiar with a book called "Then There Were None." It's about how catastrophes like diseases have nearly wiped out the Hawaiian population. Our state is no more immune to Covid-19 than Florida, New York, or California. I ask that the BOE embraces Catherine Payne's vision that we open up schools with health and safety as our top priority. Please honor the agreement HSTA made in good faith and ask the department of health to clearly state how we will keep our keiki, their families, our teachers, their families, and our entire island safe before allowing children into schools.

Thank you, and be safe.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Kramer

Teacher, Keone'ula Elementary

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Ron Lopez <ronlopez96782@gmail.com> on behalf of Ron Lopez  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:19 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

**RE: 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,

First, please allow me to thank you for all that you're doing. I do understand how much work that you're doing. We are in unprecedented times. Mahalo nui loa.

I ask for the delay of schools for the state of Hawaii due to lack of protocols in place for teachers, staff to make it safe for students and everyone. I have 3 children going to school and don't feel safe for them to return when school starts on August 4, 2020.

Would you please consider the delay of return of students to campus? I am a concerned parent and former teacher, My wife is a current educator. and I want to know the protocols to keep my children and my wife safe.

I urge you to please delay the return until protocols and procedures are in place to keep everyone on the school campus safe. Thank you again for your work.

Mahalo Nui Loa,  
Ronald S.Lopez

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** chawk@hawaiiintel.net  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:20 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Hello! My name is Kevin Kawamura. I am a sixth grade teacher at Maui Waena Intermediate. I am submitting 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 am humbly asking for your consideration of extending the reopening of school year 2020-2021 for the following reasons. First of all, teachers need a lot more time to train for distance learning as well as preparing for the health and safety guidelines in orienting our students upon returning to school. The regular 4 days is not enough time. 2 days are spent in our classes to clean, dust, and set up our classrooms as well as preparing curriculum lessons. The other 2 days is met with administration to deal with school procedures and policies. Right now with Covid19, this is a different situation. The first 9 days of 2 hour trainings is like winging it. We'd like to be well organized and consistent in how we present the guidelines and procedures to students. At present, many teachers across the state have not even been trained to for distance learning. The media and public has been misled by the information sent out by the DOE. Some trainings dates have been sent out the past week but it's optional and many of us have prior appointments with dentists or doctors so we're unable to attend.

Secondly, teachers need to have more dialogue with school staff regarding handling of issues like the wearing of face masks. Some parents insist on the wearing of face masks all day while others simply will refuse to have their child wear it as they've shared their concerns in comments made on social media. The DOE needs to have a consistent policy because teachers will face irate parents on both sides of this issue. We're in a lose-lose situation. Classroom management will become a problem if a student refuses to not wear the mask or if a school curriculum recommends for student directed learning over direct instruction, masks will need to be removed and students will be interacting with each other, thereby affecting social distancing. We need to be ready to roll on Day 1 with the least amount of distractions.

Finally should the Covid19 cases increase or things lead to schools being shutdown, teachers need to be ready to implement 100% distance learning.

Your decision will impact veteran teachers who has a great passion for teaching to retire now due to their health concerns as well as creating a very stressful situation for new or beginning teachers that will need more time to be mentored under these conditions.

Please think carefully before you make your final decision. Everyone's health and lives are at stake.

Sincerely,

Kevin Kawamura



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Me Mei <summerzen33@hotmail.com> on behalf of Me Mei  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:20 PM  
**To:** Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Educational Assistant staff

Aloha,

I am one of the RIF employees affected by the financial “rehabilitation.” And this coming school year, I was able to get my papers squared away and transferred to Waipahu Elementary. I am very concerned by the lack of guidance to us, as an Educational Assistant. We start on July 30, that leaves us 3 days, given If we start on our first day back to immediately be “on training.” But 3 days to give us some kind of early start to work on safety procedures with this kids?

I live with elderly parents that one is diabetic then other parent has a heart problem with high blood pressure. My toddler was born prematurely therefore her lungs was developed immaturely.

My personal background is worrisome but more so about the reopening of the school where - the other staff are left out with details and very concise steps to protect ourselves.

Teachers are one thing. But what about the other guys such as myself?

What protection do we get from our employers?

Will we be given PPEs? And what happens when we get infected? Use up our sick leaves apply for LWOP?

It's very worrisome. For each and everyone.

With much respect,

Sent from my iPhone

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Inga Park <ingapark@me.com> on behalf of Inga Park  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:20 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

My name is Inga Park Okuna, and I am a school counselor at Kalihi Uka School and a parent of a junior at Roosevelt High School. I am writing regarding the possibility of the discontinuance of pay differentials. I was very surprised to hear that a discontinuation is being proposed after promising this to teachers who stayed or moved into shortage areas. I was asked last year by a teacher who wanted to get out of Special Education because of the high demands, but was willing to stay if the differentials would be continued. I assured her that Superintendent Kishimoto had made it one of her priorities to do this so felt it was safe. She wasn't the only teacher I reassured.

Funding the differentials made a big impact on the shortage areas. Teachers trusted the superintendent and were willing to stay in or move into shortage areas to qualify for the differential(s). I have a difficult time understanding how we can break a promise after the teachers held up their end.

This reminds me of the concept of "bait and switch" which is unethical marketing, but it's worse because teachers have made important decisions on location of work and job positions that have a huge impact on their lives. A teacher told me she quit her second job because of the differential and could focus more time on teaching. What now?

Please continue the differentials, they were promised, and it is the moral and ethical thing to do. Thank you very much.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Patricia Nevada <nevadap@hawaii.edu> on behalf of Patricia Nevada  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:21 PM  
**To:** TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

To the Board of Education

My name is Patricia Nevada, SpEd teacher in Honolulu District , Lunalilo Elementary School. I am writing to ask for no more cuts to shortage differentials. Without these incentives we will loose many, many more teachers who feel under-appreciated, expendable and not worth protecting .Our salaries are just enough to live in Honolulu. It is a struggle to make ends meet with the high cost of living.

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.

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 infect my ohana.

Given our current situation I could better serve the students through distance learning because I would not be teaching in fear. 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 .

Please please protect Hawaii's teachers, students and families. We must push back our start date for in person teaching and do it 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.

Thank you for supporting us. We need you to do what is right and treat your teachers with the aloha we deserve.

Sent from my iPhone



## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Joseph Reale <josephreale24@gmail.com> on behalf of Joseph Reale  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:21 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

My Name is Joseph C. Reale, I am a K-5 STEM educator at Mauka Lani Elementary School 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.](#)

My wife, Jennifer is a 5th Grade teacher at Makakilo Elementary and my son, Luca, will start his educational career as a kindergarten student at Mauka Lani this school year. We have two other children, Adelina (3yrs) and Anya (4 mos.), who will also be directly impacted by any decision made (or not) from our HIBOE/HIDOE.

The HIDOE has, to this point, failed to provide concrete, cohesive, detailed, and coordinated plans on how we will keep ourselves, our students, our community families, and our own families safe. My current questions include: What are the consistent health-monitoring practices all HIDOE employees/schools need to follow? What supplies, materials, and systemic supports have been upgraded/provided/purchased/implemented to maintain our health and safety across all HIDOE schools? What support, financially and otherwise, will be provided to completely overhaul our teaching practices and planning now and into the immediate future? What systemic supports are embedded into our HIDOE to ensure appropriate distance learning for our communities and students?

Here are some ideas to help solve these issues. My ideas require clear financial support and I encourage our legislature to think outside the box, much like our public educators, administrators, and staff have been forced to do.

1. Create a clear, cohesive, systematic health plan of action for all HIDOE staff. this plan states clearly what to do before, during and after possible COVID-19 infection, spread, and subsequent containment. Post this publicly and understand this plan will need consistent updates as this global pandemic evolves.
2. Retrofit all HIDOE classrooms/facilities with the following: HEPA air filters, exhaust fans, and smart no-touch technology (lights, sinks, bathrooms, etc.). Show our families, our public, and our communities we care enough to limit the spread of a deadly disease by implementing common-sense building infrastructure.
3. Give paid work days for all HIDOE teachers/staff on distance learning opportunities and provide adequate planning time for all school staff to implement these very drastic changes.

These three ideas require planning, thought, time, and money. Oh, we also need to accept and acknowledge the glaringly obvious lack of thought, time, money and planning our entire HIDOE has endured to date. The complete lack of support is evidenced through our current and outdated facilities, payroll systems, digital infrastructure, stagnant teacher wages, limited supply resources, and teacher retention/recruitment practices.

For these reasons, I urge the HIDOE/HIBOE to delay the opening of schools across the state until we get much clearer support, plans, and direct action.

So here we are, facing a global pandemic and being tasked to reinvent our entire teaching and learning systems with limited to no additional resources or support. All while the future of our community public education funding and support has been threatened (20% pay cuts floated back in June). We are so far from getting past this pandemic. We are just scratching the surface of the systemic reverberations and ramifications for our future. If this is not the time to double-down and support public education, I don't know what will wake us up. Education, science, our aina, and reasonable compassion for all citizens should be the foundation of our lives here in Hawaii.

We have the chance to show the rest of our Country and the world how resilient we can be, how compassionate we are, and what we believe to be vitally paramount for a functioning society. Fund public education like our future depends on it. Treat public school students like they deserve the BEST. Respect public employees and educators enough to give us the TOOLS and SUPPORT to do our jobs because they are Amazingly important for us ALL. We really do care about our students. We want them to feel safe, we want them to grow, learn, and thrive. We want them to change the world for the better.

Thank you for your time.

PS - I'll be a 1st grade generalist this year to help support distancing in my school. This is a first for me and I look forward to the experiences and challenges. When our staff was asked to accept changes and adapt, we did. This is a very common theme across all public schools in our nation.

--

Joseph C. Reale, M.Ed.  
Mauka Lani Elementary:  
STEM Resource Teacher (K-5)

|

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Kristina Vioria <kmkv521@gmail.com> on behalf of Kristina Vioria  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:21 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony for Action Item H

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Kristina M.K. Vioria and I am a special education teacher. I am writing to you on behalf of the 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 a Bargaining Unit 5 employee I am concerned with the Board of Education's lack of urgency to address our concerns regarding the safety of reopening our schools and the safety of our students. For most of us, we are excited to head into a new year, but this school year is different. The conversations I am hearing is filled with concern and apprehension as many of my colleagues do not feel safe and are forced to choose between their well-being and their students.

We understand the importance of reopening schools. However, the health and safety of our students, teachers, and school staff should be at the forefront and we must take every precaution before students are brought back on campus. This is a process we cannot afford to rush.

Respectfully,  
Kristina M.K. Vioria

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** ketc3live news <ketc3live@gmail.com> on behalf of ketc3live news  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:23 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Train all DOE members!!!

In this unprecedented time of uncertainty, please ensure proper training for safe practices & pandemic related precautions.

For instance... take into consideration addressing & answering these questions:

What PPE will be given to ALL staff members in contact with students?

How easy is it to ensure stock of these safeguards for our staff as cleaning materials & supplies are always scarce in the Hawai'i department of education.

Who is in charge of screening everyone for signs of illness & what do employees look for in their students?

How can staff be properly trained before the student start date if Aug 4th? What is the plan when someone at the school tests positive for COVID-19?

Most importantly, how will physical distancing be enforced when adult supervisors are not trained in ANY capacity during the normal school year?

Students, school employees and our communities should not be put at risk with a rushed reopening plan that the DOE is pushing forward.

Mahalo,

An extremely concerned & nervous educator

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Kristen Young <kristen-young@centralunionchurch.org> on behalf of Kristen Young  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:24 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.

Hello, Board of Education:

I am a Honolulu resident and youth director at a local church that has not yet returned to their buildings to keep the community safe. I know students and teachers across the islands, have heard concerns from many teachers and parents. I stand with the HSTA in urging the delay of the opening of school buildings to students—August 4 is too soon.

Many educators do not feel ready or comfortable to return to school buildings and this will have a major impact on students' learning. I understand the importance of returning to schools, but it should not come before the community's safety. I understand that "safety" can never be 100% guaranteed even in 'normal' times, but during a pandemic when we know the risks at stake, when we see the death toll rising, we should be extra cautious and unwilling to put students, teachers, faculty, and the people they live with at risk.

This is an opportunity to rethink how learning is done. There are many ideas within the community to make learning safer during this time if these ideas are given time to develop.

Please listen to all the voices that truly care about students' education and postpone the reopening of schools until proper plans are made and mitigation strategies for health are in place.

Thank you for your consideration,

Kristen Young

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Jayson Kramer <jkramer@radford.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Jayson Kramer  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:25 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Dear Board of Education,

My name is Jayson Kramer, 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 also want to testify 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 want to share how I entered into the world of education. I am a local boy and went to the University of Hawaii and graduated with a degree in Sociology. The reason I chose the University of Hawaii was because I received an athletic scholarship to play baseball. Like many kids around the world, I thought that I was going to play baseball forever. However, when I was no longer able to play baseball I found my way into teaching kids. After I was done playing baseball I started coaching baseball for Radford High School. It was this experience that led me to want to pursue a career in teaching. I fell in love teaching kids skills and seeing them find success from what I taught them.

I never once thought about needing to earn money in my career to support a family. Fast forward to the start of this 2020 school year, I will be teaching Special Education for eight years now. I started teaching because I loved teaching kids. Now I have kids of my own. I need to think about what is right for them and my career. It is not easy living in the place I grew up with both my wife and I in education. The extra compensation that was given to special education teachers was a blessing to our family. I don't want to leave Hawaii but I have been thinking about it more and more with the cost of living on the rise. I urge you to continue the extra compensation for special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year so we can have quality teachers teach our students and so we can better meet the financial needs of our own families.

I also want to testify on having students return to the classrooms on August 4. One of the first lessons in teaching you learn is if you fail to prepare you prepare to fail. I believe that at this point there are many questions that are not being answered, and I feel like I'm walking into this school year blind. Many teachers, including myself and my wife, who is also a teacher, feel like cattle being led to the slaughter. We realize there are many factors that go into the reopening of schools and the economy and the importance of education for our students. However, with no clear and comprehensive plan in place to protect students and teachers, the spread of COVID19 will be rampant. We cannot start the year with half-truths and haphazard plans, that is a failure to our students, to our teachers and to society.

I hope that a clear and comprehensive plan can be given to teachers and students and their families. Also, I hope that the training for handling a contagious disease like COVID19 in the classroom will not be optional when it is provided. If this means there is a need to delay the return of students to the classroom, then do the right thing.

Mahalo,

Jayson Kramer

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Tamie Richardson <tamiemrichardson@gmail.com> on behalf of Tamie Richardson  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:26 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

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 Tamie Richardson from Kaimiloa Elementary School. I am currently a SPED coach and have worked in Special Education for more than 10 years now. As a teacher and coach I have seen so many SPED teachers come and go. Every year it is difficult to fill our SPED positions. It is such a challenging position not only because you need to be able to collaborate with so many other people and teachers, you have to be able to complete tedious paperwork, take data, do reports, and on top of all that you have to teach. We often take our work home and work on it for hours a week. When there are no SPED certified teachers who are hired we are forced to hire non certified teachers, who need extensive training and support. After providing all of this time and energy into these new SPED teachers, they often leave, because the work is overwhelming. The extra compensation provides some feeling of acknowledgement for all the work we need to do and it is more enticing for teachers to give it a try. We have had much success due to the compensation pay and taking it away will bring us back to the start again.

I implore you to continue the extra compensation because our students with special needs deserve qualified teachers.

Mahalo,  
Tamie Richardson

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Kim E <kimelizabeth01@gmail.com> on behalf of Kim E  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:27 PM  
**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

Dear BOE,

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.](#)

As much as my colleagues and I want to return to school because we deeply care about educating our keiki, the HSTA, the majority of teachers and staff have not received clear communication from the HIDOE regarding reopening schools following COVID-19 safety protocols and procedures, or hybrid and/or distant learning curriculum to create a solid reopening plan. Educators understand that the pandemic has affected the quality of our children's learning; however, keeping our keiki and teachers safe is the utmost priority. In order to provide a safe, learning environment for all, clear protocols and procedures must be in place, all school staff trained on the safety precautions, adequate PPE, hand sanitizer, etc, provided (all of which is back ordered, and will not arrive in time for school to reopen), and time for teachers to prepare their classrooms in alignment with scientifically based COVID-19 safety guidelines. For example, students and educators should all be required to wear masks. Costco, Target, etc. require employees and shoppers to wear masks, and customers are not in the store for the length of time they are in school. Until we have a solid reopening plan in place, our keiki and educators are putting their and other's lives at stake. Our keiki deserve a quality education, but a human life should always take precedence. One life lost is too many. There are still too many unknowns about COVID-19, so proceeding with scientifically based, precautionary measures to protect our HIDOE ohana is vital.

Also, each school's reopening plans will be individualized, so some schools will require masks, 6 foot social distancing, and others may not. Most classrooms have poor ventilation which makes these precautions even more important. As a district resource teacher who travels to various schools in the complex area, it is disconcerting that these precautions may not be mandated or possible due to reasons mentioned above. Another concern is expecting teachers to evaluate whether a child is sick or not. Research has shown that children and adults who get ill with COVID-19 often do not initially look and feel as ill as they actually are. Patients are often surprised when their physicians tell them after x-rays and other tests are completed, how advanced the virus has become. Some do not come down with a fever or cough, and have other symptoms that are not obvious by looking at someone. What about asymptomatic children and adults? According to the CDC "Considerations for Schools",



our schools are not adequately prepared to reopen (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools.html>)

Comparisons have been made that some schools abroad reopened safely; however, as the examples from the three countries in *Education Week*, July 22, 2020, "How Schools in Other Countries Reopened," best practice safety precautions remained a high priority

(<https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2020/06/11/how-schools-in-other-countries-have-reopened.html>). New South Wales opened 1 day a week with 4 days of virtual learning, Denmark reopened with students returning in phases beginning with K-5, 6-10, and finally grade 11 (12 graders met their graduation requirements), and Taiwan by requiring masks at all times. There are key lessons and other best practices to be learned by these examples. Mahalo for your time and consideration regarding the reopening of our schools only when best practice plans are clear, consistent and aligned evidence based to keep our keiki, teachers and staff members safe.

With utmost sincerity,

Kim Kozak

Baldwin-Kekaulike-Maui Complex Area

To Whom It May Concern:

I would like to testify 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.

What the people of Hawaii (teachers, parents, friends) are asking is not to delay re-opening schools, but to push back the return of students to in-person buildings. Hawaii schools and faculty are incredibly underprepared to make the shift from in-person learning to virtual (distance) learning; despite what Superintendent Kishimoto stated in her video message that was posted on Facebook. Which, by the way, was incredibly condescending and in no way expressed the correct feelings of the teacher community. Teacher's WANT to see their students and WANT to be able to teach, but only in a SAFE and CONTROLLED manner. I have spoken to so many fellow teachers who have stated that they have no idea what is going on and aren't even sure of what the safety protocols are if certain events were to happen (which is the consequence of Kishimoto's terrible leadership and lack of communication to the public).

Many other states, for example California and New York, are pushing back re-opening schools. If they are doing it, why can't Hawaii? Why do Hawaii teachers and students have to be the sacrificial lambs? Also, why are significant decisions about schools and education being decided by (the Superintendent) people who have never even been in a classroom before? How can they make the most qualified decisions when they don't even have the appropriate qualifications/experience?

Like I said at the beginning of the testimony, teachers WANT to reopen schools and they WANT to see their students again, but SAFELY. Teachers and schools need precise and detailed protocols that is not only communicated to schools, but to parents as well. "On a daily basis, other industries continue to provide services to the general public". Yes, I don't disagree and in no way want to imply that other industries are not doing their part. BUT. Those industries have safety protocols and guidelines that have been established to ensure their safety, therefore, they are able to continue on with their jobs. Schools on the other hand, have none.

So please. Put yourself in the shoes of teachers and think of the questions you'd want answered if YOU were told to return and teach in-person when cases are still rising in the state of Hawaii. There won't be an economy to re-open to the public if there are no residents of Hawaii.

Also, in my opinion, Superintendent Kishimoto is a terrible representative and should be replaced with someone who is capable and has the correct qualifications for this job.

## Testimony BOE

---

**From:** Tonya Tyler <tonya@inner-octave.com> on behalf of Tonya Tyler  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:28 PM  
**To:** testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony

To Whom It May Concern:

At this point, I feel as though students, teachers, and staff at schools are simply being used as guinea pigs with the current plan to open. As a high school student parent and an elementary school teacher, I am angry we are being used in such a way.

It would be great to be at school with my students and for my son to be at school! However, it doesn't feel safe or healthy. Many questions and clear guidelines still need to be provided to schools by the State. Here are some of my concerns and questions:

- I am at high-risk for coronavirus but do not feel as though I can afford to resign or put in for a leave of absence. How many teachers have already resigned due to health concerns? Do you have any idea how many more will be resigning before school starts?
- I'm grateful our Kohala complex has purchased the online curriculum Acellus for our students that can be used for blended or distant learning. Has the State considered Acellus or something similar? If the State chooses a different system, can our complex continue to move forward with Acellus since many of us have already started training on that system?
- Why is the governor holding **virtual** press conferences and the BOE continues to have **virtual** meetings if it is safe to have school in-person? Why are schools being asked to be the guinea pigs to figure out if it's safe to gather yet?
- What happened to the statement that schools would not re-open until there has been four weeks of no new cases? I thought that was too much when it was stated. However, why start when cases are rising?
- When we do end up going back to distant learning, once it's discovered that it wasn't safe yet, my understanding is that teachers will be required to be at school full-time. Why do you want us teachers sharing facilities/bathrooms outside of our ohana? What happens when teachers start spreading coronavirus amongst one another at school? Why not require x amount of time online with students each day or some other way of being accountable remotely? Are the 'leaders' who are making these decisions still working from home? My preference would be to follow the example of those making the decisions. If you are working in an office or school setting with others, I'd be happy to do the same. If you are working from home and asking us teachers to risk our health by working at school, how does that make sense?
- To add to the stress, you are considering cutting our pay. We are already paid lower than most states and have a higher cost of living than many. Have you considered how many teachers will be resigning because they can no longer afford to work at a school in Hawaii?
- Have you considered how morale will be at the schools when many of us do not feel safe to be there and believe that the decision makers do not care about the keiki or us?
- Last year, our elementary school had new sinks put in every classroom to be ADA compliant. The State had faucets installed that require the handle to be held the entire time water runs, not sure how that's ADA compliant, but how are students supposed to thoroughly wash hands in class without someone holding the handle for them in order to maintain physical distancing?
- What happens when a student from my son's high school tests positive? Do all of the students and teachers from all of his/her classes have to go into quarantine? What about at the elementary level? When a teacher or student tests positive, does the whole class and anyone whose interacted with that class go into quarantine? If symptoms are not too severe for the teacher, will we then move to distant learning during quarantine?

- Why hasn't another survey been sent out since the cases started rising again? Why is old data being used (when cases were reducing) to help justify current decisions?
- What will the State do if there is a severe shortage of teachers and subs?
- Has the BOE considered the number of law suits that could come through once the viruses start spreading through the schools? Has a risk manager calculated the potential legal and settlement costs that could arise?
- How many teachers can we afford to lose via resignation (due to health risks or finances), getting too sick to work, or death?

I appreciate that the decision makers are in a very tough position where there aren't any apparent win-win options. I empathize with the challenging position you are in, but please, consider making decisions based on what you would also be willing to do.

If anyone has read this in its entirety, thank you for taking the time.

Mahalo,  
Tonya Tyler

Sent from my iPhone