

Testimony BOE

From: Evelyn Ibonia <evelyn.ibonia@gmail.com> on behalf of Evelyn Ibonia
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:27 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha Board of Education Members,

My name is Evelyn Ibonia, I am a teacher at Kihei Elementary School on Maui and I am here 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, I would like to thank you for your continued support of the teachers and students of Hawaii. I believe that you have our best interests in mind. You have shown your support for us in the past and I am writing this to ask for your support once again. **We need to delay the physical return of students to school campuses.** Despite what Superintendent Kishimoto continues to say in the media, we are not ready. **Our classrooms and school buildings are not ready.** The four days of teacher work days are not sufficient to get our classrooms ready, on top of planning/prepping curriculum for the blended in-person learning/virtual learning plus complete virtual learning and ensuring that we have the proper safety protocols in place. In addition, there continues to be numerous unanswered questions from the DOE, including:

- 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 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?
- 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?

These are just a few of the important topics that need to be discussed before we welcome students back to our school buildings. With all due respect, the teachers and staff are going to be in the front lines in the schools, so shouldn't our voices be heard? We can't even begin to think about the learning if we are worrying about not having proper safety protocols in place. We need time. We want to get this right. We are asking for your help.

Mahalo for your time,
Evelyn Ibonia

Testimony BOE

From: valerie yamakawa <yamakawav@hawaii.rr.com> on behalf of valerie yamakawa
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:28 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 Valerie Yamakawa and I am a 2nd grade teacher at Hickam Elementary School. I am writing to ask the BOE to delay the opening of school year 20-21. I want to start by saying, I am a dedicated teacher of 20+ years who cares deeply about my students and wants nothing but the best for them. While I believe it is of utmost importance that they go back to school, I feel even more strongly that it needs to be done in a safe manner for all. Honestly, I am worried for my safety as well as the safety of my family, specifically my elderly parents whom I take care of. I am also concerned for the health and safety of our community as a whole.

There needs to be a clear and specific plan for the “what ifs.” This includes, what will we do if someone in our class tests positive for COVID 19, what if a family member of someone in our class tests positive? What if someone in our class is sick and we are still waiting for the test results of a COVID 19 test? What if someone is sick, but does not feel the need to get tested? Can we require them to get tested before returning to school? What do we do in the meantime? What do we do if someone in our school tests positive? Will we all get tested?

There also needs to be clear and specific protocols for us to follow, including who can be exempt from wearing a mask. I’m glad that the students now have to be 6 feet apart in class, but what do we do if we cannot fit all the students on our roster in our classroom at 6 feet apart? Can we limit class size to fit everyone?

We also need more time for planning and training, so we can be effective in educating our students. Right now my school has offered an extra half day for planning and half day for training. However, it is only optional and it is not enough. It also wasn’t scheduled in advance, so some were not able to make it due to prior commitments. Other than that, we have our usual designated beginning of the school year days, which is not adequate under these conditions and circumstances. The teachers in my school have been going in everyday, boxing things and preparing to gut classrooms in order to be able to fit as many students as possible 6 feet

apart. Needless to say, this is all on our own time. Under normal circumstances, we put in a lot of our own time anyway, but what we are being asked to do this year is especially stressful and taxing on us physically, mentally and emotionally. And it is taking all of our time, the time we normally would've spent preparing materials and getting organized for the school year. We need more time to prepare. We need more training and planning time to do blending school, both face to face and virtual. We need more training should we have to go all virtual. I suspect that once schools open, the cases will rise and we will eventually have to go all virtual at some point as we did in March of this year. The difference is that this time it will be required and the education of our keiki is at stake. We need more guidance and training in order to be better prepared to provide them a quality education.

Let's open school confidently and prepared. Please give us more time so we can do so.

Respectfully,
Valerie Yamakawa

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

Testimony BOE

From: Ci HI <bileckic18@gmail.com> on behalf of Ci HI
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:29 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha!

My name is Cicily Bilecki and I am a special education science teacher and Transition Coordinator at Kalaheo High School. I have been a special education teacher in the Hawaii Department of Education for over fifteen years and have taught at multiple high schools on Oahu.

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.

If the Department of Education approves to "temporarily discontinue" the differential compensation for special education positions, the Hawaii Department of Education will be solely responsible for the mass exodus of special education teachers and will fail to meet the needs of our students with special education services.

Over 15 years ago, I moved from the mainland to teach in Hawaii. At that time, I had immediately taken an immediate \$10,000 reduction in pay because, at that time, the state of Hawaii did not provide a pay differential for special education teachers. It took me nearly a decade and costly graduate school course credits to move up in teacher reclassification pay. Finally, after 15 years of teaching special education in Hawaii and recently earning a \$10,000 special education differential, I can finally cover my \$2,000 a month rent with just one of my paychecks, with \$200 left to get me to the next payday. I live paycheck to paycheck like most teachers in Hawaii. In my entire teaching career, I have never been able to do that, and it brought financial relief to my family. I no longer had to work side hustles (i.e. part-time, babysitting, or tutoring, etc) to make ends meet as a single working parent. I do not have a family to lean on for support, as they live thousands of miles away. I am the sole provider of my household and the reality we live paycheck to paycheck in Hawaii. Although I make a decent living, it is not nearly enough to cover our basic necessities, and I am considering leaving Hawaii and the teaching profession as a whole.

With the prospect of also being furloughed and teachers receiving a 30% pay cut, I do not know how I will survive living in one of the most costly cities in the United States. Honestly, if I am struggling as a veteran teacher, I cannot imagine what our younger teachers, who already make very little will do to make an honest living. What will happen to the future of teachers in Hawaii? Who would be motivated to become the next generation of teachers, knowing they would be struggling financially? Who will be left to teach our Keiki? Who would be willing to take such drastic pay cuts during a pandemic, while being responsible for IEP case coordination, personalizing instruction, collecting critical data, developing effective Individualized Instruction Programming, coordinating staffing, behavior management implementation, communicating and collaborating with families and service providers?

As someone who is at high risk of contracting the coronavirus with having an autoimmune-related medical condition, there are no longer incentives if you take away the differentials. I do not have an IEP preparation period and have spent long nights past midnight working on all the documentation and paperwork that is

involved in special education. What is my incentive? Hugs and good job compliments will not pay my rent, the electric bill, car note, massive student loans or put food in our fridge.

If you decided to eliminate our differential, I am fearful I will not even be able to pay my rent next month.

I love our students in Hawaii, but as an educational professional, I still need to provide for my family. I do not have a spouse or family to lean on during these difficult times. Our focus should be on how we can prepare our children for a future Hawaii, but not at the costs of its teachers. If teachers have to pay the price, there will be a mass exodus from the teaching profession and our Keiki will sadly be negatively impacted by the State of Hawaii's decision. I will not return to my special education position next year and will begin planning to leave Hawaii to another state or overseas school system that will pay my worth.

Mahalo,

Cicily Bilecki, Windward District, Oahu, Hawaii

Testimony BOE

From: Laura Marquart-Wason <lwason@kanoelani.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Laura Marquart-Wason
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:29 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

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

My name is Laura Marquart-Wason and I am a special education teacher at Kanoelani Elementary. Throughout my 20 years of teaching, I have seen incredible and bright educators in special education leave the profession because of the low wages. These teachers made such an impact in the young lives of our students with special needs and, what a shame, these teachers are gone now. Why? Because the pay was not enough to support their family. Please we need to stop having our gifted teachers leave, and more will if you take away our differential pay. You got the figures and percentages of teachers after the differential pay. The number of special education teachers increased! Because they understand our students education is at stake. We need to keep our highly qualified special education teachers in our schools and not long-term unqualified substitutes. I humbly ask to please don't discontinue our differential pay.

Respectfully,
Laura Marquart-Wason

Testimony BOE

From: Sina P. Pili <pili.sina.p@gmail.com> on behalf of Sina P. Pili
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:30 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Reopening concerns

We need proper training before opening the school. Will there be an increase in janitors to clean & sanitize the school when school resumes? Do we have PPE & enough cleaning supplies?

Testimony BOE

From: Daryle Fleming <daryle47@gmail.com> on behalf of Daryle Fleming
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:30 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony from a math teacher

Dear sirs,

Open the schools. As a math teacher at Waipahu Intermediate School, I understand that students need to be held to the state standards. I want to teach math. COVID is not affecting kids. As a community we can make great things happen. Kids need instruction from teachers and not online lessons. Last quarter when students were forced to stay home. I only had two students out of 106 that did any of the lessons. Open school on time.

vr,
Daryle Fleming
Math teacher, Waipahu Intermediate

Testimony BOE

From: Maria Maria <808mariahawaii@gmail.com> on behalf of Maria Maria
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:30 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Please reconsider opening schools only when truly safe

Dear BOE Members,

Please reconsider opening schools only when truly safe.

Some questions that have come up are:

- 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."

We are concerned that COVID19 will further spread causing more casualties here in Hawaii. Please delay the opening of schools so we can all be safe.

Thank you.

Testimony BOE

From: Erin Brennan <elbrennan821@gmail.com> on behalf of Erin Brennan
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:31 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 work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees. Opening schools to teachers on 7/29/2020 and to students on 8/4/2020 is flat out dangerous and reckless. It is incredibly easy for the Governor, Superintendent, BOE, and DOE to make these decisions while they are protected in the bubble of their office. They are not on the front lines with teachers, students, and family members. The state requires you to wear a mask and stand 6 ft. apart from each other at Costco and every other public place of business, however, it is acceptable for masks to be optional within a public school. Temperatures are required when entering a doctors office and the airport and yet again, it is not going to be required at the school level. Students are sent to school sick and health rooms are overflowing each day under normal circumstances when we are not undergoing a global pandemic. What makes the State think people will handle this any differently? Kids will still come to school sick. Teachers will come to school sick when they can't find a substitute. The State's argument is that we need to get back to school so people can get back to work. However, a large majority of schools have chosen a schedule where students are still at home 3 days out of the week. None of the questions that have been asked have been adequately answered. Such as, what happens when a student, teacher, or family member tests positive? How is it ok to put so many lives at risk? If one person tests positive it is a domino effect. It not only impacts the person but the teacher, their family, the students, their families, the siblings of those students, their teachers, their classmates, their families, and so on and so forth. There are schools across the country who have made the decision to solely focus on Distance Learning for 1st quarter and some even for the 1st semester. We miss our students, we miss our colleagues, and we miss our community. However, not at the detriment of our health and safety and the health and safety of our loved ones. Another argument from the state is that "older" populations are more at risk. I know of 30 and 40 year olds who have high blood pressure, diabetes, autoimmune disease, etc. Are these people not at risk? What happened to "school not opening up until we have 4 weeks of no new positive cases"? I implore you to make the right decision and not throw our lives and our student's lives to the wind. We must postpone the opening of school. It is the only way.

Testimony BOE

From: Sandra Bukoski <sandrabukoski@icloud.com> on behalf of Sandra Bukoski
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:36 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To whom this concerns,

I am testifying on H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2020 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

My name is Sandra Bukoski, a middle school teacher at Wahiawa Middle School and mother of three students who attend Leilehua High School (LHS), Wheeler Middle School (WMS), and Wheeler Elementary School (WES).

I do not feel Hawaii schools are ready to open on August 4, 2020. Schools are not prepared, and there are unanswered questions concerning the health and safety of students and teachers. HBOE and Schools need a few more weeks to plan and prepare.

First, several schools recently changed schedules to follow the safer 6 feet social distancing rules versus the unsafe 3 feet rule. Even now, schools are rushing to revise bell schedules and student schedules. These sudden changes affect not only the schools' ability to prepare for the upcoming school year, but parents' ability to prepare. For instance, I received notification on July 17, 2020 that WES revised their bell schedule— giving parents approximately two weeks to plan for alternative care for students' off days. While the bell schedule aligns with WMS, it does not align with Leilehua HS. The alternate days on and off make finding childcare difficult since students will not be attending the same days from week to week or possibly be home with older siblings. In addition, parents were notified **last week** of a 100% virtual option and had until July 17, 2020 (only a few days) to notify the school of their interest in that option. However, more specific details of the virtual option wasn't shared until this past **Tuesday**, July 20, 2020, and later still, parents will receive a follow up email **Thursday**, July 23, 2020 on whether we elect to enroll our child into the program or not. These short notices make it difficult for parents to weigh all their options and plan accordingly. In addition, it suggests the schools do not have enough time to give thoughtful consideration to student and teacher schedules by August 4, 2020. How can schools meaningfully assign students and teachers schedules while at the same time define learning options, schedules, and course offerings?

I know WES is not the only school changing schedules during these last few weeks before school starts. Wahiawa Middle School decided on July 17, 2020 to eliminate electives. Elective teachers will be assigned teaching lines in one of the four core areas. Teachers will be notified of their official teaching lines on July 22, 2020 or later. Many of my fellow elective teachers do not know what subjects they will be assigned to teach or co-teach until then. Teachers cannot prepare for an unknown class. At best, teachers will be notified of their teaching lines one week prior to their return to school, and this means, students schedules will have to be completed in a week or less time period too. Parents will not know their child's schedule (on and off days) in ample time to make arrangements for childcare, which includes for younger children whom some middle school students help watch. Honestly, I feel the lack of guidance and late guidance from HBOE is forcing schools to rush through planning and considerations without the ability to keep what is best for students, families, and teachers in mind.

I also do not feel schools have enough time to prepare for a 100% virtual option and lacked guidance in creating that option. WES recently notified parents that they will use Acellus Academy and a resource teacher will help facilitate student learning. However, I have not seen an email or mail concerning WMS or LHS distance learning option. Only today, after visiting LHS website, did I see a virtual option for students, which states “Students will be enrolled in an online learning platform and will not be receiving any personalized teacher support.” I only have a few days, until July 24, 2020, to decide if I want my child enrolled under the conditions stated on the website. WMS website does not have any information on distance learning as far as I can see. In addition, as a teacher at Wahiawa Middle School, I understand we are offering a distance learning program, yet I do not know the details of that program and who provides the service. The short notices, no notices, seemingly lack of teacher support for middle and high school students, and different platforms and companies tell me that HBOE did not have time to develop a virtual learning option or guidelines for such a program. Schools are improvising. However, since schools are focused on planning for in-person classes, they cannot devote the necessary time it takes to create a well thought out virtual program and support it.

I would like to add, it appears some schools cannot provide teacher support for virtual learning. LHS will not offer any teacher support. I am unsure what WMS and Wahiawa Middle School can offer. This is in contrast to online college courses that assigns a professor to help adults learn. If adult-learners at the collegiate level need and expect a professional to facilitate learning, I would expect younger and less mature students would need the same. Therefore, at this time, the virtual option does not offer equal access to education.

Not only do I feel schools are unprepared for in-class and virtual classes, I also feel there are unanswered questions concerning the health and safety of teachers and students. As a teacher, what happens when one of my students test positive for COVID-19? The entire class may have been exposed to the virus. Does everyone in the class quarantine for 14 days? What happens when a school has too many cases? Does the entire school shutdown and/or go to virtual learning? Who pays for testing? What happens when someone in my household is exposed to COVID-19 or becomes COVID-19 positive? Do I stay home? Do I teach my students online? In addition, we know schools spread COVID-19, and scientists anticipate a worse flu season due to COVID-19. What happens when all schools must shutdown? If the school closes, students who are in the virtual option without teacher support, can they suddenly receive teacher support? It is inevitable that schools, teachers, students, and families will find themselves in one or more of the above scenarios. There are too many of these big questions left unanswered. Until we have policies and procedures in place that addresses these predictable outcomes, I feel it is unsafe to return to school.

Thank you for considering my concerns. I hope the HBOE and HTSA can come to an agreement— delay the opening of schools so that everyone can plan, prepare, and create policies and procedures to keep everyone safe.

Regards,
Sandra Bukoski
Wahiawa Middle School Teacher

Sent from my iPad

Testimony BOE

From: Kris Bush <k.bush25@gmail.com> on behalf of Kris Bush
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:36 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony - Reopening of Public Schools

Hi,

I'm a Mom concerned about sending my child back to school.

What protocols are in place for lunch when students can't wear masks because they need to eat and drink?
Do they have designated places to eat that have enough space for physical distancing?
Are they going to have to all eat in the cafeteria, or are there other options?

Also, what protocols are in place for recess?

My child's school has opted to have kids on campus for one day a week but they'll have to rotate classes.
Are the teachers required to clean the classroom before the next class comes in?

These are the types of questions the BOE and DOE need to address so that parents can feel comfortable sending their kids back to school.

I feel VERY strongly that schools shouldn't reopen until these types of questions are thoroughly thought out, with solid solutions that can be executed.

I understand that a lot of things are fluid due to the constantly changing times we're in, but this is not the time to "make it up" as we go along.

Thank you.

Testimony BOE

From: doowee <puanani6715@aol.com> on behalf of doowee
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:40 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY

Dear Board of Education,

Aloha! My name is Adrienne Belaras. I am a third grade teacher at Makakilo 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.

As an educator, it has never been an issue of not wanting to get back to work or do distance learning. I, along with my colleagues, are up for the challenge and willing to do whatever it takes. We were asked to do it when school abruptly ended last school year, and we will, undoubtedly, do it once again. However, with the August 4 start date of school closely approaching, I feel very unprepared to deliver quality level education, particularly if I need to deliver a distance learning program should school shut down again. Today was the second day that I participated in a voluntary professional development on distance learning. After these two days of training, it is clear that I still have much preparation to do, and not enough time to do it.

As of today, I am 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. My colleagues and I spent a good chunk of our PD Day, today, simply trying to figure out the details of what the first two weeks in-school teaching would be like, and what distance learning might look like for the students' "off days" within those first 9 days.

I am also very concerned that there has been no clear plan given on what happens if a student, teacher, or other school employee (or one of their household members) tests positive for Covid-19. I feel like teachers will be most at risk when schools open, as we will all be in close contact with dozens of children, daily, for multiple hours. I also worry for my own son's health. He is a second grader in the public-school system. As a mother, I fear for his health, along with the health of my two other little ones in my household, should we contract the virus from school.

I have very little confidence that our school buildings and classrooms are ready for students to return back to school, in a manner that minimizes the risk of Covid-19. The health and safety of our children and the staff of our public schools must be our first priority. We must take every precaution and be fully prepared before students are brought back on campus, and I strongly believe that we are not there yet.

I am requesting to delay the opening of school buildings to students. Educators need additional time to properly create and implement health strategies in order to help eliminate the spread of Covid-19. We also need additional time to better prepare for an online environment. I hope you take into consideration the delay to the start of students returning to school. We need more planning time to deliver the best quality education for our students as well as better plan for more specific health guidelines and protocols.

Sincerely,
Adrienne Belaras

Testimony BOE

From: Vanessa Escajeda <vanessa_escajeda@yahoo.com> on behalf of Vanessa Escajeda
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:41 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Our school is NOT ready to open for students

I am the SASA at Maemae Elementary. Our staff is dedicated, our PTSA is strong (they bought face shields and helped sew cloth masks for each child), we have the funding to purchase extra cleaning/safety supplies, we have a plan backed by our teachers to open school face to face under Model A (our Principal proudly stated this on the front page of the Star Advertiser just 9 days ago), we were courageously moving forward...then just a few days ago we were blindsided by an email from a parent that we must offer a distance learning (DL) plan. I understand the need, but we are not ready to present a DL plan to our families nor are we ready to field all the questions that parents will rightfully have.

Maemae is an exemplary school, but are simply not ready. At minimum we would need a few weeks to work with our teachers and other support staff to prepare classrooms, receive proper training, revise procedures/protocols, and communicate to our parents more detailed plans to prepare for the return of our students. A delayed opening for students will also provide ample time for parents to make an informed decision whether to opt for DL or send their children to school with the understanding of our new procedures and expectations.

We are relying on the guidance and expertise of the Department of Health. I agree when it was mentioned in a recent public address that it is of utmost importance to have students return to school for their all around well being. I have worked with Board Chairperson Payne and can say with full confidence she will work tirelessly for what is right for the students. Schools must open up, but we just need more prep time with our teachers to do it right. We all have our sleeves rolled up and are ready to put in the work, please give us the time!

Testimony BOE

From: Amanda <amandafhaley@gmail.com> on behalf of Amanda
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:41 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Dear BOE,

Please do not open schools on August 4th. I am a physician and a mother of two elementary age children. The health risk to educators, staff, children and their families is too great. The economic impact of a full classroom of students and their families needing to quarantine for 2 weeks for each sick child is immense. Furthermore without detailed protocols regarding COVID testing for symptomatic children and the response to a positive test result chaos and mistrust will spread. Missed time in school can be made up but health and life taken away can not be restored.

Do right by our health.

Sincerely

Amanda Haley MD
2330 Pikake Place
Honolulu, Hawaii 96817
808-387-0444

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

Testimony BOE

From: PAM YUEN <yuen.pam@gmail.com> on behalf of PAM YUEN
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:42 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: DOE NOT ready to reopen schools on August 4th

This testimony is to justify reasons the State is NOT prepared to reopen schools on August 4, 2020.

First and foremost, based on the MOU agreement between the DOE and HSTA, the DOE has NOT kept to their part as stated in the MOU; to provide a safe environment for teachers and students during this COVID19 pandemic.

1. No written document has yet been provided by the Dept. of Health, stating proper procedures schools will take if students or teachers test positive for COVID while on campus.
 2. Hand Washing stations for students throughout the school campuses, have not been put into place to provide appropriate hand washing for ALL students and teachers.
 3. Providing proper PPE's for teachers, students and classrooms are not yet available for the start of school.
 4. CDC advises that masks be worn, as the first line of defense for COVID19, yet the DOE has not yet provided schools with adequate amounts of masks for students nor made it MANDATORY for everyone on campus to wear it.
 5. Classrooms are not outfitted with spit shields to protect students and teachers from contracting microns from infected individuals who may be asymptomatic.
 6. How will substitute teachers be trained to address COVID in the schools if the state is not properly training them? Not a good thing!
 7. The DOE is placing students and employees into an unsafe health environment as proper preparation for safe schools are still being addressed.
 8. When the state opens on Sept 1; to receive out-of-state visitors, the influx of possible new cases will spike throughout the state, causing an even greater problem for schools, if the above issues are NOT in place at the start of school.
- These are just a few major concerns, the DOE agreed to have accomplished, but have not yet completed.

In addition to the DOE not keeping their fair agreements as stated in the MOU, it must be understood that despite having fewer students on campus; the core curriculum for educating our students remains the same. There is still a need for teachers to teach all content courses in school. A teacher is still required in each classroom.

With the teacher shortage being addressed pre-COVID; schools are now faced with an even greater shortage; as teachers choose to retire or leave the profession, during this pandemic. We need to create a reason for teachers to remain in the profession, and continue teaching our children. Therefore, the hard-to-fill differential is a much needed asset for front line teachers; as we continue to try and maintain enough teachers in the less desired schools, like the Leeward Coast.

Thank you for your consideration on these matters, as I look forward to a school year that's physically safe for all students, families, faculty and staff on campus.

Sincerely,
Pam Yuen
School Library Media Specialist
Nanakuli High and Intermediate

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: David Harvey <david.harvey@k12.hi.us> on behalf of David Harvey
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:44 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Please do not end the pay differentials for SpEd teachers. I, along with many others, will need to move to the mainland if the pay is resinded. Along with us go our highly qualified status and many years of experience.

Thank you,
D. Harvey

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Testimony BOE

From: Jessica Guillermo <jessica.guillermo@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Jessica Guillermo
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:44 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

My name is Jessica Guillermo and I am a first grade teacher at Konawaena Elementary School on the Big Island. I am writing on my concerns towards

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 rushing into sending children back to schools without having a plan in place. I'm concerned that superintendent Kishimoto believes these "o'hana bubbles" are the solution. I'm concerned that we don't have a plan in place in the event that someone on our campus or one of the students' family member contracts COVID. I'm concerned that I'm being asked to teach a distance learning curriculum without even having any training.

We are in a mad rush to send the children of Hawai'i back to school and start the school year as we always do. Give the teachers 4 days prep before the students come like we always do and welcome students back on the first day of school like we always do. Well therein lies the problem because we are not operating in the "like we always do." We are operating in UNPRECEDENTED times. If we have to push the start date back and have teachers return so that we can be prepared then that's one thing, but to rush us back with student and have NO CONTINGENCY PLANS or SAFETY PROCEDURES in place is just simply NOT RESPONSIBLE. Would you go to work everyday without having the safety precautions in place? Then why would you ask that of teachers? Second if it is so important for us to be there in the classroom and be ready to teach on August 4th, why are we facing yet another pay cut? These are mixed messages.

The idea of the bubble just doesn't work. We have seen in the NBA that they have created a bubble where these athletes have left their homes and are living, eating, and training on site where they continue to receive regular testing and have procedures in place if one of the athletes contracts COVID. Again they are living, eating, and training in a site away from their families. This idea of a bubble just doesn't work because as soon as the day is over the students leave their "bubble" and return home. Students have many "bubbles" that they will operate in and this idea that they stay in one "bubble" all day just isn't going to happen in reality.

Next, I'm concerned about what will happen if someone on our campus or a students' family member contracts COVID. There is no procedure in place. Kishimoto says we will quarantine that person. What does that mean? What does that look like? How will that work? Do we automatically enter distance learning? There needs to be a clear plan set into place before we can be allowed to return. Only last Thursday Health Director Bruce Anderson told lawmakers that Governor Ige asked him to create a panel of experts to do a risk analysis of schools and determine trigger points for opening and closing schools.

Last, Kishimoto keeps saying that we have received training. There has been no training offered by the state. If there was training that occurred over the summer, we are expected to attend on our own time with no pay. That would basically be the same as you going to work today, but not getting paid for it. But it's okay because this is information you need to know so you'll just do it anyway since it's important to your job. Training needs to

occur during contratual time and I'm sorry the 4 days before school starts is just not going to cut it. We need time to properly plan and support students' needs if we need to return to full distance learning.

Please reconsider opening school on August 4th. It is vital that we do this right because everyone's health is on the line. Proper planning and training is essential for everyone to move forward. You wouldn't go to work without the proper safety procedures in place. We are only asking for the same consideration because at the end of the day the goal is for everyone to return home safely to their families.

Sincerely,

Jessica Guillermo

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Testimony BOE

From: James Gallagher <wehiwa95@yahoo.com> on behalf of James Gallagher
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:45 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha Board of Education Members,

Thank you in advance for reading my testimony regarding action Item, "H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 Employees."

My name is Sheri Gallagher and I am an educator with 26+ years of service in Hawaii and two years in the mainland. Currently, I am teaching at Lunalilo Elementary School in Honolulu, Hawaii. I wholeheartedly love my job. I pursued this livelihood for many reasons (fulfilling, engaging, challenging, and rewarding to name a few) and will continue to do my job to the best of my ability until it's time for me to retire. Like many other educators, I look forward to the start of each new school year for a multitude of reasons and I prepare for the new year all summer long. This coming school year however is very different. Given the unusual circumstances due to Covid-19, I was very reluctant to go in to school to prep my classroom once we were allowed to enter our classrooms. Today, I finally went in and I can tell you that I'm even more hesitant and distressed to start the 2020-2021 school year. Now that I've seen first hand what my classroom will look like with 6ft. distancing (crowded with desks against cabinets and walls from the front of the class to the very back of the classroom) coupled with the many uncertainties that do not protect the health and safety of the entire student body, the entire faculty and the entire staff at all schools. As a state, we are prematurely reopening our schools and we should be more proactive rather than reactive when making such decisions. We should not open if we do not have a system in place that protects the well being of every child, every teacher and every staff member. I implore you to be proactive and not reactive and resolve to put systems in place before it is too late and we have a much greater problem on our hands that the state healthcare system will not be able to handle.

Some of my concerns are as follows:

Why is it not mandated for everyone to wear a mask? As a state we have to do this in every public space. Hospitals are mandating masks, face shields, and eye protection be worn by staff that do not even work with Covid patients to protect themselves! I sure would like to protect myself and the students should feel confident that we are doing everything possible to maintain a healthy environment. Social distancing of 6 ft. is not nearly enough to keep us all safe.

Why are teachers, yes teachers proposed to make medical decisions on the health of a child when we are not qualified to do so? We are being given a list of questions to check all students health at the start of the school day yet we can't take their temperature? Are teachers, the school, and state liable for the health of these students if we as teachers misdiagnose symptoms, or the student doesn't answer the questions correctly? In some cases, the students may not even speak English and are unable to answer the question all while

airports, businesses, and other educational institutions across the country are taking temperatures in addition to other precautions?

Being a school that is near the most famous tourist destination on Oahu, with many parents working in the same community, we are at greater risk on contracting and spreading the disease.

Why is the State imposing no social gathering more than 10, yet we have 12 students plus a teacher in our classroom and 100+ students on small campus daily?

Knowing that persons with Covid-19 can have asymptomatic symptoms, we could unknowingly spread the disease to many children, teachers and staff members on a daily basis. Yet all the state is worried about is contract tracing?

At the end of the day, I help care for a 90 and 92 year old parents, my two children and husband. Is the State Department of Health and the State Government going to help me with the aftermath if I bring home Covid-19 to my family members? Or will they be satisfied because they can trace where it all started and how far it has spread?

What is the exact protocol for schools once a person on campus is diagnosed with Covid?

The state said teachers were able to take classes to prepare for online instruction. This was impossible for me as I had to care for two elderly parents, one of which had two surgeries during the past few weeks. Shouldn't all the teachers be trained before the students start school?

Will the safety protocols include school closure? If so, what is the timeline? Specifics need to be written and known by all parties before the school year begins..... not after a surge occurs. If the Department of Health is imposing such guidelines then please be specific on every detail.

Shouldn't the state be providing schools with more money to hire additional qualified personal right away? Why do we have to wait for the count date? Why are we forced to use the bodies we have and put them in less than desirable working conditions? Knowing we need more technological expertise how is the State going to help schools financially?

I hope as a board, you are able to really understand the struggles parents, children and educators have logistically with the premature opening of schools. Delaying the start of the school year is happening nationwide and worldwide. Make the correct choice. What is another few weeks to a month? I ask you to chose wisely. I ask you to think of everyone and protect everyone, for the betterment of Hawaii and all of its people.

Mahalo for your time.

Sincerely,

Sheri Gallagher

Testimony BOE

From: Yong Sohn <yongsohn@gmail.com> on behalf of Yong Sohn
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:46 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Greetings,

I am a spouse of a teacher 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.

My wife is a teacher with the DOE and I am writing to you to voice my concern. We are definitely not ready to open school doors as our students and teachers' health should be the number one priority. I know currently there is no concrete solution but reopening schools for the fall is way too early as cases (known cases) have been rising. We need to find other possible solutions. An article from The Oxford Student says "The government should instead be investing in making sure that all pupils have remote access to the education that they deserve. Buying laptops or tablets (free, nationalised internet doesn't seem so ludicrous now) or sending round work by post if need be. They must do whatever they are able to do, must explore every avenue and exhaust every possibility, in order to maintain educational standards – without endangering thousands of lives." It is ridiculous to reopen schools for fall and endanger the health of everyone.

Sincerely,
Yong

Testimony BOE

From: Jennifer Jo <jennifermelindajo@yahoo.com> on behalf of Jennifer Jo
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:47 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To the Honorable Board of Education Members,

I am testifying on agenda 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 both an educator, and a parent of children in the DOE Schools in Hilo, Hawaii. I am concerned with schools reopening without the necessary preparations in place. I also feel that if the DOE is using the month of August to prepare us for future distance learning, why should we open up to end up closing?

The schools reopening has put a strain on me as an educator and a parent. As an educator, I worry that social distancing will not work, especially for the elementary school children I teach. Young children have no boundaries, and teaching them not to have any physical contact with each other or their teacher will prove to be impossible for some.

As a parent, I feel that having my middle school child in school 2 days a week, and my high school freshman in school one day a week does not alleviate the childcare issues I face. I know I am like many parents who do not have childcare options and have to take time off of work to care for my children. This would mean that I would not be able to be present on campus everyday since I have my own family to take care of.

If we could all do distance learning, both teachers and students, you will alleviate the need to find substitute teachers to have bodies on campus because many of us teachers are in this predicament.

I do not understand why it is so important to open schools before tourism opens? Why is distance learning so bad especially if we are given training and examples of what successful distance learning looks like.

I please ask you to let us telework for the safety of our faculty, students, and our Ohana.

Thank you,
Jennifer Jo

Testimony BOE

From: Nohea Goo <ngoo@hawaii.edu> on behalf of Nohea Goo
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:47 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

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

My name is Nohea Goo and I have been a teacher at Dole Middle School in the Honolulu District for 18 years.

I am writing to share with you how I will be affected by the reopening of schools and my ability to do my job to provide a safe learning environment for my students.

Currently, the administration of Dole Middle School has not sent written communication regarding how the school will be enforcing 6 feet of physical distancing and the use of masks. The schedule I saw, affords the students an outdoor recess and a lunch period where they can be in the cafe or outside. We have a hard time enforcing the dress code policy, I have very little faith how we are going to enforce physical distancing and mask wearing. I was provided with written communication stating that classrooms are going to be cleaned at recess and lunch recess. I was not informed who was going to do the cleaning as recess is 15 minutes long and there are over 40 classrooms on campus. I am not aware of any plans in place should a student or adult on campus test positive for Covid-19. I was told that I could have up to 15 students in a class. On a daily basis (except on Mondays when students will have virtual classes), my students, depending on their schedule, could have contact with up to 4 teachers a day, and up to 60 students, not including the times they are at recess and lunch. When I hear about "bubbles" the entire Dole Middle School will be one bubble and that is scary.

I have received no training regarding distance learning. During the fourth quarter of SY 1920, I ended up working more hours than I ever have. I felt as though I was on my own trying to navigate distance learning. I received many angry parent emails during this time which added to my stress. I am not prepared for the upcoming school year, as there are two administration days and two teacher work days to help prepare for a completely new way of educating students.

I have underlying medical conditions that put me at an increased risk for severe illness. I live with my mother who also has underlying medical conditions that puts her at an increased risk. I am extremely scared and nervous that there are no solid plans in place that will protect my students and myself from Covid-19. Through the news, I have seen how one person can infect many people.

I would like to ask that time be given so that teachers will be prepared to provide a safe learning environment for their students. Teachers also need time to be trained on distance learning.

Thank you for your consideration.

Nohea Goo

Testimony BOE

From: Marisa Miyashiro <miyashirom004@gmail.com> on behalf of Marisa Miyashiro
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:48 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 Marisa Miyashiro and I am a School Counselor at an elementary school on Kaua'i with a population of approx 335 students. I personally do not feel comfortable opening up our school in just a few short weeks with so many questions unanswered. It feels rushed and it also feels like the rush is for us (school staff) to develop relationships with students in anticipation of reverting back to distance learning. If the state is anticipating the closing of schools again because of another influx of COVID-19, then why are we putting teachers and students in harms way? I strongly urge you to push back the start date for students until everyone involved can be more prepared ahead of time instead of preparing while students are already on campus. I may have done some voluntary training online during the summer but that doesn't mean that I feel trained or equipped to go back to teaching/counseling my students with confidence with so many changes that have happened since I last saw them in March... all 335 of them. How did I see all 335 of them you ask? In addition to providing counseling and guidance lessons for our school I have recess duty and lunch duty so I would normally see every student everyday on campus. I really don't know what my roles and duties will look like this school year but until simple questions are answered like "What happens to the students and adults on a school campus if a student, teacher, or other school employee (or even another household member) test positive for COVID-19", I really do not feel comfortable welcoming back our students. As Teachers and School Staff we are viewed as leaders (by both students and parents), if we don't have answers prepared for them how can we expect to successfully lead our beloved school???

Thank you for your time,
Marisa

Testimony BOE

From: Bridgette Beatty <bridgandcharly@yahoo.com> on behalf of Bridgette Beatty
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:50 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony addressing the defunding of teacher differentials

July 22, 2020

Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha, Honorable Board of Education Members:

My name is Bridgette Beatty and I am currently a middle school mathematics teacher in Maui District Canoe Complex on Lana'i. I am submitting testimony in support of keeping the pay differentials for teachers in special education, Hawaiian language immersion, and hard to staff positions, and not defunding.

Our teachers are worth it as they are important for the future of our keiki. Currently, the DOE and BOE are asking teachers to walk back onto campuses, back into classrooms, and face potential threat of coming into contact with SARS-CoV-2 by the numbers of students and staff in an enclosed space being beyond CDC guidelines. Rather than suspend or reduce the differentials, you should be adding hazard pay to our salaries.

My family and I have lived in Hawai'i for the better part of ten years. Living on Maui, we thought, would be more cost effective. It is only slightly more cost effective on groceries and gas, however, the cost of housing is outrageous. Living on a teacher's salary, I do not qualify for much, so the available houses are literally decaying, mostly unsafe, and extremely costly to rent. The rent I paid ranged from 50%-80% of my salary. My family was hungry. We live on an extremely tight budget with no room for even extra gas to go to the beach, the one free activity, for fun. Prior to moving back to Lana'i we looked into a tiny home, camping, and honestly, being homeless. Aside from Lana'i being home, I chose to move my family back to Lana'i knowing I would get housing due to teaching on a hard to staff island.

This first increase in pay in January was the first time my family has not had to eat instant ramen for dinner every night for a week prior to the next paycheck simply because we could not afford anything else. Sadly, this is not an overstatement. Losing the pay differential is literally our food budget. And that's not taking into account the repeated threat by Governor Ige to cut teachers' pay by 20%, with rumors circulating now that the cuts will be 40%. This is outrageous.

I choose to be a teacher, and enjoy it, but it honestly is more stressful and dissatisfying than ever. The pay being tens of thousands of dollars below the cost of living here makes it even less appealing to stay in education—and that's prior to any cuts actually being approved yet. I already know of several teachers who have opted to retire early, leave education, and still others looking for a way out. I know, as I am one of them. You cut our pay, and instead of the increased retention we've seen thanks to these differentials being put in place only six months ago, the number of credentialed teachers, or even people willing to teach, will be significant.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bridgette Beatty, Maui Canoe District, Lana'i

Testimony BOE

From: Martha Gomez <martha.gomez@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Martha Gomez
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:50 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Hello. I just wanted to let you know that there is a big concern about opening the schools face to face in this Covid-19 situation. I work with the special education preschool and I can tell you for my experience of working with the preschool since 2006; that we won't be able to teach at social distances or make the children be safe or wear a mask even If we wanted to because of their age, and their behavior. Another point; who is going to be responsible for a child that gets sick of COVID-19 and dies just because the DOE felt confident about bringing back the students in a time of health crisis. Are you as a Department ready to face parents of children that would die for getting the virus at school if they sue the DOE and the BOE; just Because you as a department felt you can beat the odds? Please reconsider pushing back the face to face and once everything gets better then go for it. I'm not the only person that has a

Big concern about opening schools face to face. We have a big group of teachers and educators in a social media that are super concern and feel the same way.

Thanks for your attention

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Testimony BOE

From: Michelle Stanley <mpohina@gmail.com> on behalf of Michelle Stanley
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:51 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Please delay

Hello,

I am a parent of 2 elementary school aged kids plus a baby at home. The thought of sending kids back to school is unnerving with rising cases as the state is slowly reopening. Then to learn that the teachers are not ready, not prepared, not trained, and not comfortable makes it even more unsettling to send the kids back to school.

Please delay and help the teachers to get prepared and trained. Help schools get their supplies and PPE that they need.

Thank you!
Michelle Stanley

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Jeri Dean <jmiya1006@gmail.com> on behalf of Jeri Dean
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:51 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Reopening of school

While I believe my CAS has done everything in his power to keep us updated and "on schedule" with tasks, I feel an enormous pressure to create policies and procedures that I am not trained to do. Specifically relating to COVID-19, administrators are being tasked with an impossible responsibility to create solutions of health and safety with a depleting WSF account and recently vacant positions that has taken away. In my case, a full time custodian position was vacated and immediately removed from the State leaving us short on custodians. I am not competent in the "ways" of health and safety when a pandemic is the threat. I don't know where appropriate signage should go, or the best way to control direction of foot traffic on my campus. I don't know how to find subs willing to cover for teachers who do not want to be in school despite the aggressive measures we've taken at the school level. I only have 300 chrome books for a school of 1,000 students. How are we supposed to go virtual without technology devices and got spots? Can I lead my school to finding solutions? Yes...but do I have the time once teachers finally return to work? No! As educators, we will rise up and do the best we can and it will have to be enough - but no, I am not ready to reopen on August 6.

Mahalo,
Jeri Dean

Testimony BOE

From: trina oato <trinaoato@yahoo.com> on behalf of trina oato
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:52 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Dear Board of Education,

My name is Trina Oato and I am a special education preschool teacher at Queen Kaahumanu 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 asking that you delay the August 4th opening of schools for students. In my current teaching position, I will be teaching several special education preschool students in half of a classroom (I share a classroom with another preschool special education teacher). Many of my students will not tolerate wearing a face mask and I have been advised to space their desks only 3 feet apart. I feel that schools and teachers are underprepared to minimize the risk of COVID-19. I am having to learn about COVID-19 on my own and stockpile my own PPE (masks, face shields, covering for my clothes) and cleaning supplies because the DOE has no plan in place. I do not know how to keep myself and my students safe from COVID-19. I have not received any training or was aware that there were any trainings available over the summer in regards to COVID-19 or distance learning.

Please delay the August 4th start date for students so that schools have the time to adequately plan and train teachers and staff to minimize the risk of COVID-19 spreading in public schools.

Mahalo,
Trina Oato

Testimony BOE

From: CATHERINE JONES <email4cjones@gmail.com> on behalf of CATHERINE JONES
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:56 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony Opposing the Discontinuance of Teacher Differentials

Dear Members of the Hawaii BOARD OF EDUCATION:

My name is Catherine Jones, and I am a 2nd year teacher at Waimea Elementary School in the Hamakua District on Hawaii Island. I am writing today to submit testimony in opposition of 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.

The differential we received during the second semester of the 2019 -2020 school year made a tremendous difference in being able to live a little easier financially. As a new teacher, the differential has helped me to begin paying my student loans while I subsist in this very expensive state. The cost of living here in Hawaii is quite high, and often a financial struggle for my family. As the parent of a school-aged child, I work hard every day to provide for my child and to ensure his future.

The Covid-19 Pandemic has only exacerbated the stress and anxiety of my financial situation. In my rural community, prices of food and other essential supplies have skyrocketed because of the pandemic. The differential has helped my family to weather the storm.

I know that I am not alone in my struggle to subsist, and often hear personal stories from my colleagues about their financial travails. Please continue to provide the pay differentials for teachers in special education, Hawaiian language immersion, and hard-to-staff positions to show that Hawaii's Board of Education values its 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 school year will continue to impact our profession and communities in these areas significantly. Some teachers may be forced to retire, while others may need to leave the area and/ or the teaching profession. Additionally, recovery from the discontinuance of the differentials would put even more of Hawaii's workforce in dire financial straits.

Mahalo for your time and understanding,
Catherine Jones, 3rd Grade Teacher,
Hamakua District, Hawaii Island

Testimony BOE

From: Jeannine Gomez <jeannine_gomez@hotmail.com> on behalf of Jeannine Gomez
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:53 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony - delay opening and provide distance learning guidance

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 feel like our children are being treated like guinea pigs. Reopening schools in such a haphazard way and having the DOH Director and Epidemiologist EXPECT a spike in cases upon reopening is ludicrous!

Personally, I feel that 1) the school opening needs to be delayed and 2) a 100% distance learning option **WITH** some form of teacher interaction needs to be universally adopted ASAP. Most schools are NOT providing adequate education for those who choose to (or must) learn from home.

I completely agree that education is a priority and I know that kids need to have face to face learning, but at what cost? Having the kids go back to school with so many unanswered questions and variables just doesn't make sense. Reopening schools and *then* doing teacher training is preposterous to me and backwards. Teachers should be trained BEFORE schools open. In fact, they should have been training since March for this. One hundred percent distance learning should have already been on the table as a viable option at that point. Had that been the case, we would definitely be ready for an August 4th re-opening.

Why not use the first two weeks for teacher/staff training *then* have kids go back and push the school year out if you have to? We need outside of the box thinking here. Everything is changing and we all have to adapt.

Have teachers even been surveyed and asked if they would prefer to do distance or in-person teaching? I'm sure there are a lot that are willing and very able to do distance learning if given the opportunity.

Also, in light of the recent increase in COVID-19 cases, a survey should be sent out AGAIN to all interested parties via ALL avenues (mail, email, social media, apps, etc.). Many people I have spoken to did not complete the survey as they did not know where to find it or that it even existed. And at the time it was posted, the cases weren't spiking like they are now.

I am simply concerned not only for our children but for the high-risk loved ones they pose a threat to.

Thank you for taking the time to read this and acknowledging our concerns.

Jeannine Gomez
Parent of Waiakea Elementary School students

Testimony BOE

From: LH <wailukupapaya@gmail.com> on behalf of LH
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:41 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am a teacher in Wailuku, Maui. I am also a parent of an elementary aged child.

Please rethink opening schools on August 4. Teachers and schools are not ready. Thus far, all I know is that my school is using the blended model, and the first 2 weeks of school will be half days.

Has the state adjusted dates to provide schools and teachers with adequate time to measure and arrange classrooms according to health and safety guidelines? No. We are not back to work yet, and when we do return, we still only have the same amount of days before students arrive as we do during a normal school year. 2 days for admin to go over business and 2 teacher work days. There is no additional time for learning new safety and health protocols, or for being trained in how to do distance learning AND in person teaching before students arrive on campus. The 2 weeks of half day training we are supposed to receive will be happening simultaneously to students returning to campus. Shouldn't we be trained and prepared BEFORE their arrival to campus? If training, education, and health/safety guidelines cannot be carried out well with quality, with ample time to prepare, the effects on teachers, staff, students, parents, and families will be catastrophic.

Have schools realistically been given enough time or funding to order and receive proper PPE for the beginning of the year, as well as the consecutive weeks and months that are possibly to follow? If hospitals and other essential workers are having difficulty getting PPE, how will all of our schools receive enough to start the school year in such a short time, especially with delays in deliveries? Will there be extra money to order future supplies of PPE? What happens when schools do not receive the things they ordered?

It is very worrisome as a parent, to know first hand, just how unprepared schools and teachers are. Having a plan on paper is one thing, but actually being prepared to carry the plan out is another. I am not comfortable starting school as a teacher or sending my child to school knowing how unprepared we are. This is not a situation where we can have a do over when things do not go well. We must make smarter and safer decisions. The choices we make now will change the lives of many. I am hoping that it will not change lives for the very worst.

Once again, please reconsider delaying the reopening of schools. I would rather be alive and have children be a little behind the old normal standards, than the alternative.

Thank you for your time.

Testimony BOE

From: Michelle King <we3kings808@gmail.com> on behalf of Michelle King
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:54 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Michelle King

July 21, 2020

To the Hawaii Board of Education

Aloha,

It will be very devastating to discontinue the shortage differentials for teachers. This will cause many teachers who teach in these shortage areas to leave the profession especially now that we are at risk due to COVID-19. Some teachers have returned to teach Special Education because this differential was offered. We still are faced with shortages in the areas of Special Education.

As a Special Education teacher I have faced any challenges with teacher shortages in this area. This leaves very few teachers remaining to cover IEPs for the missing teachers. As the head of the department I have had to cover the shortage areas and work above and beyond a typical work day. It is impossible to sustain at this level. It is not fair to my family or my students to be given a workload that is seemingly impossible. Everyone suffers. Even with full staff we write and attend IEPs during our own time and during our prep. Our work loads makes it difficult to work another job to make ends meet as our jobs demand so much of our time beyond our typical work day. .

Please help us retain our hard to staff areas as it will cause a domino effect. It is really unbearable to cover for the loss of these teachers. Subs can not do IEPs. Our students deserve more.

Sincerely,
Michelle King

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Steve <pistolsteve316@yahoo.com> on behalf of Steve
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:54 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To whom it concerns:

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 Steve Hathaway and I am an elementary teacher at Alvah Scott. I am worried that schools are not prepared to open and that it will not be safe for all. I have received no training nor have I been offered any training to know what to look for or what to do if someone has Covid at my school. Please consider moving back the start date or starting schools online. Think about all
Involved here.

Thank you,

Steve Hathaway
Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: D. Gray <dgraysong@gmail.com> on behalf of D. Gray
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:54 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

My name is Dee Ann Gray, and I teach Chorus and Piano at Wahiawa Middle School.

Initially, I was told that the classes I teach would be taught virtually this fall. I spent this summer preparing and planning for this.

Last Friday I was told that all Electives have been eliminated from the curriculum this year, so I will now be helping Core teachers teach their subjects. Basically, I've been reassigned to teach a subject I haven't taught before, and I am required to report to work next Wednesday. I will have 4 days before students arrive to learn, collaborate, and plan in addition to all the safety protocols and changes we are facing with this pandemic. This is not enough time to adequately prepare.

We normally need 4 days to prepare for the start of school in pre-pandemic years, so I am confused as to how 4 days could possibly be enough time for us to prepare.

There are many questions parents and educators have which have not been answered satisfactorily.

I am concerned about the safety of myself and my students when they return to campus. Why are masks not being required for all students and staff? Right now we've been told that each teacher can decide what they feel is safe in their rooms, however in my school teachers will be rotating between rooms. Even if I require the students in my room to wear masks, what will happen when I go to the next room where masks have not been required? This is not safe practice.

What happens on campus when a student or staff member tests positive for COVID 19? We've been told that students are in "Ohana Bubbles", however students are not in just one bubble all day. They will exit the room for lunch, recess, and bathroom trips. The minute a student steps outside their "Ohana Bubble", they expose themselves and everyone within that bubble and outside that bubble to transmission of the virus. Also, when teachers rotate from bubble to bubble for each class, they could unknowingly be spreading the virus.

What happens when campuses need to shut down for 100% distance learning? We have not received training for this. We are unsure of the procedures and the process. Training has not been mandated for all employees. It has been optional. Also, I've heard it stated that online learning does not work well for our students based on participation during the 4th quarter of school last year. Couldn't it be because it was not required of students? We need clarification about how this will work.

Educators are confused about how this school year will be structured, and how it will work. There are many loopholes and unanswered questions, and we as a school system can do better. We need more time to prepare for the safety of our students, teachers, families, and the community.

It is more important to be prepared with a plan in place for our schools than to hurriedly rush to put students and teachers back on campuses too soon.

Please reconsider the decision to begin school for students on August 4th, and give us the time necessary to ensure safe, well-designed protocols and plans for our keiki and educators.

Respectfully,

Dee Ann Gray

Testimony BOE

From: Blue Light <bluelight74@gmail.com> on behalf of Blue Light
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:55 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for schools reopening

Hawai'i Board of Education,

>

> I find it concerning that our teachers (HSTA) are not willing to open up our schools again. They've had since March to plan how they can keep the students socially distanced, getting paid to stay at home while doing so. Now, they'd like to continue staying home, getting paid for doing nothing!

> How about those teachers who want to stay home can take a leave of absence, with no pay?!

> I'm sure there's a lot of qualified people out there unemployed right now who can fill vacant spots of unwilling (or lazy?) teachers.

> Or better yet, let teachers get paid based on the number of days they actually teach classes, put them all on hourly rather than salary. Maybe then they'll be more motivated to show up and teach, to do what they're paid to do.

> Let our students get back to school. They're already behind half a year. The keiki are in their prime time to be learning and cannot waste anymore time!

> Online learning is just not possible with younger students, without full parental involvement. We parents need to work to make money, as should the teachers.

> We're out there, keeping socially distant, washing hands, and being as safe as possible, but still, out there working to make a living. It's possible to stay safe and do your job.

> Let's get our students back to school. Those teachers who want to retire or go without pay, let them! They've already had too much time off, free vacation at the expense of taxpayers, at the expense of our keiki. They only grow up once, and learning is critical at this stage of their lives. I implore you, please let the schools open!

>

>

> -concerned parent

>

Testimony BOE

From: tksf.wong <tksf.wong@hawaiiantel.net> on behalf of tksf.wong
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:55 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 feel we need to postpone the reopening of schools. Teachers will always care for the safety of their students and families, others, as well as their own family. They are the frontline workers once schools reopen. Teachers are very fearful and underprepared with the reopening. How can you expect students and families to be confident coming to school when teachers themselves are uncomfortable with the reopening? There has not been adequate training given to teachers before the start of the school year for them to feel confident in the reopening. There are many unanswered questions about the procedure when students, teachers, and school staff become infected with covid19. All information given from the department of health, board of education, and the department of education is general, and not clear/specific. There is a high chance teachers will become infected multiple times a year and will be forced to work with no pay. The shortage of teachers has been an issue for many years and it continues to be. By reopening the school, the shortage will only increase. The schools should not be reopening if teachers and schools are untrained and unprepared.

- T. Wong

Testimony BOE

From: Chelsea Fujitani-Agasa <chelsea.fujitani@gmail.com> on behalf of Chelsea Fujitani-Agasa
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:56 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To the Board of Education,

My name is Chelsea Fujitani-Agasa and I teach band and orchestra at Aiea Intermediate School. I have proudly taught music for seven years and I hope to continue teaching for as long as I can. COVID-19 has had an impact on my job as a teacher and as a new parent of a recently turned one-year-old. I understand there are many uncertainties and hard decisions that have been made throughout this time but I feel that the recent, or lack of decisions made by the Board of Education are ones that I am deeply concerned about in regards to the upcoming school year.

In the news, positive COVID-19 case counts have been rising. With contact tracing, they have linked one person to be in at least three clusters of positive cases (two gyms and Hawaiian Airlines). This is truly an example of how "it only takes one." Here is how "it takes one" can affect my home and at school.

My household is myself, my husband and recently turned one-year-old son. My husband is asthmatic and was told that if he is diagnosed with COVID-19, his whole workplace (40 members large) will be forced to take Emergency Sick Leave immediately. If I potentially bring home the virus, not only will this affect my husband and recently turned one-year-old son who is still vulnerable, but it could affect 40 adults and potentially more due to their families.

If Student A in a secondary school has a positive case of COVID-19, that student could have potentially affected up to six different classes, or Ohana Bubble, as you call it, that s/he was sitting in one day. Those six different classes will then have to see if they have a positive case of COVID-19 and if they do (example Student B), we have to check what six different classes Student B was in, as Student A and Student B only have one class in common. This has potential to be the greatest snowball effect that no one wants to deal with as a whole school could get COVID-19. As fast as this virus spreads, we have yet to receive word on what that procedure will be if a student tests positive for COVID-19 during the school day. What are we waiting for?

My school administrators have been working hard to answer the many questions my colleagues and I have throughout the summer. It has also been frustrating as the common answer that I got from my administrators is that they are waiting to hear from the "higher ups." There is no written guidance from the Department of Health that was agreed upon by the Department of Education so how can my administrators give us answers? We start school in less than a week and teachers are still unsure of many factors such as ensuring safety and consistent protocols for each school. Leaving up to the school administrations is not fair to them as they have their share of work to do, among making sure that there is a safe learning environment for our students.

By delaying in-person education, this is allowing everyone time; which is what we need. We need time to make sure that our syllabi are consistent with our colleagues and with the state. We need time to wait for that huge backorder of personal protective equipment that our administrators purchased for us. We need time to ensure that we create a quality curriculum for our students that follow CDC guidelines. We need time to have a lower case count to ensure there is no large spread of the virus. But most importantly, we need time to hear from you or the Department of Health what the protocol, procedures and practices are in order to keep everyone safe with COVID-19 and be able to confidently relay this to our students and their families.

Like any teacher, I cannot wait to see my students in person but safety should always come first for everyone. I feel like that has not been the priority recently. We need to be proactive and be mindful about how we approach going back to school, otherwise, we will be preparing paperwork (and a possible lawsuit) for the first death that occurs in our schools because a student was tested positive and it got traced back to school.

I strongly urge the Board of Education to reconsider opening up schools on August 4th for in-person teaching. The safety of our students and teachers are at high risk.

Thank you,
Chelsea Fujitani-Agasa

Testimony BOE

From: Jan Avellana <javellana@hes.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Jan Avellana
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:57 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov; sendelacruz@capitol.hawaii.gov; christina.kishimoto@k12.hi.us; senfevella@capitol.hawaii.gov
Subject: 7/23 Meeting on the Re-opening of Schools

To the Honorable Members of the Hawaii Board of Education,

My name is Janice Avellana. I am a first grade teacher at Hahaione Elementary School in Hawaii Kai. I am providing testimony with concerns regarding the reopening of Hawaii's public schools.

I oppose the reopening of Hawaii's public schools under the current plan, for the following reasons:

1. Currently, the Department of Health does not require testing of students or faculty and staff. How will our parents, teachers and families know that we are in a safe learning environment without COVID-19 testing? As teachers, we are required to base our curriculum choices and teaching methods based on researched based data--shouldn't we hold the State of Hawaii's Department of Education and the Department of Health to these same rigorous standards? Where is the scientific data showing that all participants are healthy and virus free? Sadly, even the National Basketball Association has higher standards for testing and isolation of their players. Don't we have a responsibility to our keiki to test? (https://www.espn.com/nba/story/_/id/29321006/in-documents-nba-details-coronavirus-testing-process-orlando-campus-life)
2. Ohana bubbles provide for manageable contact tracing, but it does not protect teachers from the threat of COVID-19. Ohana bubbles are only as good as how intact they remain. Here are just some ways ohana bubbles will be compromised:
 - We do not have designated bathrooms for each ohana bubble. Every time a student enters a bathroom on campus and interacts with other students, that student's ohana bubble will be compromised.
 - Students will be in contact with other students before school upon drop off, on the bus/public transportation and after school, thus piercing the ohana bubble safety net.
 - Students will be interacting with their families, and placed in social settings on the weekends and during family time that are way beyond the scope of their school ohana bubbles. Teachers have no control or information about who students interact with during their non-school hours, or what potentially risky activities in which they engage.

To this point, ohana bubbles can be likened to sexual partners and the transmission of sexually transmitted diseases. An individual that has sex with one partner, doesn't only have exposure to that one sexual partner--rather, an individual will be exposed to all of the partner's previous sexual encounters and whatever risks or diseases were present during those interactions. <https://www.cnn.com/2020/06/27/what-is-a-covid-19-bubble-and-how-to-do-it-safely.html>

There are many other concerns that I share with my colleagues, students and their families. Make no mistake that my stance to delay students' start date and the reopening of their school year is not due to my lack of planning or preparation--nor should this blame fall on the collective shoulders of any of Hawaii's school teachers. I am ready and eager to return to teaching in a safe work environment or in a 100% digital venue, with the proper training. On the contrary. That onus for the safe reopening of our schools is on the Superintendent Kishimoto, the Hawaii State Department of Education, Governor Ige, the Hawaii State Department of Health and this Board of Education. I hope you do the children, their families and teachers of the State of Hawaii justice by re-examining your re-opening plan and shoring up areas of lack so that no child, parent, caregiver, teacher or school staff need die.

Sincerely,
Janice Avellana
Grade 1 Teacher
Hahaione Elementary School

Testimony BOE

From: Manuel Jadulang <manuel_jadulang@yahoo.com> on behalf of Manuel Jadulang
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 11:01 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Teacher differential testimony

Aloha e Board of Education

My name is Manuel Jadulang, transferring CTE teacher to Kealakehe HS in Kona, Big Island from Honokaa High and Intermediate. I have been teaching since 2001 and urge the Board of Education to continue with the funding for the teacher shortage differential. Both Kealakehe High School and Honokaa High and Intermediate are hard to staff school.

When I applied for a position during posting 1, I have seen a lot of openings for teachers statewide. Seeing the openings for teachers is evidence our state of Hawaii has a shortage of teachers. The differential encourages teachers to go to schools in hard to staff areas, help with schools needing qualified SPED teachers and teachers for Hawaiian language immersion schools.

If the Board of Education does not continue the funding for teacher shortage differential, the State of Hawaii will see teachers exiting the profession and this will cause chaos when our DOE re-open schools in the middle of COVID 19 pandemic.

I'm also a parent of two children attending Waimea el and Waimea MS and know those schools that have been identified as hard to staff schools. As any parent, I want my own children to be taught by qualified teachers not subs or emergency hires.

Mahalo for your consideration

Manuel Jadulang
Kealakehe HS CTE Teacher

Testimony BOE

From: Vanessa Humphreys <vhumphre@hawaii.edu> on behalf of Vanessa Humphreys
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 11:01 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony: Thursday July 23rd Meeting (MOU & Reopening of School)

Dear Board of Education Members,

I strongly urge you to delay the reopening of in-person student instruction on August 4th -- as a public high school teacher for over 15 years, after reading the MOU for reopening schools in light of the COVID pandemic, I feel we are not ready to welcome students back to our school campuses.

My first concern is that the CDC has not yet released their updated and additional guidelines on the safe reopening of schools (July 17, 2020 <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/cdc-delays-release-of-school-reopening-guidance/>). If our top infectious disease experts are taking the time to cross-reference and vet their work, extending the deadline of their publication from what they initially anticipated, I feel we need to proceed with the same level of care.

In addition, the reason I feel we need to proceed with caution and delay in-person instruction, is that the current MOU leaves many of the parent's, teacher's, and community's questions unanswered. We need a more comprehensive, thorough, and well-thought out plan before reopening our school buildings. Below are a few concerns:

1. Health & Screening Checks: KITV reported that students will be subject to daily temperature checks and questionnaires before entering campus (July 20, 2020 <https://www.kitv.com/story/42390758/hido-implements-symptom-screening-checklist-for-staff-and-students>). However, the MOU says each school will have a written procedure for health screenings and specifics are left up to each individual school – temperature checks and questionnaires are not stated to be mandatory. I feel the statements given to media outlets may give parents, students, and others a false sense of security in regards to how “strict” screening will be before students enter classrooms. In addition, teachers have yet to receive information, yet alone training, on how we should respond if a student (or staff member) is displaying symptoms. Teachers are not trained health care professionals, and it is frightening to think that we will probably end up being the ones determining whether students are okay to remain on campus for the school day. Due to COVID concerns, hospitals, dentists, government buildings, and many other facilities currently have checkpoints and designated “screeners” in place before one can enter, yet our schools do not.

2. Social & Physical Distancing: Although we now have “6 feet” in our MOU, realistically, that is not possible in many of our classrooms - there is not enough space. In addition, according to the CDC, confined spaces, with poor ventilation, for long periods of time, with groups of more than 10 individuals (which describes many of our classroom environments) increases COVID transmission to a “moderate” to “high” risk. As of writing this letter, I have not seen my class roster, nor have I been able to return to my classroom. If I am to safely bring students back, I am going to need more than a couple of teacher work days to trouble-shoot safety issues.

3. PPE: The MOU states that PPE should be worn by all staff and students on campus. However, I have also heard that when in the classroom, masks are at the teacher's discretion. Even with a modified hybrid schedule, high school students will still meet with 3-4 different teachers each day. If each teacher has different classroom protocols, this could in effect, increase exposure and transmission in several classes, and expose numerous individuals on campus if there is no consistency.

4. Exposure: The DOH has indicated that exposure to COVID in our schools is "inevitable", yet we do not have an emergency plan in place. The state already recognizes that we do not currently have enough contact tracers, so how soon will a school community be notified of possible exposure? What happens if a parent of a student is a confirmed case -- who will notify the school? What if it is a sibling? A co-worker? A co-worker of a parent or sibling? What if a student rode a city or school bus with another infected individual? With the opening of schools, our "ohana bubbles" are not just extended to our students, but essentially everyone in the community. How can we ensure that those in the community are taking adequate precautions to prevent transmission? How do we hold parents, guardians, and students accountable? As a teacher, this probably frightens me the most, because most of Hawaii's COVID cases are due to large gatherings, not using the proper PPE, no social distancing – unfortunately, not everyone in our community is taking this pandemic seriously, and now teachers are being placed at a greater risk because we are being forced to extend our "ohana bubbles" to hundreds of students and in turn everyone they associate with.

In the past few days, we have seen public school districts across the nation make the difficult decision to switch to distance learning for at least the fall – to better assess the best way to safely proceed with the rest of the school year. Although not ideal, this is the best choice, at the moment, to protect students, staff, and the surrounding community – with safety and prevention in mind. There are over 170,000 public and charter school students we are responsible for, not to mention the thousands of teachers and support staff involved in the reopening of schools. Each of these individuals entering our school buildings has numerous loved ones and family members they come in contact with —with so many lives at stake, we need to reopen with caution, we need more time.

Testimony BOE

From: craig shigeyasu <gotwhat@hotmail.com> on behalf of craig shigeyasu
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 11:02 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: foolish

as a teacher, I strongly feel that it is foolish to reopen schools on aug 4. when our medical infrastructure is overloaded due to the huge increase in cases stemming from school openings, that all on your conscience. if you can sleep at night knowing that, you're not a human being.

Testimony BOE

From: Ian Nagao <ian_nagao@yahoo.com> on behalf of Ian Nagao
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 11:03 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony to delay opening of school campuses to students on August 4

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

RE: 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.](#)

THURSDAY, JULY 23, 2020

Dear Board of Education Committee members:

My name is Ian Nagao. I am a science teacher at Keaau High School in the Keaau-Pahoa-Kau District on the Big Island of Hawaii. I am submitting testimony asking the board to delay the opening of school campuses to students on August 4. The health, safety, and well-being of our students and teachers should be the primary concern of everyone involved and I feel we are not ready for students. I am still confused and unclear on what measures and steps to take to reduce the risk of COVID-19 in my classroom. Furthermore, I have not been trained yet on how to properly deal with students who don't wear a mask in class nor how to implement distance learning should we need to. Teachers, such as myself, will be the most at risk when schools reopen as we will be in close contact with many individuals for hours in a given day and we need to be properly trained on how to deal with them. Another concern is the need for PPE which has not arrived yet at my school. In addition, I also have these concerns that need to be addressed: 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 and what standard practices and additional PPE methods should be followed by employees who need to get within 6 feet of students. I have children of my own attending Waiakea Elementary and Waiakea Intermediate School and I feel that their lives and well being would be jeopardized if schools are opened prematurely. Please delay the opening of school campuses to students on August 4 until teachers are properly trained. Doing so will help our staff and keiki prevent the spread of COVID-19 and help ensure their safety to the best of our ability.

Thank you,

Ian Nagao, Keaau High School Science Teacher, Keaau-Pahoa-Kau District, Big Island of Hawaii

Testimony BOE

From: Kara Bumanglag <karabumanglag@gmail.com> on behalf of Kara Bumanglag
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 11:04 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

I am testifying on the [H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association \(SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response\): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.](#)

My name is Kara - I am a special education teacher at an elementary school in the Farrington Complex. I am also a Mommy of a 5 year old boy who will be starting kindergarten this school year, at the same school.

As a Mom, I am not 100% that my child's health will not be at risk. Just knowing my son, I know that he touches his face to move his hair on the sides or to scratch his nose when it's itchy or he puts his hands in his mouth bc he just finished eating chocolate. He doesn't have that automaticity of keeping his dirty hands away from his face. He doesn't think to wash or sanitize his hands after every pencil or doorknob he touches. I understand that social skills, routines, & beginning phonetics are built in kindergarten, but to think that his or any child's health is the wager makes it even more so important that those things can wait. As a parent, I feel that I would rather sacrifice my time to keep my son home to receive any type of schooling from the comfort & safety of our home. Even though he may be kept in his "bubble" how am I supposed to feel confident that other kids in the bubble are healthy & have not been in contact with someone who may or may not be asymptomatic.

As a teacher, I worked during the summer at my school, & the first thing I noticed was, there was no way any teacher & student could stay 6ft away from each other, especially during independent work & one to one work. I'm a sped teacher, so that 6ft is definitely impossible. I'm doing a lot of 1:1 work & working on IEP goals with my students. I'm gonna be bouncing from one student to another student. Even if it's in my "bubble" I could be the one who is a carrier of the virus & transferring it to one kid to another. On top of that, I am a main caretaker for my grandmother who has cancer. So how am I supposed to come home to her & take care of her without the risk of being exposed & passing it to her. I am ready for 100% online. We may not have all the training we needed, but as teachers, we're made to be flexible & we're made to create lessons that engage & Target all students. I believe that

with such little training we can still make online learning a success. But it really does take the partnership of parents also. We cannot open school campus' yet. It's not safe. It's not safe for the children and it's not safe for the adults. By opening up school campus', you are just looking for numbers to stay where they're at.

“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.

Please, think about the children & the adults. We are all high risk at this point. No one is safe. If you open campus' up, then we are going against what a school environment is supposed to be. We are supposed to be a safe environment. When our health is out at risk, that already makes it NOT SAFE.

I hope & pray that all considerations are made.

Kara B.

Testimony BOE

From: Kandice Kartchner <kandice_k@yahoo.com> on behalf of Kandice Kartchner
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 11:04 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: Kandice Kartchner
Subject: Testimony for teacher pay and differentials agenda items G and A. Finance and Infrastructure Committee Report &

- Kandice Kartchner, Teacher, Lahaina Intermediate School
- General Board meeting: Thursday, July 23, 2020 1:30 p.m.
- 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 teach middle school students in Lahaina Intermediate School. I was born in Hawaii. I was forced to leave as a child at the age of three because my parents were not able to make a living teaching here. This left me to learn our Hawaiian Aloha and cultural values in smatterings during the summers when we would return to bond with our family and island community.

It has taken a lot of personal sacrifice to return home to Hawaii and teach in a hard to staff area, not the least of which is the financial losses and hardship to live on the pay here. The extremely high inflated cost of living on our islands means that poverty and insecurity for food, shelter, and medical care are deeply important and troubling realities especially for our professional teachers who serve and lead our keiki and community.

I currently take home in pay about \$2400 a month without the differential, or 1200 a paycheck. My rent is currently \$2000 a month. It leaves me with barely enough for two tanks of gas a week and maybe enough to address part of my electric bill. There is nothing left for food, medicine, and other needs.

My retired parents on social security were trying to help us with some groceries every month till the differentials started. Though the differential adds only \$200 to my take home pay (yes, incredibly) this is huge for my family because we can finally afford some basic food and life saving medicine. I can once more afford to get my diabetic insulin and we can afford at least one family meal a day. I do not know what we will do when the landlord again raises the rent this year over a hundred dollars a month, but without the differential for sure it will be hard.

If teacher pay is cut then most teachers I know will not be able to afford rent. In Lahaina typical rent for an apt or house is over \$3000 monthly. I could only find a small apt 45 minutes away that would rent to us for what we bring home—I do not have the deposits required to move to another place to pay them without a significant reduction in rents, or increase in take home pay.

The hard to staff differential is the difference between being able to get my insulin and not, the difference between feeding us or having to supplement our food by joining the homeless dinner meals at St. Teresa's in Kihei. And may end up being the ability to pay for the rent increase so I am not homeless—even giving up my critical medicines, and eating at least one meal a day.

Without enough money in our net salaries, teachers will not be able to stay here and our children and communities will suffer. Cutting the pay and differentials will be a cost too high

for Hawaii-- It will cost us and our keiki the ability to progress forward, bring forward critical leadership, and provide for our families, innovative business, and be the Aloha state in every way.

Testimony BOE

From: Penny Kaneshina <pennykaneshina@yahoo.com> on behalf of Penny Kaneshina
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 11:05 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha Board of Education Members,

My name is Penny Kaneshina, I am a parent of a third grade student at Kihei Elementary School on Maui and I am here 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.](#)

As a parent, I am very concerned about the plans for re-opening of schools, or lack thereof. I have not heard of any further guidelines aside from my child's school choosing the A/B blended rotation model. Like many other parents, I am concerned about the safety protocols that will be put in place. What exactly are they? What procedures will the schools follow if a child or adult in my child's "bubble" gets sick? What are the plans for virtual learning?

My child is excited to go back to school, as am I. But I am anxious about the lack of information from the DOE and lack of transparency. Teachers are asking for more time to prepare and I fully support this if it means that my child will be going back to a campus that is safe and has all of their plans in place.

I am asking that you support the delay of students returning to campus.

Thank you,
Penny Kaneshina

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Jason A. Wong <jasonwong@aol.com> on behalf of Jason A. Wong
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 11:05 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Jason Aloysious Wong
Student Services Coordinator
Nimitz Elementary

Finance and Infrastructure Committee Meeting and General Business Meeting

Reopening of Schools on 8/04/2020

I am OPPOSED to the reopening of schools so soon.

I would rather see teachers spend the first two or three weeks in August 2020 reviewing CDC and DOH guidelines, preparing their classrooms for the incoming students, and informing parents how they can help us open school safely. Safety comes first. Then, socio-emotional learning and academics come next.

When I am not teleworking from home, I have been working this summer with preschool-aged students, assessing them in person, in a one-to-one setting, when they are not wearing masks and refusing to sanitize their hands. I have observed a student at the Child Development Center, where the adults were not wearing their masks appropriately (i.e., including their noses) in an air-conditioned setting. I do not think I have contracted the coronavirus, but that thought is always foremost on my mind. I care for my 81 year old widowed father, and I worry that I can easily contract the virus when we open the school. As a school resource teacher, I am called to assist in whatever capacity is needed. While our administrators are doing their best to keep us informed and safe, I know there will be something we missed along the way, especially with conflicting information between the State, District, and Complex Areas. There is just too much being expected of teachers in such a short time, with little guidance and much confusion.

Testimony BOE

From: Bo Frank <radfordrams@hotmail.com> on behalf of Bo Frank
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 11:10 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Delay the opening of school

Aloha,

The health and safety of our students and staff must be first and foremost! Risking the lives of our children and teachers is not Ok! Our Covid numbers are higher today than they were when we shut down schools in March, yet we are considering sending children and teachers into unsafe situations. We are in a global pandemic, people are dying, in Hawaii the situation is worse now than it was earlier in the year. Risking the life of just one student or one teacher is not worth it! We all know a bunch of teacher may die and probably a couple kids too, but hey it's ok, is not the proper or conscientious way to handle a pandemic.

Schools in the Radford complex have increased risk, the transient population of military students who transfer in and out of our schools daily adds to possible exposure. Who makes sure a new military family that will enroll in our public school system is fulfilling their quarantine before they come to our schools. I know of students (military dependent) who went to the mainland to visit family came home and went right to the beach! Who is monitoring military quarantine?

We all know we live in a time of litigation, as a school system and state we would be negligent and lose a case against a family that lost a life due to a student or teacher contracting Covid from school, but even worse than losing a court case would be the loss of life that could have been prevented by the hands that say "the safety of our students and faculty come first!"

Give the guidance needed to teach teachers how to teach online. Provide the time and resources to make schools safe! Do what is right and consider the health and safety of our students and teachers!

Mahalo,

Bo Frank
Radford Teacher and Parent of children who attend Aliamanu Middle, Makalapa Elementary and a Preschool.

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Debra Miyaki <miyakid580@gmail.com> on behalf of Debra Miyaki
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 11:10 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Teacher testimony

To Whom it May Concern,

My name is Debra Miyaki. I am a Kindergarten Teacher at Kuhio Elementary. I am VERY worried that school will be starting in 2 weeks. I am in the "At Risk" group. I have asthma, and Pulmonary Fibrosis runs in my family.

I agree that schools should open, but I also believe we need to do it safely. I am worried that we do not have written guidance from the DOH on face mask protocols, what happens when a teacher or student tests positive for COVID? I hear about the "Ohana Bubble", but what happens if that bubble is comprised? I heard if a student tests positive, only that class will shut down. However, we have many families that have multiple children in various grade levels. We need to consider that as well.

We also need teacher training on dealing with the pandemic and we MUST have more prep time. We have the usual 4 day teacher prep, but many of us at our school are moving to a different grade level, and need time to collaborate.

Our principal has been doing a great job of updating the teachers at our school and holding meetings to inform the staff. Unfortunately, there are so many conflicting messages. Dr. Kishimoto went on the news to say that sports will be suspended. However, that same evening The Office of Curriculum and Instruction sent a memo stating Sports will start on July 29th. I am pleading as a parent and teacher, to have written protocols for all schools to follow. We need to be consistent in our message to the teachers, faculty, and parents. Please consider delaying opening of schools until we have written protocols to follow. I love my student, parents, and coworkers. As our COVID numbers continue to rise, I am scared for the health and safety of school ohana.

Sincerely,

Debra Miyaki

Sent from my iPad

Testimony BOE

From: Ilima Hose <ilimahose@gmail.com> on behalf of Ilima Hose
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 11:11 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Delaying the opening of schools face to face

Aloha!

My name is Michelle Hose. I have been a teacher in Hawai'i for 15 years now, both in the DOE as well as our public charter schools. I have taught grades K-12 and have dedicated my life to educating our youth and future generations of Hawai'i. I am currently the kindergarten teacher at Kawaikini NCPCS on the island of Kaua'i.

I am writing to urge each of you on the board of education to rethink the opening date of all public schools in Hawai'i next month. As COVID-19 cases have risen since March, we all know that the health and safety of everyone in our school communities (from students to teachers to all other staff) are at higher risk than ever before in this COVID-19 history. We all know school was shut down in March and we did not get to finish the fourth quarter face to face with our students. I know it was a hard call but it was the right call. I am sure that this decision helped in "flattening the curve" here in Hawai'i. I am also sure all of Hawai'i was happy to see the cases drop to near nothing if anything in May. However, now that the amount of cases have risen, doubled and then some in most counties, how is it safe and healthy to reopen schools now? On Kaua'i, the amount of COVID-19 cases doubled in a few weeks compared to the original half that occurred within a couple of months. Why were public schools shut down with less cases in March and are now being reopened with way more cases in August?

As a teacher, our administration has been funneling information to us through the BOE, SPCSC, DOE, HSTA, and CDC since March. I serve as an associate member of our governing board and I am also on our education committee so I have been a part of the meetings and email threads throughout the summer. Most of the information we have received has been more reactive than proactive, and many times very sporadic with holes that need to be filled. With that being said, planning since the onset of COVID-19 has been almost impossible for schools. There has been confusion at every level including our administration, our teachers, and even the families we serve! To date, the information we have received as teachers is not enough for us to be anywhere near ready for this upcoming school year! And please note that I have been keeping up with all HSTA emails, the superintendent's announcements, Governor Ige's press conferences, and everything in the MOU. It seems as if the more information we receive, the more confusing it all gets, and that leads to more questions than answers! As a teacher and friend of many other teachers, most of us are not ready! We are not prepared because we have not been given the information we need to be prepared. How can the BOE or anyone else for that matter expect us teachers to be prepared to teach our students, the future of Hawai'i, in less than 2 weeks if we have so many unanswered questions???

As a parent and a teacher, my greatest concern is the health and safety of my family and students. Right now, I am not comfortable with returning face to face 100% as my school is mandating for grades K-2. I do not feel like my class can properly social distance each student six feet apart! I do not feel comfortable wearing a mask or not wearing a mask all day! I do not feel comfortable with my students wearing or not wearing a mask all day! I do not see how I will be able to teach my kindergarten students in an effective way with all of the new guidelines, mandates, rules, and so on. They will no longer have floor time. They will no longer have group time. I have no clue how they will safely use any manipulatives in class that will need constant sanitizing! Where are we supposed to get all of the proper safety supplies that are supposedly being provided to us? Who will be cleaning in between classes? Who is taking the temperature of our students? How much time will I actually spend teaching, and not cleaning and sanitizing?

Our leaders are pushing for our children to return to school to socialize! Honestly, how will these kids socialize from 6 feet away, discouraged from turning to one another, and having to sit in one spot ALL day??? How does a child socialize and play when they cannot share any objects? How do I teach when I must also social distance? A very big part of being in kindergarten is making that connection with your teacher and friends, so please explain to me how anyone expects children at the ages of 5-6 to do this while practicing social distancing? I can honestly guarantee you that I could better and safely socialize with my students online if offered that option. If at home, my students could be comfortable, without masks and social limitations. This would open the child up to learning in a more comfortable and way safer environment. If forced to sit at the same desk for most of the school day, I can guarantee you that most children will have a harder time learning in such a strict environment.

I could probably go on and on with questions and scenarios I already see happening as I have years of experience teaching kindergarten. However, my point is that the BOE and all of our leaders guiding education and teachers within Hawai'i need to listen to those at the front line, our teachers. We know how to do our job and do it well. We know what is best for our students at these various ages. This is why we are licensed professionals with degrees to prove this. Please trust us when we say we are not ready, we have not received the guidance to be ready. The schools will not be safe, and this is not the best choice for our health and safety. No matter how much distancing we try, kids will be kids. They will remove their mask, they will play with their friends, they will cough and sneeze and not wash their hands, and parents will send their kids to school sick. I cannot afford to become a victim of COVID-19, I cannot allow one of my students or family members to become a victim of COVID-19. One sick child, or even worse one death from COVID-19, is one too many for me. We are not guinea pigs. Our schools are not ready to be opened yet, our teachers are not ready and willing to fall ill for socialization over life, our keiki and 'ohana are not ready and should not be willing to sacrifice a life for socialization and a mediocre education in a restrictive environment. The BOE should not force our teachers, students, staff members, and families to start school in two weeks. We should either delay the reopening of schools or start the school year 100% online until the schools are 100% safe to be reopened face to face.

Please think about our community, our kūpuna, our keiki, and our kumu. Thank you very much for taking the time to read my testimony. I humbly ask that you take our testimony into serious consideration before making any decisions. Mahalo nui loa!

Na'u me ke aloha a me ka mahalo palena 'ole,
na Michelle Hose

Testimony BOE

From: Jan Avellana <javellana@hes.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Jan Avellana
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 11:11 PM
To: senfevella@capitol.hawaii.gov; senkeohokalole@capitol.hawaii.gov;
senkidani@capitol.hawaii.gov; sendelacruz@capitol.hawaii.gov;
senmoriwaki@capitol.hawaii.gov; senkim@capitol.hawaii.gov;
Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov; BOE.Hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov;
christina.kishimoto@k12.hi.us
Subject: Testimony on the Reopening of Schools:

Superintendent Kishimoto,

This is in direct reply to your most recent video message to educators and testimony in favor of delaying the re-opening of students return to school. The late civil rights leader John Lewis said, "When you see something that is not right, not fair, not just, you have to speak up. You have to say something; you have to do something." This is exactly what teachers are doing by challenging the Hawaii Department of Education and lack of preparedness to safely reopen schools at this time. Who knows better than teachers, the challenges of teaching face-to-face in the time of COVID-19? A wise leader would have had more classroom teachers give input throughout the entire re-opening planning process so that Hawaii's school reopenings could have been done efficiently and safely. Instead, we are here.

For you to cast doubt on our courage and our commitment to our keiki and their ohana is disingenuous. The fact that teachers are advocating for a safe learning environment for ourselves and our students and proactively pointing out the dangers we see ahead, does not mean we are cowardly—it does not mean that we do not want to do our share to help Hawaii's COVID-10 recovery efforts. (If you question our collective courage, we welcome you into our classrooms during an active shooter drill.) On the contrary, our voices now raised in alarm and concern is proof positive that we care about our students, their families and our own.

By shaming our legitimate concerns over the DOE's and DOH's lack of transparency and planning by calling into question the care and commitment we have to our students and their ohana, is insulting. Hawaii's teacher's will not be bullied into silence when we know that the Department of Health and the Hawaii Department of Education are putting the lives of our students and their families and yes, teachers, in danger. No one in Hawaii—grocery workers, bank personnel, service workers, delivery, custodians, security staff, shopping center workers beaches, park and government agencies, and especially not our children and the teachers that teach and care for them—should be put in harm's way, made to work in an unsafe environment without the proper protective equipment, ventilation, training or clearly documented guidance from the Department of Health, not for the sake of any economy or anyone's convenience.

Be clear that our call for the deferral of the beginning of student school year is not an contrived excuse by teachers to avoid work. We have mortgages and bills and families to support, in addition to having an unquestionable commitment to our students' whole being. Of course we want to teach and reopen the year! But not like this, not in the midst of a global wide pandemic. What educators are saying is that the existing plan laid out by the Hawaii State Department of Health and Department of Education—one week before teachers go back into the classroom—is not adequate. We are saying that a 100% distance learning option was never on the table for us to consider, as one of the viable models of instruction, as it should have been. We are asking you as we have been, to open your mind to a myriad of innovative ways that teaching and learning can be done without all of the risks of face-to-face teaching, and in lieu of this option in all but the most extreme circumstances, we are asking you to help ensure and prioritize the safety of our teachers, staff, students and families.

Thank you,
Janice Avellana
Grade 1 Teacher,
Hahaione Elementary School

Testimony BOE

From: Martha Gomez <mayte.palomera@yahoo.com> on behalf of Martha Gomez
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 11:12 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Martha Gómez, Mililani complex,

Hello. I just wanted to let you know that there is a big concern about opening the schools face to face in this Covid-19 situation. I work with the special education preschool and I can tell you for my experience of working with the preschool since 2006; the reality is that we won't be able to teach at social distances or make the children be safe or wear a mask even if we wanted to because of their age, and their behavior. And in top of that, my school is planning to bring face to face the whole Preschool class every day instead of half the group one week and half the next week. We always have high number of children in our 2 preschool classes; so reinforcing the protocols for COVID 19 would be almost imposible. Another point; In the case that child gets the COVID-19, who is going to be responsible if that child dies. Are you as a Department ready to face parents of children that would die for getting the virus at school if they sue the DOE and the BOE? just Because you as a department felt you can beat the odds? Please reconsider pushing back the face to face and once everything gets better then go for it. I'm not the only person that has a Big concern about opening schools face to face. We have a big group of teachers and educators in a social media that are super concern and feel the same way. Thanks for your attention

Enviado desde mi iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Lydia Haff <lydia.haff@outlook.com> on behalf of Lydia Haff
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 11:12 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Hard-to-Staff Differentials

Hawaii Board of Education,

I am writing to you in regards to the suggested budget cut of the teacher pay differentials toward hard-to-staff schools. I believe that cutting these differentials would mean that we would lose several of our teachers here on the Leeward side. The differentials were proven to have worked in promoting recruitment in our hard-to-staff schools. Amidst a pandemic, these are also the schools where teachers will be under increased stress and pressure. Many of our students' parents have been put in difficult financial situations because of the pandemic, and this then affects their children, whom we teach. Our students will need additional supports and resources that they are not receiving at home because of the pandemic. As stressful as it is to teach in a hard-to-staff school, cutting the differential will cause more financial strain on teachers that will need to be present enough to support their students. If we are worried about a cut in our pay, this will severely negatively affect our ability to care for our students.

I myself have considered quitting since the suggestion of the budget cut for the pay differentials was made. Teaching will be hard enough during the pandemic. Teaching in a hard-to-staff school during a pandemic may be more than I can handle. Several of our newer teachers have also considered quitting, and our older teachers have decided to retire early. A cut from the differential pay budget will only make the teacher shortage here worse than it was before the differential was an option. This will, in turn, make surviving this pandemic more difficult on our students, and it will leave lasting impressions on their education and their futures.

Please reconsider.

Lydia Haff
Wai'anae High School

Testimony BOE

From: Bo Frank <radfordrams@hotmail.com> on behalf of Bo Frank
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 11:13 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Delay the opening of school

Aloha,

The health and safety of our students and staff must be first and foremost! Risking the lives of our children and teachers is not Ok! Our Covid numbers are higher today than they were when we shut down schools in March, yet we are considering sending children and teachers into unsafe situations. We are in a global pandemic, people are dying, in Hawaii the situation is worse now than it was earlier in the year. Risking the life of just one student or one teacher is not worth it! We all know a bunch of teacher may die and probably a couple kids too, but hey it's ok, is not the proper or conscientious way to handle a pandemic.

Schools in the Radford complex have increased risk, the transient population of military students who transfer in and out of our schools daily adds to possible exposure. Who makes sure a new military family that will enroll in our public school system is fulfilling their quarantine before they come to our schools. I know of students (military dependent) who went to the mainland to visit family came home and went right to the beach! Who is monitoring military quarantine?

We all know we live in a time of litigation, as a school system and state we would be negligent and lose a case against a family that lost a life due to a student or teacher contracting Covid from school, but even worse than losing a court case would be the loss of life that could have been prevented by the hands that say "the safety of our students and faculty come first!"

Give the guidance needed to teach teachers how to teach online. Provide the time and resources to make schools safe! Do what is right and consider the health and safety of our students and teachers!

Mahalo,

Bo Frank
Radford Teacher and Parent of children who attend Aliamanu Middle, Makalapa Elementary and a Preschool.

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Bonnie Lum <mauilum@gmail.com> on behalf of Bonnie Lum
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 11:12 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: totally unprepared to teach on Aug. 4

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 feel very unprepared to teach my students beginning Aug. 4. I am over 65 and my husband is over 70 with diabetes. I fear for our health.

This is due to lack of training of teachers and staff with the necessary protocols needed to insure our safety from Covid-19. Also we are lacking guidance from BOE, DOH, and HIDOE.

Please consider delaying school start until after Labor Day in September. The majority of schools are opening then. We would have more time for training both in safety protocols and for online teaching. Also, we would be able to see how other schools are dealing with the opening of schools. Furthermore, we would avoid rushing into opening schools, only to have to close due to Covid contamination.

We are also concerned re the following:

- 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?

Thank you for your attention to these matters.Regards,

Bonnie

Bonita Lum

Testimony BOE

From: Erin Fukumoto <erinokita@icloud.com> on behalf of Erin Fukumoto
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 11:13 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Erin Fukumoto and I am an educator at Nuuanu Elementary School. I am also a parent of 2 children, one in Elementary School and the other in preschool. I am writing my testimony to address 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 I am terrified for the safety of my young students, their families, my colleagues, and my own family as well. I do not believe that our students should return to school as scheduled. It is not safe yet from this virus, and it is likely that sending students back to school will increase the spread if the virus. By going to school as scheduled, we will all be putting ourselves and our family members at risk. So many of us live with someone who is at great risk of hospitalization or death. Other countries have already suffered great loss with the return of their students to school. We should be learning through the mistakes of others, not repeating them. I'm scared every day for my children and my elderly relatives with whom I come in contact with every day. Please keep Hawaii safe, for each and every life matters.

Sincerely,

Erin Fukumoto

Sent from my iPhone

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Max Kaneshiro <max.kaneshiro@wilsonschoolhawaii.org> on behalf of Max Kaneshiro
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 11:13 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

I would like to start off by saying thank you. Thank you to our DOE, HSTA board, and leaders within the DOE for working so hard to push through these tough times. I also would like to point out that I am 100% on board with bringing students back to school WHEN we are prepared.

Unprepared: This past summer, we have not done any training to prepare for teaching in a pandemic. We do not have the adequate or proper equipment in each classroom to ensure that all schools are ready for students on August 4th. We are risking the health and safety of not only kids, and educators, but we are risking the safety of our entire state by not being prepared. Things are left up to each individual school to handle things properly. There is no consistency within the plan from the DOE and that will lead to chaos.

Experimental: First we were told to keep kids 3 feet apart and to let parents know masks/shields are OPTIONAL. That is ludicrous! How can masks/6 feet of distancing be required in almost every business yet optional in a classroom filled with students and staff members? The DOE quickly backtracked, but it was too late. That proved the lack of support for the safety and well being of all educators in the state of Hawaii. Currently, they are rolling out an "as we go" plan. Everything is shaky, nothing is set in stone, and no one is prepared. This is one big experiment that will fail miserably. I was also told that I would not be allowed to check students' temperatures and that I would have to do visual checks. Visual checks? Is this a joke? I will violate any policy to make sure my students and family are safe. It feels like the families of educators are not being taken into consideration. At the end of the day, we have to go home to our families praying that we are not infected.

Too early: We have seen what can happen with an early reopening (Florida, Texas, etc.) Please spend more time to get everything organized and lined up instead of trying to meet a date. The opening date should be when everyone is prepared and ready, not August 4th. Our state is already suffering from a shortage of teachers. Many of our current teachers are in a high-risk category or on the brink of retirement. Let us not give them a reason to leave the DOE for good.

Lack of options What happens when a teacher refuses to come to school due to safety concerns? What happens if a teacher becomes infected with COVID? We do not even have enough quality options at the substitute position during a normal pandemic free year. How can we expect to provide our kids with quality instruction virtually through a substitute teacher during a pandemic?

I support and applaud the efforts of everyone involved. I do believe in being here for "the kids." However, we will not be around for long under this loosely constructed plan. We are 2 weeks away from 08/04, which is not enough time. Let us spend some quality time regrouping, to come up with a plan that allows educators to feel safe and secure with a well thought out opening plan.

Max W.K. Kaneshiro, Fifth Grade Teacher
Mayor John H. Wilson Elementary School
Phone: (808) 733-4740
Email: max.kaneshiro@wilsonschoolhawaii.org

"Education must not simply teach work - it must teach Life."
W. E. B. Du Bois

Testimony BOE

From: Erna Medina <mareehkylerei@gmail.com> on behalf of Erna Medina
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 11:13 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha Board of Education Members,

My name is Erna Medina, I am a parent of an eighth grade student at Lokelani Intermediate School on Maui and I am here 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.](#)

As of today, Tuesday, July 21, 2020, my daughter's school has not provided parents with any information about the school's plans for the coming year. At last week's meeting the principal alluded to the A/B blended rotation model, but there has been no confirmation as of yet. I don't know what days my child will be in school and when she'll be at home. When parents asked the principal about the safety plans such as cleaning classrooms after students rotate to their next period she could not provide a clear answer. As a parent, this is very concerning. When will the schools have these plans ready? Am I expected to just send my child to school and hope for the best?

Superintendent Kishimoto continues to tell the public that schools are safe and ready to open. Which schools? Can she give us specific names so that maybe my child's school can see what plans are already in place and they might follow? What exactly are the safety protocols that schools should be following? What procedures will the schools follow if a child or adult in my child's "bubble" gets sick? How does this "ohana bubble" even work in the middle school setting? What are the plans for virtual learning?

My daughter is very much looking forward to returning to campus. But how can I allow this if we can't get a straight answer from the school and the DOE? Teachers are asking for more time to prepare, so let's give it to them. Because as much as I want my child to be back on campus, I would like it to be when the teachers and the schools are fully prepared to welcome them back.

I am asking that you support the delay of students returning to campus.

Thank you,
Erna Medina

Testimony BOE

From: Felicia Ferrance <hamakuagirl7@icloud.com> on behalf of Felicia Ferrance
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 11:14 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Funding Differentials

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Me <sunflower8pak@yahoo.com> on behalf of Me
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 11:14 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Thorough Training Upon Reopening of Schools

To whom it may concern,

I have been an Educational Assistant for 22 years. During this uncertain time, I don't feel comfortable returning back to work not knowing if the safety and protocol training planned for EAs upon returning next week will be thorough enough. EAs are sometimes redirected at any given time for reasons as follows:

- 1-1 for a Sped student when the assigned adult is late/absent -Cover various classes for scheduled or last minute IEPs.
- Cover a class due to a teacher leaving because of an emergency or sudden illness -last minute recess duties with various grade levels

Emergency coverages are endless and concerning especially during these uncertain times. Not knowing what responsibilities EAs will entail upon returning concerns many of us. Will EAs be protected and not thrown into an unsafe environment or situation? This past school year, I personally worked in 5 different 1st grade classes. I covered various classes while teachers attended IEPs or other meetings. Other EAs were also pulled for reasons as stated above and more in the past as well. I have a special needs granddaughter who is in a Medical Frag class at another public school that lives with me. She will not be attending school when it opens. She and her 6 1/2 month old brother live with me. I'm so thankful they have been healthy over this pandemic. Having proper, adequate training and protection is of utmost importance before the return of students. EAs aren't sure if they'll be working in more than one cohort/bubble upon returning to campus. They have shared their concerns as well. Some are also high risk due to age or age and health concerns. Please take into consideration that EAs support many teachers and students on campus throughout the day and feel it is only fair to be well trained and informed before students begin.

Thank you for your time and concern with this matter.

Sincerely,
Alene Sandry

Testimony BOE

From: Lisa Garcia <john1513nogreaterluv@yahoo.com> on behalf of Lisa Garcia
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 11:14 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimonials: Agenda items: A, G, H

Mrs. Lisa Kartchner
95 Manino Circle Apt. 102
Kihei, HI 96753

July 19, 2020

Board of Education of Hawaii
P.O. Box 2360
Honolulu, HI 96813

Meeting: General Board meeting July 23, 2020 1:30pm

Agenda Item: Testimonials

A. Finance and Infrastructure Committee Report on: Presentation on Department of Education's financial plan ...2020-2021 School Year: budget appropriations from 2020 Legislative Session....

G. Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations...

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) and anticipated short falls

Position: Opposed to any cuts in teachers differential pay, and the proposed 20% pay cut for teachers and 40% pay cut for principles.

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express my concerns as a citizen: of the kingdom of Christ, the State of Hawaii and the United States of America, a parent, a spouse of an educator and fellow human being.

I am asking you to speak with your fellow constituents about delaying the opening of schools/putting it online instead, taking away teachers differential and the proposed 20% cut in pay and 40% cut in pay for principles.

History has shown us that this pandemic is just beginning and that this fall it is a very high possibility it will again ramp up potentially infecting and killing hundreds of thousand. Are we ready to own the responsibility for their deaths?! I for one am not.

I have invested the time and energy to listening to many online discussions from many different sources; from state and federal governments and education venues. I have read the

texts from those who were also listening; expressing their concerns, anger, fears and uncertainties about the future plans to keep everyone safe. There are **no** easy answers to this problem and I along with so many others have looked at the scientific data, watched and read about how those countries who were successful in stopping the pandemic in its tracks survived and are now flourishing and what has happened to those countries and states that haven't taken the extreme precautions to stop its spread...a high infection and death rate! Please let us not repeat history!

Speaking as a citizen I am putting my trust and faith in God and you to guide me in making informed decisions that will protect my family, my community and myself. I on my own can only do so much without legislation to back me. Legislate please! Use your powers of persuasion to help lead people to a clearer, scientific based plan.

Speaking as a parent, I am filled with deep concern for our keiki and our kupuna. We are not familiarly set up like other mainland states where only the immediate family is made up of parents and two children are in a home or apartment. Here in our special state of aloha, we have makua, keiki, 'anakē me 'anakala, mau hoahānau, kupuna me loa kupuna kāne (a **complete** family unit) living under the same roof. Please ask yourselves how our families will survive if we can't guarantee that sending our keiki to be educated face to face won't expose them to a greater risk of contracting Covid and bring it back home to some of the most vulnerable of our populations.

As a spouse of an educator I know how hard it is to recruit and keep teachers here in Hawaii. The cost of living is **very high** with housing accounting for the largest part of it, and food coming next. Speaking from experience as the accountant who pays the bills, moving here was a huge financial drain but one we felt compelled by God make. My spouse is Oahu born and wanted to come home to use her talents to help the next generation of keiki become our future leaders of tomorrow and be close to her aging parents now in their mid 70's.

Our educators and their families have happily made many sacrifices for the opportunity to make a difference, and the differential, which was directly instrumental in retaining teachers this year, the state implemented over the last few months has made it easier for everyone to meet their needs medically, for rent and auto insurance/gas/registration and basic utilities. Many are now living instead of just surviving! Many teacher spend money out of their own pockets to help students with their learning needs and purchasing things they know will lift their students to a greater level of understanding and knowledge; going the extra mile despite the added struggle it puts on themselves and their own families. Like solders and their families who are all asked to give of themselves, many putting themselves in harms way to give us our freedoms to be educated weather you be a boy or girl in a safe environment without fear. Let's give our educators the same respect, to teach in an environment without fear for their lives, their family's lives, the keiki and their family's lives. Help make a decisive positive decision for life and not death.

Do we now ask them to risk their lives and the lives of their families by teaching face to face just so people have a built in baby-sitting service? Teachers are **NOT** babysitters! They are educators, teaching their students to critically think, evaluate, formulate and then hypothesize and execute plans for their lives both now and in the future...our leaders of tomorrow are being taught by our educators of today. I do not want either group to be sacrificed for the convenience of wanting to get back to "normal"!

On top of losing the differential, taking 20% more from teachers pay will exacerbate the already difficult time our state has in the retention of educators. Many of whom have taught for decades will be forced to retire, many others will be forced to quite, leaving education altogether to find work in another professions, and others who will simply pack up and leave because they can no longer live here due to the high cost of living. It simply is impossible to survive! If educators get sick, who will replace them?

How can we hope to bring educators here if we cannot guarantee sufficient pay and benefit packages that will allow them to live a decent life instead of just surviving. This just breeds despair and hopelessness, and the only answer they see is to leave the keiki they love in order to provide for their own families. Please help retain our educators and build a better solution that will provide for their families as well as your own in the end.

Principals, though they make more money also carry a greater level of responsibility and stress brought on by implementing the HDOE directives, while keeping their teachers and staff, and communities needs in mind. They deserve the hard earned pay they receive also. Please think about how this affects not just their futures but also our community's futures.

There are answers, we just have to think outside the box, work together as one community family and show respect to the educators whom we are seeking to teach our children. Let's ask ourselves this question: If we knew there was a high chance of dying, would we still go into that place without protection, pay that reflect the hazards and plans that would care for those we leave behind if we perish? If we wouldn't, than why are we asking our educators, communities and especially our keiki to do so?

Please consider these words and thoughts from my heart. Help everyone understand the severity of their actions and how our communities will carry their decisions for generations to come. **Convenience should never override logic!**

Sincerely,

Mrs. Lisa Kartchner

Testimony BOE

From: K 10 <k10jumali@gmail.com> on behalf of K 10
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 11:14 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: School Reopening

Dr. Christina M. Kishimoto
Superintendent
Department of Education
State of Hawaii

Dear Dr. Kishimoto:

My name is Kristen Umali and I am a parent who has children at public and private schools. My concern is how will parents with children in different schools tackle on managing the different schedules of their children. How will they manage their work, will their workplace allow them to take the time off? I have two children that attend private schools and will be attending school everyday and I'm concerned about that. I feel uncomfortable about them being in a classroom with other kids all day,

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

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

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

1. No mandatory mask requirement. This contradicts the latest CDC recommendations, particularly a call from CDC Director Robert Redfield for "universal masking"^[1]. Especially in closed or poorly ventilated spaces such as many of our classrooms, it is absolutely essential to have a mandatory mask requirement for all teachers and students.
2. The current state plan relies on a fictional construct known as "Ohana Bubbles", which especially in the absence of a universal mask mandate, puts a family's health at the mercy of other families. However, no amount of distancing, disinfecting, or use of PPE will be sufficient to keep groups of people in confined, poorly ventilated spaces safe, because behavior of all those individuals outside the classroom cannot be assumed to have been safe.
3. The current DOE plan is to leave masking optional (at teachers' discretion) is unacceptable. Fundamental matters of scientific fact such as masks should not be left to teacher (or even school administrator) discretion. That would allow too many loopholes that will result in poor or no compliance

that puts their child's lives at risk. It also puts an undue burden on teachers and/or school administrators to decide and enforce mask rules.

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 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 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 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,

Kristen Umali
91-1219 Kaimalie Street
Ewa Beach, HI 96706

Testimony BOE

From: Andrea Fernandez <andreafern92@gmail.com> on behalf of Andrea Fernandez
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 11:16 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY

Aloha,

My name is Andrea Fernandez. I will be a sixth year teacher this coming school year. I am writing in hopes that you would consider delaying the start date for students. I am having many mixed feelings about this school year. I feel like I am going in somewhat blind and unprepared. As an educator my hope is to welcome back my students this year safely as possible. I have been asked by many friends, family members, and acquaintances about this upcoming school year and I really have a hard time answering their questions about how this school year will be, and I cannot speak for all schools but only my school alone. I am very fortunate to have a principal who has been planning since the shut down in March and has been very flexible with the different protocols and rules that have been changing constantly. Although we have a "plan" in place it still makes me feel unsure about the safety for our students, high risk teachers, and families that live in multi generational homes. I feel that we need more planning time to ensure safety for everyone. I have never felt so much anxiety and stress in my life about going to a job where I am not sure if I can keep my students and families safe. I have also considered not going back to teaching this school year because of the many factors and uncertainty that has been going on. I understand that we need to open so that we can move forward with opening up our state, but I hope that we will not have to risk the health of our students or teachers in doing so. I hope this helps in understanding the thoughts from an educator's point of view and I really hope we consider the reopening school for students until we have a secure plan in place.

Mahalo for taking your time to read my email.

Testimony BOE

From: Lawrence WAYMAN <lwayman@mac.com> on behalf of Lawrence WAYMAN
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 11:17 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: DOE comprehensive plan for reopening schools on August 4.

July 21, 2020

Members of the Board of Education

State of Hawaii

TESTIMONY

Regarding the DOE's comprehensive plan for reopening of schools

Lawrence H. Wayman

Teacher of Language Arts, Drama, and Newswriting

W. R. Farrington High School

Thank you for this opportunity to express to you my concerns in opposition to your plan to reopen the Hawaii public schools during the Corona Virus pandemic on August 4.

I have no doubt that you have wrestled with the many variables that need to be considered in the opening of school in a normal period of time; this year has already shown how complex your task is and will be.

I am a praying person, and I hold you in my prayers each day. One of my prayers is that in your policy-making, you not lose track of the concerns of all the people in the schools. Plans and policies and their deadlines are important as guides for action, but if the people for whom they are intended to benefit are forgotten, then the planning becomes a wasteful exercise for an artificial end.

This is what I thought when I heard the Governor say during his recent press briefing that he is committed to meeting the August 4 deadline. This is what I thought when I heard the Public Health Director speak authoritatively about data...but forgot to say something about the fears and worries of people like me. I do not believe that it is safe for me to return to teaching in a compromised school building, but if required to do so, I probably would. I'm a professional teaching who loves his children, and I believe that you will find many teachers like me who would do the same.

Much attention has been directed toward the children and young people and their vulnerability to this virus. May I ask that in your deliberations you not forget us old people.

I am 80 years old. I began teaching in 1962. During the intervening years I have taught in every sort of school one could imagine, including five years at USC. I have taught many unique and challenging young people, and with a few rare exceptions, I have loved them all.

I have had an opportunity to share this love since 2005 in Hawaii, and I would like to continue, as long as my colleagues and administrators believe that I still have something of value to offer our Hawaiian young people.

I fear that my being in what has been called the most vulnerable demographic causes me concern. In addition to my age, I have what is called Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis. The progression of the illness is very slow, but it could be "triggered" to become more active by infections. For me, and I suspect for other older District teachers with similar health concerns, a return to our classrooms could be hazardous to our health and perhaps to our life.

In your rush to meet the August 4 deadline, please remember those of us who are old, and yet love our children to the extent of wanting to teach them everything we know, no matter what. Thank you for the opportunity to have provided this, for me, for the past sixteen years. I would like to continue, but I am fearful of a premature opening based on an artificial deadline.

Sincerely,

Lawrence H. Wayman

lwayman@mac.com

(808)295-9691

Testimony BOE

From: Verne Kiaha <kumukiaha@gmail.com> on behalf of Verne Kiaha
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 11:18 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I Am against the cutting of differential pay and am for delaying student start date.

Me ke aloha pumehana,
Kumu (Verne) Nalani Ki'aha

Testimony BOE

From: Logan Freitas <loganfreitas1@gmail.com> on behalf of Logan Freitas
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 11:20 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Best thing to do is 100% distance learning

BOE,

Keep our children safe. Keep our teachers safe. Many children live with grandparents. Many teachers have children. The plans in place are okay only if you can promise no Covid cases in schools, which you know as much as we do that you cannot promise. I hope you're not that naive. And you're definitely not prepared for the worse.

What happens when there is a positive test in a school? Does the whole class have the quarantine for 2 weeks? The whole school? Is there no quarantine? What happens if the teacher gets it? Do they get paid leave? The list goes on.

These are very simple questions that you have no answers to. So until you do, there should be in-class lessons.

Do the right thing.

--

Aloha,

Logan Q.K. Freitas
CENTURY 21 iProperties Hawaii
Keeping Hawaii Home
RS - 77114
(808)284-5585

Testimony BOE

From: Logan Freitas <loganfreitas1@gmail.com> on behalf of Logan Freitas
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 11:22 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY

BOE,

Keep our children safe. Keep our teachers safe. Many children live with grandparents. Many teachers have children. The plans in place are okay only if you can promise no Covid cases in schools, which you know as much as we do that you cannot promise. I hope you're not that naive. And you're definitely not prepared for the worse.

What happens when there is a positive test in a school? Does the whole class have the quarantine for 2 weeks? The whole school? Is there no quarantine? What happens if the teacher gets it? Do they get paid leave? The list goes on.

These are very simple questions that you have no answers to. So until you do, there should be in-class lessons.

Do the right thing.

--

Aloha,

Logan Q.K. Freitas
CENTURY 21 iProperties Hawaii
Keeping Hawaii Home
RS - 77114
(808)284-5585

Testimony BOE

From: Shelby Furtado <sfurtots@gmail.com> on behalf of Shelby Furtado
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 11:23 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 Shelby Furtado and I am a first grade teacher at Benjamin Parker Elementary. I am very concerned for this upcoming school year starting so soon. I am already stressing out completely trying to get cleaning supplies for my own home and I am going through panic trying to see where I'm going to get cleaning supplies for my classroom. I know the DOE said they will provide us with these things but that's what they say about our supplies in the past and still I use mostly every penny I earn on materials for my classroom. Also I concerns me that students will not be able to keep 6 feet apart in classrooms due to the amount of students we have. I know that I can make my classroom as best as it can but I need more time! There is no solid plan put in place yet to protect us teachers and students, therefore I believe school needs to start at a later date. The last thing which is the most heartbreaking is seeing some of my colleagues forced to retire early due to health issues. Something needs to change and be done!

Testimony BOE

From: Evelyn Ibonia <evelyn.ibonia@gmail.com> on behalf of Evelyn Ibonia
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 11:24 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha Board of Education Members,

My name is Evelyn Ibonia, a teacher at Kihei Elementary on Maui, and I am here 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 currently teach in a fifth grade inclusion classroom with a Special Education teacher. This coming year will be our fourth year teaching together in this setting. That's an accomplishment in itself, wouldn't you agree? I have taught in other schools where the Special Education teachers did not last more than two years. The success of our students in the inclusion setting is only made possible because there are two qualified teachers working together. My co-teacher and I are equals in our classroom, the students don't associate me as the "regular" teacher and her the "Special Ed" teacher. In our classroom, we are both their teachers and I can say with complete confidence that this would not be possible if my co-teacher was not a qualified Special Education teacher.

Special Education teachers like my co-teacher deserve to be compensated. Not only are they expected to share the load in the classroom, but also collect data, write IEPs, schedule and run meetings (sometimes multiple for the same student), make accommodations, conduct assessments and observations, etc. We need to retain these teachers, along with the teachers in hard-to-staff locations and Hawaiian language immersion programs. Funding the differentials will help tremendously.

So I urge you, please reject the proposal for temporary discontinuance of extra compensation. Instead, continue to fund the extra compensation, as promised, and show these teachers how much they are valued.

Hawaii's Keiki thank you.

Sincerely,
Evelyn Ibonia

Testimony BOE

From: Fanny Ancheta <anchetaflavi001@hawaii.rr.com> on behalf of Fanny Ancheta
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 11:25 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Pay Differentials

Aloha,

I would like to request the Board of Education to retain and continue our Teachers' Pay Differentials as it will help us to meet and sustain our daily needs- expenses for our families and as teachers to our students.

Thank you for your kind help and support for us teachers.

Sincerely,

Flaviana Ancheta
Science Teacher
Lahaina Intermediate School

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: karen f <mattmattmaui@hotmail.com> on behalf of karen f
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 11:28 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: testimony

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

Please answer these questions before expecting educators/students to return to school. Are you willing to show up daily at school with us without these answers?

I love my students and my job. I want to be back with our school families-but I also want to be safe and wise. I have asthma, should I risk my health while these questions are being contemplated?

- 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?

Schools cannot successfully reopen without a solid plan that has been effectively communicated to school employees, students and their families. The health and safety of our students, their families and all school employees are too important to risk.

Karen Figueira
Haiku School, Maui

Testimony BOE

From: Naomi Ige <igenao0316@gmail.com> on behalf of Naomi Ige
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 11:28 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony: Agenda Item VI-D

July 21, 2020

Dear Chair and Members of the Board of Education:

DO NOT RUSH REOPENING schools on August 4, and inevitably exposing children and teachers to the health risk of the corona virus pandemic! 100% virtual distance ONLINE LEARNING needs to be the 1st priority option if education is truly the role of public schools.

Why are schools reopening when pandemic numbers are not lower than when schools were closed in March? Schools will need to close as soon as they open to prevent inevitable infection, and exponential spreading of the corona virus in the community. Children are now beginning to be found to, in addition to infecting others, also get sick and even die from the corona virus. Air-conditioned classrooms where children are expected to sit at desks for long periods of time (even with minimum 6 feet distancing and mask-wearing) is a breeding ground for corona virus.

The first option needs to be a 100% virtual distance learning option! Many successful education models that do not require students in classrooms exist. Better ways to instruct students with online options that do not compromise the safety of children and teachers (and all related staff) are needed if it is truly believed that the role of public schools is education! Take the time, money, and care to make sure that a coordinated statewide effort led by the governor, during these unprecedented disastrous times, is made with government agencies, as well as businesses, nonprofits, etc., to help provide a safe place with internet access for students (as well as insure the provision of laptops, PPE, cleaning supplies, additional infrastructure, etc.).

The DOE needs to support teachers, as well as principals, and not leave them to figure out the safety of children, teachers and staff on their own without any resources, finances, and time to safely provide public education during the uncertain and dangerous times of this pandemic. The DOH also needs to provide honest health guidance for the primary benefit of children, as well as their teachers, families, and ultimately, our communities, whose lives this corona virus is threatening.

Sincerely,

Portia N. Ige

Testimony BOE

From: Melissa Hayashi <melhayashi3@gmail.com> on behalf of Melissa Hayashi
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 11:29 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Melissa Hayashi and I am a 4th grade teacher at Nanakuli 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.

The principal, other staff members, and teachers at my school have been working tirelessly to try to prepare for the reopening of schools despite the lack of guidance provided by the DOE and DOH. Now that we are a week away from teachers returning and two weeks away from students returning to school, it is clear that we are not prepared to reopen. Our principal has been bombarded with important and reasonable questions from our staff that she could not answer herself because no protocols have been set by the DOE.

We still don't know what will happen if a student in our class tests positive for COVID-19. Does the whole class switch to distance learning? Do all the students and teachers in that class need to quarantine and if so, for how long? When is it okay for that class to safely reopen? What if one of the students' family members test positive? Is that child allowed to come to school? Dr. Kishimoto says that there are procedures in place, however the HIDOE School Reopening Plan does not specifically state what should happen in these situations.

It is preposterous that Dr. Kishimoto expects all schools to be prepared to safely and effectively reopen without any training on safety measures, precaution, or procedures relating to COVID-10. In addition, we need training on how to teach via distance learning (since most teachers will be teaching through a blended model of in person instruction and distance learning). She has mentioned that thousands of teachers participated in training over the summer, however I am not aware of any training offered by the DOE and have not been able to find any information online on how to receive this training. The DOE has not returned my email request for information on training. Dr. Kishimoto has referred to the nine half days of school at the beginning of the school year whenever asked about training, however she has not specifically stated what training will be provided by the DOE. It seems that she is expecting each school to provide their own training. Why are we not receiving the same training statewide when we are all experiencing this pandemic together?

Dr. Kishimoto has repeatedly said that it's time for the teachers to step up and do our part to serve our students and our community. We wish we could go back to work and see our students in person, but at what cost? Are we expected to risk our lives and the lives of our family members so that we can provide instruction to our students? As a mother of a 2 year old who is expecting another baby in a few months, I am very concerned for my family. My husband and I are very cautious in our personal lives to limit our exposure to the virus. Simply attending school each day will put our family at a much greater risk, and attending school when there is a lack of precautions and procedures in place is not a reasonable expectation to have of teachers.

The DOE needs to provide more training, guidance, and specific written procedures and plans regarding how to keep our students and staff safe before reopening schools.

-Melissa Hayashi

Testimony BOE

From: Cherie <lash.cher@gmail.com> on behalf of Cherie
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 11:30 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Continued funding for teacher shortage differentials

Dear Board of Education,

I am a special education teacher for mild to moderate students on the windward side of O'ahu. Since the week after I arrived here in Hawai'i I have been taking professional development class after class in order to make enough money to house and feed myself and my daughter, although I had over 15 years of teaching experience and a Master's degree.

Every year, I reassess my situation to determine if I can make it another year. It has only been by the help of my family and a second job that I have been able to survive financially.

I was thrilled to find out in January that we were finally going to be able to get paid a more livable wage and consulted a mortgage banker to determine if I could get a loan. The special education differential was enough to allow me to qualify for a small place for us to live. I have found several places that I would like to buy, but have been advised that if our differential is taken away, I will no longer qualify. Home ownership is important for various reasons, but as a teacher, our pay will never keep up with the rate of rental increases and this allows us the ability to have a fixed housing payment, thus financial security to better manage our other expenses with the high cost of living here in Hawaii.

Not only is it crucial for us to continue to receive this differential so that we can have a stronger and more consistent teacher base for our students, but also now that we have the crisis of COVID, I know I will need to spend quite a bit of extra money of my own to keep my medically fragile students safe (and with these necessities being in short supply, there are no bargains out there anymore). **DOE does not have a strong track record of providing the necessities that we need (i.e., soap and paper towels in student bathrooms, etc),** and I will be spending my own money on PPE, sanitizers, etc., especially since students will be changing classes often which means even more disposable supplies will be necessary to keep my classroom as hygienic as possible.

Please, please, do not balance the education budget on the hard-working, stressed out special education (and other specialty) teachers' back. This is an extremely difficult time for all of us, but especially those of us that will be trying to navigate teaching special needs students during this crisis. We implore you to look at other areas where the fat can be trimmed and not do so at the expense of the special ed teachers. We need your help and support and hope that you will continue to provide this much needed differential.

Mahalo for all that you do to support us to do our best for our keiki.

Testimony BOE

From: barbara hara <bhara@lunaliloel.k12.hi.us> on behalf of barbara hara
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 11:32 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To the Board of Education Members,

Testimony regarding action Item, "H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 Employees."

My name is Barbara Hara and I have been a teacher for over 25+ years. I am still very concerned about the reopening of school with so many bodies on campus at a given time. After seeing the video today that Dr. Kishimoto addressed the teachers, I feel defeated! I chose teaching because I enjoy my job and love what I do. I spend countless hours researching and looking for new materials to use and to improve my teaching. Believe me when I say I try to make my classroom a comfortable place for my students to learn. Over time, I was able to transform my classroom from a traditional classroom to a flexible classroom and found that my students loved having the freedom to choose what was best for them for the day. Not just time but money is poured into my classroom. I don't get paid much but I believe in getting what I can to make learning better for my students. So for Dr. Kishimoto to undermine educators is very disheartening and discouraging.

I implore you to seriously consider the ramifications of opening schools too soon. As I have stated in a previous testimony, one life is too precious to give up for the sake of opening up schools. All lives matter. With rushing to open schools, we are potentially creating bigger problems. The bubble theory may sound great but it's not a reality in what we will face on August 4th. The bubble theory would work if our students are with us 24/7 where factors can be controlled. But once our students go home, the bubble will be broken many times over. I do not feel safe! A prime example of this happened just last week. I had passed by Palolo gym and noticed that there was a gathering of way over 100 people. They were not practicing social distancing and no masks were worn. What happens if someone was asymptomatic? That means all these people just took it home to their families, and those family members will then spread it to their friends and coworkers and so forth! Now those students will be coming to my classroom and therefore potentially spreading it to me and their classmates! No life is worth sacrificing! If it was so safe to open schools then why are prisons releasing their prisoners? Why are the numbers going up if it was so safe? Why are doctors' offices choosing to telemed instead?

Superintendent Kishimoto says that it is safe to return to school...but is it really? She says that she hired 15 more RNs, one for each complex. How does it help the schools proactively? It sounds more like a reactive plan. As a teacher, I will be required to ask each of my students a bunch of questions (to do a visual check) that my students may not be able to answer due to a lack of understanding or language. I feel very uncomfortable with this. I am not trained to do this nor am I qualified to make decisions on my student's health. Who will be held responsible for this should a student come down with Covid? I already have a lot on my plate and to add that will take away from teaching. Also why aren't we doing temperature checks? We are required to do it at the airports, doctors' offices, beauty salons, stores, etc but students don't need to be checked? Remember too that many of our students may be asymptomatic. Again another reason as to why I don't feel safe!

What other professions expect their workers to come in during their free time to set up their classrooms, spend their hard money to furnish their workplace, and to take courses? No one! But teachers do it because they care

about their students! When will it be enough? It seems that what we have to offer is not enough and we need to give more. Now to expect us to possibly forsake our lives in the name of teaching? I'm sorry but it's not just my life but now I am endangering my husband and children. Not only do I endanger them but I also care for my elderly mother and mother in law which I can endanger them. Should something happen to me or my family, will you folks take responsibility? No! It will fall upon me to use my sick leave and to pay for any medical expenses that may be incurred due to something that I caught at work.

Ms. Kishimoto says that thousands of teachers received training. I did not receive any training nor was I aware of any training. It should not be voluntary but mandatory that all teachers receive training during paid work hours! In fact, many of my teacher friends were not aware of any training. Please push back the opening of school with students. Use the time to train the teachers properly so that they will be ready for the uncertainties that students and teachers will face. Can we not push back having students start until there is a clear and uniformed plan that is safe for all? Can we not train our teachers properly before the students start? Giving teachers a few days is not enough training. On top of setting up our classrooms, we will need to do our regular meetings that consist of the mandated yearly videos and planning. With all this on our plates we are not ready to receive our students safely! Two weeks of half day is not enough to receive training either. When will teachers have time to prepare for the students the following day? There is much time and preparation needed in teaching. Also we need time to rearrange our classrooms since we basically have to empty everything out from our classrooms to make room for distancing. There is too much on our plates and we do not feel safe!

Mask wearing should be mandatory in schools! We need to wear it everywhere here on our islands. So why shouldn't it be expected for everyone on campus to wear one. Shields will not offer protection that masks do. Masks will contain droplets and airborne particles. Shields will just protect the eyes. Covid is not just droplets but it is airborne as well. Clearer and more firm decisions need to be made regarding mask wearing. I spent so much time finding a group to donate homemade masks for all our students at Lunalilo. But to hear that it's just a suggestion for them to wear it but not a requirement is shocking. Especially when I heard that it is highly encouraged for only our older students but it was ok if our younger students didn't wear one. What happens if parents or students refuse to wear masks? What recourse is there for teachers to get their students to wear one and to wear one properly? I do not feel safe!

Please reconsider the start date of our students to a much later date. Our mainland counterparts are so why can't we? Please consider the health and welfare of the teachers, students, and staff and make it safe before we reopen our schools.

Thank you.

Mahalo,
Barbara Hara
Lunalilo School

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.

Testimony BOE

From: igemn@hawaii.edu
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 11:37 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Dear Chair and Members of the Board,

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 Ige and I am a teacher at Ilima Intermediate school. I am writing because I am concerned about the face to face instruction that comes with the reopening of schools on August 4th. We will be starting with some blended face to face and online instruction, and have a school model that allows for 6 foot separation of desks. Student desks are distanced at 6 feet apart, which is good, however, masks still aren't mandatory. We will try to enforce the wearing of masks in classrooms, but it seems like it will only be a matter of time before a case of coronavirus appears somewhere in our public schools and spreads. No matter how careful we are and even if everyone stays 6 feet apart while wearing masks at all times (and this is not realistic), there is still a possibility of transmission. Any face to face time with students or other teachers is an added risk to us all.

I prefer to interact with students in person, and I really want to be back in my own classroom, but I'd be lying if I said that I don't feel nervous about face to face interactions this year. I know many of my colleagues feel the same way and some of them have health conditions that make them further at-risk. They also have infants, elderly parents and grandparents, and maybe even extended family to worry about. I also go home to older parents and fear that I could take the coronavirus home to them if by some chance it comes to our school. I am afraid that the DOE will not be ready when the virus starts to infect our public school population (because I think it will, given the number of interactions between students, staff, and teachers every day). I understand that it's important to get our students back in school and try to return a sense of normalcy to them and their families, but I am not sure if we can give them that peace of mind if there are still doubts about safety.

Sincerely,
Michelle Ige

Testimony BOE

From: Jaime Gusman <gusmanj@hotmail.com> on behalf of Jaime Gusman
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 11:37 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Re: Testimony

Aloha,

My name is Jaimelynn Tateyama and I am a Japanese language 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.

Due to many factors such as not having specific written clear protocols from the State of Hawaii Department of Health and not having enough safety training for dealing with the COVID-19 situations, as a floating teacher that teaches a high military population at my high school, at this time, I do not feel that school is safe to open to me and all of my students on August 4th. Being in a number of classrooms every day, I emphasize on the protocols and safety training because as an educator, I want to feel confident as to how to deal with this pandemic as a floating teacher for the students, myself and school community, but I don't feel confident at all because I don't know what to go by to deal with COVID-19 (If it happens in any of my classes or school) and we haven't had enough safety training to practice and know how to deal with the situation when it happens. We are all at high risk because the classroom is utilized by many teachers and students, with the frequent volume of students from military households and not knowing if they have self-isolated or went through the 14 day quarantine and not being able to create "Ohana bubbles" at our school because we don't have enough classrooms to hold all of our teachers and students. Teachers, staff, students and even parents should know what the COVID-19 guidance and safety procedures are for re-opening schools and different COVID-19 case scenarios and everyone should feel confident in dealing with them prior to school opening especially in a school situation like mine where any of us could easily get the virus. The two weeks we have at the beginning of school are not enough time for everyone to feel confident with the safety procedures and other protocols especially when there is no written guidance on the re-opening of school buildings and how to deal with different case scenarios dealing with COVID-19 in our schools even until this point. At the senate meeting, it was mentioned that the written COVID-19 DOE guidelines are still being worked on. I don't think it is right and fair to open school without these guidelines and everyone not being confident about how to deal with different COVID-19 case scenarios in their classrooms and in their schools. All our lives are put on the line.

In addition to this, the two weeks training we are receiving is not enough time for teachers especially those who are new to technology to produce and be efficient with remote and hybrid learning models and just in case the school needs to close due to COVID-19. Self-motivated and wanting to learn, I spent the entire summer trying to figure out what all my classes would look like via hybrid learning. I am still working on how I can go ahead and implement effective Japanese language learning for this coming school year. Asking the teachers to be able to produce a model of distance learning that suits them and their subject and curriculum in two weeks is difficult and even online course instructors have mentioned the same thing. They have spent much time to provide online learning to their students. Training for teachers how to plan and how to execute their remote learning model is necessary. Training for students and parents with what platforms and tools are also necessary. Not having the guidance and protocols and proper time to prepare for safety and remote hybrid learning will hurt and affect everyone.

Lastly, as a wife, family member and individual, I worry about my own life and the affects it will have on my husband and family due to not having written safety guidelines and not knowing standard practices and

procedures dealing with PPE and COVID-19 situations. We need to have the guidelines and need to be trained. Many other teachers have mentioned that they are afraid to go to school, not being confident with safety dealing with COVID-19. I don't blame them because I am afraid myself too. Who would want to go to a workplace where you don't feel safe and you are not properly trained? The August 4th opening really is not safe and not fair for everyone especially with lives at stake.

Being an educator in the DOE Hawaii for ten years now, I love my job. I went into this field because I love teaching. I want school to start and see my students, just like many other teachers do, we want to create relationships and help our students to learn and succeed, but teachers cannot do these things for their students and communities if they do not feel safe and ready. I am not asking to not to re-start school, but I am asking for a safe re-opening of school in phases were teachers can be confident in safety training and remote learning to provide our students what we want to give them. With re-opening of school in phases, we will not only have time to train and be confident with safety and remote learning, but we will also be able to communicate more and work together with our communities, staff, students, parents and work together to re-open school safely.

Please think of all the safety, health, and well being of everyone (students, teachers, staff and communities)

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony.

Sincerely
Jaime Tateyama

Testimony BOE

From: wendydagdag <wendydagdag@aol.com> on behalf of wendydagdag
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 11:41 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

As a nurse, I see what this virus does to healthy people. Please dont open up schools and put our innocent kids at risk for this virus. We can still learn through distant learning until a vaccine comes out. It's not worth taking a chance with lives. Kids will need to social distance so socialization will be limited anyways. Thank you.

Sent from my T-Mobile 4G LTE Device

Testimony BOE

From: Maribel Perez <maribel94112@yahoo.com> on behalf of Maribel Perez
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 11:42 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Concerns

Aloha,

Teacher nor students should be put at risk! As an EA I haven't gotten trained on anything and don't feel safe nor ready to open schools up Aug. 4.

As a parents I'm not comfortable knowing that other staff haven't gotten trained either! It's not ok to open just like that and employees not know what to do in an emergency.

-M. Perez

Testimony BOE

From: Michelle Garofalo <MichelleGarofalo@outlook.com> on behalf of Michelle Garofalo
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 11:44 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.](#)
July 21, 2020

Good evening,

My name is Michelle Garofalo, and I am a special education teacher at Iroquois Point Elementary School. This is my 19th year teaching with the Hawaii Department of Education. I have a bachelor degree in special education and a masters degree in curriculum and instruction with an emphasis on early childhood.

My last few years of teaching have been especially challenging so I'd like to start my story with my experience from last school year. Last school year, I was hired to teach at Ewa Beach Elementary as a special education kindergarten inclusion teacher, a job I coveted and was looking forward to. A few months into the school year, one of our special education teachers resigned due to the stress and demands of the job. She packed her bags and went back to the mainland. The principal asked the sped department if anyone was willing to cover the position and I volunteered. So now I was teaching kindergarten inclusion and teaching and covering the caseload for 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade inclusion. I became so overwhelmed with the paperwork, meetings, and teaching, that I was losing my passion for teaching and needed to take a leave of absence for two weeks. During my leave, I actively pursued finding a job in a private school teaching regular education where the caseload and demands would be more manageable and it would allow me to focus on the children and teaching. In the midst of my private school job pursuit, we received the special education teacher differential. The differential actually helped me to push through the year and seek out a new position within the DOE for the following school year. The increase in pay made me feel like I was appreciated for all the hard work the special ed teachers do.

This school year, I was originally hired to teach preschool special education, but due to the covid-19 pandemic the student numbers did not warrant 3 preschool classrooms which was originally planned for the school year. The principal asked for one of the teachers assigned to preschool to volunteer to change positions to another grade level. She had two other special education positions that were not filled. Naturally, even though it felt like dejavu of last school year, I graciously volunteered myself to take the kindergarten fully self contained classroom for this school year.

Why year after year are teachers fleeing special education positions? Why aren't the special education positions filled when school is starting in less than 2 weeks?

I believe the main reason we can't fill and keep the positions filled is due to the extra caseload demands. The amount of meetings and paperwork required that goes beyond our school day and contract hours without any compensation is incomprehensible. I love teaching and my heart has a special place for children with special needs. It disheartens me when I can't put the time needed to create lessons and teach because I spend hours preparing IEP's, PWN's, behavior plans, and conducting and attending meetings.

During this time of national crisis, our most vulnerable students need well- trained, experienced teachers. Special education teachers need the differential more now than ever. For me personally I have increasing demands of childcare, my business owner spouse is losing customers daily, the risk and worry about contracting covid during teaching in person school, and for the second year in a row I'm in a teaching line that I didn't apply for. To also put additional financial stress on an already stressful situation seems unfair, as the differential has only been offered for less than one year.

Thank you for listening.

Testimony BOE

From: Laura Warner <ljww2@icloud.com> on behalf of Laura Warner
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 11:45 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Opening schools

I am a teacher and feel the date to open School to students Should be delayed. Teachers were not allowed back to classrooms; classrooms were left at third quarter. There was not appropriate time to clean up from the previous year. To open classrooms for a pandemic setting takes Much greater planning organization. For one setting up a new classroom environment; like Getting rid of furniture to fit six feet spacing. Clearing room to create large open spaces means down sizing bookshelves, and going through materials To keep or dispose of in deeming them essential . Creating Innovative premote curricular activities, packets, and setting up for A/B scheduling also takes increased planning, as well as much needed training to k hiPp learn new programs, and best practices to keep children engaged. I believe it is important for students to come back ASAP. Allowing teachers to teach from classrooms also where our materials are is important when going to full remote. At least an additional week is needed to cleanup, set up, have Professional development to learn new tech opportunities, create packets, And be fully prepared for students to return.

Mahalo. Ljww

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Ayla Durbin-Matrone <ayla.elora@gmail.com> on behalf of Ayla Durbin-Matrone
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 11:46 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha Board of Education,

My name is Ayla Durbin-Matrone, I am a special education teacher at Mililani Uka f 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 was incredibly disappointed to hear there is a discussion about the differentials being used to assist in funding. I am well aware of the lack of funding schools receive in the first place and I definitely didn't become a teacher because I was going to be rich. But please understand the impact these differentials have in hundreds of lives across the state! Also, it is common practice that Special Education Teachers receive more money than their peers. This difference is because of the expertise in learning and behavior that special ed. teachers receive as a part of their training. I have dual certification in general and special education. This certification took extra time, money, and credits to receive but I am expected to get the same pay. Hawaii finally addressed this issue through the differential pay last year and now it feels almost discriminatory for our compensation to be used to fund expenses. Remember, the differential pay made a huge impact in schools and with retention and now you are looking to take it away. During a year like we're facing, could end very poorly. I know COVID has presented extra expenses that are not typically included in the budget. However, there should be some real analyzing being done to find other areas where this funding can come from. If we really don't have, then we need to rethink opening schools, NOT take the livelihood from your teachers. Also, if the hard-to-staff areas must receive a pay difference, why shouldn't other teachers?

Personally, the differential allow me to cover necessities in my life that I have previously sacrificed because I cannot afford it. I've been able to go to the doctor for visits I haven't had in months and been able to save for the dental procedure that I need to have done. Since receiving the increase in pay, I was also able to purchase some special materials that I could use with my students. With high-needs students, it can really make a difference and we know the schools don't have money in their budget to get specialized materials or curriculum. This made a huge difference during our school closures and prepping materials for their enrichment activities.

Lastly, consider the population of students that special education teachers work with on a daily basis. These are students that will not be able to follow all the social distancing. We work one-on-one and utilize hands-on activities because that is what they need to be successful and learn. During the school closure at the end of the year, I was held much more accountable than my general education peers, regarding data collection and providing materials that were individualized or modified.

This is just some of why we deserve to continue receiving the compensation through our differential. Honestly, this will have a major impact on whether I continue to teach in Hawaii! Especially with COVID as a concern.

Ayla Durbin-Matrone

Testimony BOE

From: Theresa Haberstroh <mamathaberstroh@gmail.com> on behalf of Theresa Haberstroh
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 11:47 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

From:
Theresa Haberstroh
Parent of 2 students at Kalama Intermediate
4th Grade Teacher at Haiku Elementary since 2002

Testimony for July 23, 2020 Meeting of Finance and Infrastructure Committee

Aloha,

My name is Theresa Haberstroh. My family, which consists of my husband with underlying medical conditions, 2 middle schoolers, and I live in the rural community of Kailua, Maui. I am submitting 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.](#)

This summer has been the least restful I have ever had in my 29 years of teaching in Hawaii. I have been working non stop every week since March 13 to plan, prepare, participate, attend meetings, and educate myself in distance learning, covid protocols, reaching out to students and their families, and in helping my own children with their online learning in 6th and 7th grades. After May 28, I received no compensation for any of this work as I am a 10 month employee. It was all volunteer and self-directed learning with no guidance or input from administration or the DOE. Trainings that were offered were optional at best and none were officially offered. People who wanted to learn on their own time and could afford to do so had to take their own initiatives.

Our last principal at Haiku Elementary left to take a position on Oahu to be nearer her aging parents. Our school was left rudderless during an extremely unsettling time. Therefore, several of us stepped up to help with ideas and planning to help with reopening efforts. We again had to meet on our own times and with our own initiatives to try to lay the groundwork for a safe reopening at Haiku, all volunteer efforts.

Almost every teacher I know is a planner and a self-directed learner. We work to be prepared and do our very best for our students, even when we are working well beyond our contracted hours. I've always said that we teachers are philanthropists at heart, however, we don't have the wealth to provide endowments or scholarships, we just give of ourselves.

However, we should not have to give of ourselves at the risk of our lives and our families' and friends' lives. We are not doctors, nurses, medical professionals. We should not be asked to go back to work with some of the most uncertain circumstances just because families need to get back to work. We are not daycare providers. We are educators. We do not want to NOT WORK. We want to BE SAFE and provide our very safest and best educational experience for our keiki.

We are educators who don't even have the same precautions that the grocery store clerks have. We do not have plexiglas shields, face shields, 6 foot distancing stickers, limits to the amount of people we come in contact with. To go try on glasses at a Costco Warehouse, temperatures are taken, questions are asked. We do not have even those same assurances and we are going to be with people from many different families, areas, walks of life, etc. for long periods of the day. And it's not just the teachers and the students-there are Educational Assistants, Recess and Lunch Supervisors, Cafeteria Workers, Office Staff, Substitutes, and all of the families belonging to each of these stakeholders that will be affected if we don't open appropriately and safely.

As I mentioned before, I am the parent of 2 middle schoolers. I know I am going to need to be at my own school campus every day, but with the blended learning models, my own children likely will not be at school every day. We live in a rural area and my children are the first to get on the bus and the last to get off the bus, spending about an hour and a half daily in a school bus. How many contacts will they meet just in the trips to school and back? What guidance have we received as parents? None.

This year, as with any year, we will have 4 paid days to start planning for this school year. Those days are never enough to get everything ready. Teachers and staff work well beyond contracted hours, on weekends, and holidays in a normal school year. This year there has been no guidance from the DOE on how we can safely open our schools. It has been left to schools to decide, and my own school and my childrens' school both have new principals, which brings a whole new situation to the table.

As one of the first districts in the country to return to school, 4 days is absolutely insufficient to help us make our safest, best informed decisions and plans to keep all school stakeholders safe. I, along with many parents, staff, educators, implore you, to delay the start of school in the way of the status quo. We teachers and staff can go back to work on August 4, but please give us more time to make the safest and best decisions to open schools safely.

Allow us the time to put procedures in place that shopping malls, restaurants, and gyms have been allowed to do. We need more training, time for our input, and respect of our opinions to prevent the spread, illnesses, and death due to Covid 19. Give us the time to do this without having to scramble with guesswork and no guidelines. If there are no mandatory or consistent guidelines, how can any steps we take be reliable? Let us, the people who are entrusted with educating and raising our keiki, do our very best to make sure we are opening our schools with the safety and excellence every person demands and deserves.

Mahalo for your attention, consideration, and time.

Sincerely,

Theresa Haberstroh

Testimony BOE

From: jeaninedot78@gmail.com
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 11:49 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Delaying student start date

To whom it may concern,

As a teacher I am concerned about my health and the health of my students when we return to school on August 4, 2020. I have been dealing with major anxiety just thinking about it. I am having trouble sleep at night and walk around with constant neck and shoulder pain because of this. It is the lack of answers to the multiple questions teachers have been asking. The fact that some schools are not enforcing a mandatory rule about face mask deeply disturbs me as a parent. Knowing that our classrooms will not be cleaned and disinfected throughout the day worries me. Not having shields provided in the classrooms should not be something I have to concern myself about. I should not have to be paying for shields out of my own pocket. If we can let criminals out of jail because we are worried of spreading COVID-19, why are our children and teachers not as important as criminals???

As well as worrying about doing my job well, I am also stressing out about the cuts and shortage differentials. Why are teachers having to deal with the brunt of trying to make the community feel "normal" again. We as a state need to find a better solution so that we as teacher don't need to feel like we are carrying the pressure of this pandemic on our shoulders.

We love our jobs, we love our students. Please help us to work in a safe and healthy environment, even if this means pushing back the start of this school year.

Thank you
Jeanine Dotario
Teacher
Wilcox Elementary School

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Kaleolani Akim <ulalenagirl@gmail.com> on behalf of Kaleolani Akim
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 11:50 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Written Testimony - 6D, 6G, 6H

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1au5xR0UZhCtP7ZyMdggCxtXfAXqYTZM1v1s8ezDE5os/edit?usp=sharing>

Name: J. Kaleolani Hanohano | Kahuku High and Intermediate School | Social Studies
Event: Board of Education General Business Meeting Testimony
Position: Comment
Agenda Item:

6D. 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

6G. 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

6H. 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 mai e nā hoa makamaka me nā aloha ‘aina:

‘O au iho no ‘o Kaleolani Hanohano, Ano ‘ai me ke aloha kakou!

Hi! I am Kaleolani Hanohano a Kumu in the Department of Education for 30 years, a mother to 5 and Tūtūhine to 14 mo‘opuna. My concerns are deeply rooted in the care of intergenerational ‘ohana and all of our marginalized communities in Hawai‘i nei. I am here to address 6D, 6G, and 6H through mo‘oleo.

Do you know who is in your **‘ohana bubble**? Do you know what this bubble represents? Are teachers, students and parents trained in knowing how to develop an ‘ohana or support bubble?

Data indicates that most native Hawaiian communities have adhered to the stay at home order, and continue to care and share aloha safely. Ko‘olauloa has a low level of infections, and my theory is because of our “support bubbles.” We created, connected and supported those in our “bubble” for the past 5 months. Because we care about you, we limited our exposure. The obedient did not go camping, attend parties, and collect in large

numbers for 4th of July. If anyone became ill we could trace contact and pinpoint the infection. These efforts have kept my `ohana safe for the past 5 months. But, that is going to change. I will soon become the “dark horse.”

Let me share a mo`olelo:

On August 4, 2020, all teachers across Hawai`i will turn into Essential workers. Basically, enabling them with the status to earn hazard pay, sometimes called hardship pay, this is not a new idea. How dangerous will our jobs become?

Starting August 4, students will arrive at my classroom. 60 to 80 students, 5 periods 3 different subjects daily, running concurrently or back to back. Let's break down the math, 6 to 12 students every 45 minutes reporting 5 times daily to a wooden portable. No designated temperature check points, and only 10 minutes to wipe down, sanitize and reset.

When students arrive I am wearing a face shield, a facemask, and gloves as directed by the CDC, my whole body prepares to recognize and greet our day with ALOHA. Students oli and practice cultural connections to `āina and engage in indigenous lifeways to support our keiki kaiapuni (immersion school). We observe or KILO our weather and recognize the akua and kupuna standing with us, as we standing 6 ft apart. Students enter with AKAHAI as I try to speak clearly through the muffled flaps of my face mask, while projecting lessons from the elmo to the whiteboard, and managing attendance on ZOOM for 12 -16 other students joining us remotely. All the while hoping that each student is able to connect, enter the room prepared to learn, and find LOKAHI and belonging. Did I mention that our school will be teaching 5 classes daily except on Wednesday. Did I tell you that I will be teaching 3 different subjects? Did I mention that I am in the high school, where social interaction is a hormonal rush? 5 classes 3 different preps all in one day with high schoolers who haven't seen each other for 5 months. I find it interesting that many teachers like myself will be tasked to bear the distress and trauma of a global pandemic as witnessed through the eyes of our sweet children. My na'au is already `eha or sore with the mo`olelo of fear, confusion and anxiety. Did we get specific training to handle this? WE will all be tasked to be in `OLU`OLU the entire time. The amount of changes, transitions, and redirections adds to the tension will make it difficult to be HA`AHA`A. With all of this going on, can you protect me and my “`ohana bubble?”

If I am infected with COVID 19 my husband will need to quarantine, he can lose his job, and the workplace can be shut down and our livelihood put on hold. Will I get to stay in a hotel like first responders to isolate from my `ohana for fear of infecting them?

My Hawaiian `ohana is fragile! We are `aina and as such we create precautions to still the misery of loss and despair from epidemic after epidemic. Generation after generation we have seen our mo`okū`auhou decimated and whole communities forgotten. Tutu Kawena

Puku`i states: **Lawe li'ili'i ka make a ka Hawai'i, lawe nui ka make a ka haole| Death by Hawaiians takes a few at a time; death by foreigners takes many.**

When I return home daily, I am now required to isolate myself because of my exposure. My family will not be allowed to come to visit, and I will not be sharing space with my husband for fear and uncertainty. What is the alternative?

With mutual respect, deep and unwavering aloha for all of you and our Hawai'i please make sure that PPE, free COVID testing and universal access to technology is in place. Teachers in the Immersion programs are essential to providing the social emotional learning piece connected to `aina and aloha. Most of all, secure the health, wellbeing and the protection of our kupuna. Please do not send our children into the path of infection and have them bring it home to our kupuna. This is genocide by proxy! Using our keiki through unified education theory to prop economic stability as the guise to leading COVID into our homes is evil. Do not use our keiki to infect, weaken, and erase our kupuna. This is my `ohana bubble, please help me protect them?

E huli ka lima i lalo!

Kaleolani Hanohano

Social Studies - Kahuku High School

808-428-3850

ulalenagirl@gmail.com

Testimony BOE

From: Sean J <sjandoc86@gmail.com> on behalf of Sean J
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 11:52 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha, my name is Sean Jandoc. I am a teacher at Castle High School. In recent days, I have seen and heard news reports concerning the reopening of schools. I would like to say that I do not feel comfortable with the August 4th return date for haumāna.

While I understand the need to reopen schools for any number of reasons, the mental and social health of our keiki, kumu and haumāna building the relationship to make distance learning more successful, parents need to return to work to pay bills, etc, I do not agree that the reopening should be rushed. I think that it would benefit both the haumāna and kumu to delay the return of haumāna to either mid August or after Labor Day. That would give EVERYONE (DOE, BOE, DOH) time to put pen to paper to lay out a plan for all schools to follow to reopen safely, and it would give the schools and kumu time to properly train on how to handle situations.

"Testimony" was presented stating that surveyed parents said their keiki did not learn as much during the 4th quarter. The simple reason is this, IT DID NOT COUNT! What child is going to do the work if it's not going to affect their grade? Coupled with the fact that most teachers were not properly trained to teach via distance learning, those two reasons are just some of the things that led to unsuccessful distance learning during the 4th quarter. So how are we (kumu) supposed to feel safe and provide a feeling of safety for the haumāna if we are not properly trained or not given proper guidance on how to handle situations during this pandemic?

I understand that the situation during this pandemic is constantly changing, but that doesn't excuse the fact that there has been nothing put down in writing to help guide the schools with reopening safely. The MOU was posted a month ago, and still there is nothing!

I could continue on about how the VOLUNTARY training in distance learning wasn't available to all teachers, or with all the problems that could occur, but I do not want to go on ranting. Speaking as a kumu and as a parent of three young children who are set to return to school, I feel that the reopening of schools is being rushed and do not feel comfortable returning to work without proper guidelines in place for schools to follow. It is irresponsible, and places all kumu, haumāna, and the 'ohana of the kumu and haumāna at risk. I urge you to strongly delay the return of haumāna so that those guidelines can be written for schools to properly prepare. The phrase "adjust to the new norm" is being thrown around often, so I end by asking this question, how are the kumu supposed to help the haumāna adjust to the new norm of school IF WE DON'T KNOW WHAT THE NEW NORM LOOKS LIKE?

Testimony BOE

From: Mari Hokama <mari.hokama@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Mari Hokama
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 11:52 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Members of the Board of Education:

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 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees. I am currently a teacher at an elementary school in Honolulu. We are about a week away from returning to school, and students are expected to return in a few weeks. I am writing to you to express my concerns on the opening of the school year.

I have watched as the number of Covid-19 cases in the state have continued to increase to as high or higher than we saw in March. March is when schools were closed to cope with the pandemic. I have watched as the DOE has tried to come up with a plan to safely reopen schools. However, as a teacher, I have seen the lack of leadership and direction first hand. There is absolutely no plan or safety procedures in place at my school and I do not believe that public schools should be allowed to reopen until we can guarantee that guidelines set forth by the CDC are being followed. It is one thing to have a plan on paper, but another thing to see the plan rolled out effectively in all schools. There is no one monitoring whether each individual school is adhering to the policies agreed upon to safely reopen schools. I can without a doubt say this because my school has nothing in place to effectively welcome all teachers and students safely back on campus. Our school does not have enough PPE or any safety protocols in place. Why is this not being addressed? This is such a critical time and no one is ensuring the safety of all persons involved.

Schools should remain closed for face-to-face teaching until all schools can ensure the safety of all persons on campus. I fear for my well being as well as all families and students who are supposed to return to campus on August 4. I would prefer to keep this letter anonymous and confidential as I have little trust in the leadership of my school and the DOE who have shown that they cannot consistently support teachers in their demand for uncompromising safe school openings.

Thank you for your consideration.

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Testimony BOE

From: Felicia Ferrance <hamakuagirl7@icloud.com> on behalf of Felicia Ferrance
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 11:53 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am writing to oppose the defunding of differentials, Action Item G, that were promised to teachers. We are now facing what will surely be the toughest year of teaching in history. I began preparing for SY 20-21 as soon as this school year ended. The challenge of providing online as well as in class instruction along with managing new safety measures is incredibly complicated, not to mention, risky. Teachers are now on the front lines and this is not the time to cut pay from those who were promised compensation for the extra responsibilities they have taken on. Statistics show that hard-to-staff schools and positions, have been filled when teachers have been offered a decent, living wage. I recently took a position at a hard-to-staff school and while I'm excited to begin my job there, I'm disappointed to learn that I may not be compensated for my extra effort and long commute. After 20 years of teaching in Hawaii, with a masters degree no less, I will again be looking for another way to supplement my income this year.

Please understand, the responsibilities and stressors of teaching have increased ten-fold, this year. I strongly urge you not to defund the differentials.

Sincerely,

Felicia Ferrance

Honoka'a High School

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: David Fischer <djf029@gmail.com> on behalf of David Fischer
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 11:55 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 David Fischer, and I'm submitting testimony as a concerned citizen. I have 3 major concerns when it comes to reopening the schools:

1. Staffing levels

With the best effort, the virus will spread throughout the school; that's inevitable. We already have a teacher shortage here as well. If even 1/50 teachers get infected and have to stay home, do we have the coverage to support that? And since they have to be out until they're clear of the virus, more teachers will be exposed and infected. What happens to the classrooms where there is no teacher available? Asking teachers to report to that sort of environment will destroy morale, and it cannot help but impact the quality of education when they know for a fact that every day they go to work they're risking their lives, or the lives of their family.

2. Alternate plan is putting more onus on the teachers who're already overworked and underpaid

The alternate plan if the outbreak becomes too much is to go completely online again. Part of why it wasn't as effective as it could've been at the end of last year was that there was a lack of time to prepare properly. Teachers being unsure of what was going to happen, then being told to convert the rest of the year that they've already planned to be completely online was almost unfair to expect anyone to do. But the teachers rose to the occasion as best they could. If they could go into the school year with a single plan, instead of having to prepare every lesson for multiple avenues, they can provide a more unified learning experience for the students. Additionally, they would be able to have 1 on 1 conversations with the students a lot easier than if the student has to talk to a teacher about a private question while they're at least 6' away.

3. Potential for PTSD in the students

As it's expected, the virus will spread in the schools. There isn't enough room in the hallways for students to maintain social distancing. And some of them won't take it seriously. When it spreads to the students, they'll take it home to their home where they live with their parents, their aunties and uncles, and their grandparents. The most common cause of new cases is someone getting infected outside the home and infecting the entire household because we have multi-generational homes where social distancing isn't an option. When their grandparents get sick, they have to go to the hospital, and they have a greater than 0 chance of dying. When that happens, how is that student going to feel? How will it affect them in the future?

No child wants to be the one to bring home the cough that kills their grandparents.

I hope that schools remain online only. I understand it's a difficult decision either way, and there are good arguments on both sides of it. I don't envy your position in this. I'm just putting my vote in for moving to an online-only method until an effective vaccine is available for everyone.

Thank you for your consideration,
-David Fischer

Testimony BOE

From: Koji Hayashi <khayashi906@gmail.com> on behalf of Koji Hayashi
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:01 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Dear Board of Education,

My name is Todd Koji Hayashi and I am currently a teacher at Nanakuli Elementary school. 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.

I am writing to you all because I am deeply concerned about the reopening of schools on August 4th. Not only am I concerned for myself and my family, but I am concerned for the students and their families. I personally do not feel prepared enough to create the safest possible learning environment for my students. As teachers, it is our job to always be prepared for our students before they show up to our classroom. Right now, I do not feel that there has been enough time for us to prepare for this new normal we are currently in. Education has changed completely from how it was in February and we need more time to adjust and adapt.

The students are the reason why I became a teacher. They are the reason I make the drive to Nanakuli and work beyond school hours. Their personal safety and well-being has always been my number one priority. I do what I can to ensure that they are safe the entire time that I am their instructor. This feeling of trust is so important between the students and I, as well as their families. If anything happens to them, I carry the responsibility of it.

Right now, I do not feel I can provide that sense of security for them. There are so many variables that we cannot control that jeopardize the health and safety of everyone. There has been a lot of discussion about keeping the students in their "bubble" while they are at school. Our school is trying our best to do that, but the reality is that the students will not stay within their bubble when they are not on campus. When they return to school, they will have interacted with many other people who may or may not be sick. Unknowingly, this student may be putting their classmates at risk, who may then become a danger to their family.

I feel it is unfair to put the same expectations we have for adults, on children as young as 4 years old. I have taught 5th graders and even those students would not be able to consistently maintain 6 feet or keep their masks on indoors. It is horrifying for me to think about the guilt a child would feel if they were the person who infected their loved ones. There has been a lot of valid concerns regarding the social and emotional well-being of the students during this quarantine. On the other hand, if a student ends up being the reason their class or school needs to close, that will certainly cause irreparable social and emotional harm to them.

I am not submitting this testimony because I want to change occupations if changes are not made. I still want to continue to be an educator because I truly enjoy helping students. I just feel we need more time to reopen schools the best way possible. Teachers are responsible for every child in their classroom and we do not want to bring them back into uncertainty. We were taught that one plan is never sufficient in a classroom. You always need a plan B, C, and even D, because things will not always work out how you envisioned it. If we apply that thinking to academics, we certainly need to apply that to safety protocols as well. There just has not been enough time to come up with those plans yet, especially since teachers have not returned to campus.

I urge you to please delay the reopening date and listen to the concerns of parents and educators. If some parents are already saying they want to opt for 100% distance learning, that shows that they do not feel it is safe to return either. We all want the same thing: to safely reopen schools so children can learn and be with their peers again. Unfortunately, we will not be able to accomplish that by August 4th, even with the half days. Education should not take priority over the personal safety of each and every student.

Thank you,
Todd Koji Hayashi

Testimony BOE

From: Karin Miyasato <karinmiyasato@yahoo.com> on behalf of Karin Miyasato
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:03 AM
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 Hawai'i State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017–2021 contractual modifications and conditions work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

Please delay the reopening of schools. Schools are not fully prepared with safety protocols in place and equipment to implement distance learning. We are putting our children and teachers at risk by allowing them to return to school with no clear health guidelines in place. There's no set plan of how will COVID-19 cases be handled when it comes up in our schools. Dr. Anderson mentioned that Covid-19 cases will likely increase when schools reopens, yet we have no definite plans on what schools will do when that happens? I noticed he said "will happen", "not if it happens". That makes me even more concerned of the safety for the children and teachers. How will all the schools provide distance learning when there is a shutdown if there isn't adequate devices for every student? In addition to devices, how will the state provide for internet connectivity for those households who don't have? There are many unanswered questions about safety and implementing distance learning that have not been answered Schools are on edge, along with students and families because there is not a clear and formidable plan ready. Teachers are feeling frustrated that their administration is not supporting them by ensuring a safe environment on campus. Because there are so many uncertainties and feelings of uneasiness amongst students, teachers and families, please consider the delay of reopening our schools until these questions can be answered.

Thank you for time and understanding.
C. Miyasato

Testimony BOE

From: Alison English <alison.english@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Alison English
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:02 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Fwd: Testimont, Action Item H

On Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 11:59 PM Alison English <alison.english@k12.hi.us> wrote:

July 22, 2020

Aloha Board of Education,

I am writing in regards to Action Item H because I am very concerned both as a parent and a teacher about the reopening of our schools without the correct safety measures in place. I feel the safety measures are not clear, or are nonexistent. Furthermore, I doubt that principals have been able to secure all of the necessary sanitation supplies and PPE prior to teachers returning to campus. There are so many unanswered questions and there seems to be a disconnect between the MOU and what principals claim is the policy.

When measures are in place, and it is deemed safe to return, we MUST mandate masks and a 6 foot spacing in our classrooms. If not, we will see both keiki and teachers falling ill. Principals are telling parents they don't need to be worn in class. We believe they do, and the MOU supports that. With many of us teachers considered high risk, this is definitely a concern.

We were told that they would be sanitizing daily, and between classes. I haven't had a classroom cleaner in literally five years. They send someone to take the rubbish maybe once or twice a week if I'm lucky, but mostly we have to clean our own classrooms, although not our kuleana. Who is going to do the sanitizing between classes now? This puts our teachers at even greater risk, especially for those of us that are high risk already. Furthermore, CBA (master agreement) on the bottom of page 23-24, section Z; Non-Professional Duties, which removes cleaning from a teacher's responsibility and states that, "The non-professional chores connected with lunch duty, custodial duties and supervision of students performing custodial duties shall be eliminated from the teachers' job responsibilities." We are not getting hazard pay. In fact, we will be teaching full time AND be expected to provide three days of instruction online in addition for no additional compensation. You can't dump facility sanitation on us too! It is unsafe AND a violation of the CBA.

The DOE keeps citing survey data that says teachers and students are ready to return. I believe this data is old. We haven't answered a survey as a parent since before the numbers started rising. Perhaps we issue a new survey in light of this and query the teachers and parents? Many are unwilling to send their kids. Please take a look at the comments on the live stream. I think your data is from when we all were optimistic on lockdown, before the numbers took a turn for the worse. Can we just ensure that we are READY to receive the students? As it stands now, we certainly are not!

We have seen Covid 19 numbers climb. July has been the worst on record for our state, with cases rising daily. So many of our keiki live in extended family homes with vulnerable kupuna in their homes. We need strict precautions. We have the highest number of multigenerational families in the nation.

We released prisoners over concerns of covid when the numbers were much lower. Now we are going to rush to send keiki back to school as numbers rise? That makes no sense!

Please reconsider either going completely online, or pushing back the start date for student arrivals in person. We need to iron out many issues such as who will disinfect the rooms between classes before they are packed with students and teeming with germs. Right now, my principal says it will be the teacher, or the

students responsible, which I believe is a violation and a safety hazard. How are we going to do that with 5-6 minutes between classes while we prep our next lesson? That is NOT what the MOU states. It puts teachers and students at greater risk. Teachers do not feel protected. We need these safety measures and equipment in place BEFORE students return.

Please reconsider.

Mahalo nui loa,

Alison F. English

45-1038 Kalehua Rd.

Honokaa, Hi. 96727

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Testimony BOE

From: Lorraine Bennett <lorrainebennett@yahoo.com> on behalf of Lorraine Bennett
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:12 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

Testimony 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.**

My name is Lorraine Bennett, I am a Special Education Teacher at Leihoku Elementary School. I teach Kindergarten through Second grade. Currently I have 14 students, 2 para pros (1-1), and an Educational Assistant. This puts 18 people in my classroom not including the speech therapist, OT, and PT.

Since my students come to school everyday, we have to figure out how to keep my classroom at around 10 people. This means 6-7 students will need to be taught elsewhere for part of the day and then switch at some point with the other students in my classroom so we can maintain social distancing.

I desperately need time to plan for this. I also will need to plan for their education when they are not in class, for when they are in class, make sure they have a recess, and get to lunch. I will need to figure out how to make up for the loss of not being with their non-disabled peers and the positive social interactions they gain from them and the classroom activities they will be losing out on.

I need to plan how to train them to distance learn and the various technologies I will need to learn so I can teach them. I need planning time! I need professional development! My students are in a critical period, this is not the time for me to figure it out as I go. I have always prided myself on being ready and being able to come up with creative learning activities at the beginning of the school year for my students. In this time of Covid 19, I cannot rely on those activities as they may not follow our current health guidelines.

I am asking for extra time to plan with my colleagues for an effective start of the school year for my vulnerable students.

It is important for our students to start school when we all feel prepared. This can only happen by delaying the start of school and giving teachers, administrators, and other staff the time to plan and feel prepared.

We are already feeling worried and scared about going back and I have taken the time to make sure my will is updated.

Please give schools the time they need to plan and effectively implement the opening of schools.

Thank you!

Lorraine Bennett

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

Testimony BOE

From: B Kuroiwa <bckuro@yahoo.com> on behalf of B Kuroiwa
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:14 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Do Not Open Schools on Aug 4th

I am a 1st grade teacher and in the at risk group as I have taught for 33 years in the State. HIDOE/DOH/BOE needs to come up with clear guidelines on how to return back to school safely with all scenarios thought out. What will happen if a student/teacher/faculty tests positive. Dr. Kishimoto said it would be relayed to DOH. I'm very nervous since HPD had a positive case on Saturday, 90 officers on administrative leave and will be tested on Wednesday. That's 4 days since they were notified. How many other interactions have they had? What will happen in schools? It took DOH this long to trace, notify and set up testing?

We need time to plan this out before students arrive on campus. It should be done during the first 2 weeks of school without students and not during our summer break. We need adequate training. The DOE is saying we will receive training 2 days before school starts, then the students will be on campus and training will continue after they leave. They will be on campus from 8:00 am until 12:20 pm everyday...leaving us scrambling to figure it out as students are already present. Is this going to be SAFE for all?

Temperature checks, questionnaires should all be mandated for parents to complete weekly regarding their child's health upon return to school. Private companies are doing temperature checks, installed barriers, mandated masks and/or face shields. They are protected. We are not.

Other countries that have re-opened are seeing surges in COVID-19 cases among students.

I'm asking to push the opening of schools back. Do a phased approach. Give us the time to plan out how we're going to Blended Learning/Flipped Classroom instruction. 2 days before school isn't enough time.

Thank you.

Cheryl Kuroiwa
Teacher
Grade 1
33 years with the DOE

Testimony BOE

From: E <emmaholland47@gmail.com> on behalf of E
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:16 AM
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 a certified special education teacher and am beginning my fourth year teaching in the state of Hawaii. I first was attracted to move to the state when I learned of the critical shortage of special education teachers the state faced then, and continues to face. The classroom I have come to love had previously experienced a high number of turnover of teachers, leaving parents and students upset and concerned to find a stable teacher for consistency and progress for their children.

I love my job and enjoy living in Hawaii. While I enjoy it, it is not to say my time here has been without hardship, including experiencing the high cost of living, especially compared to other states. The job positions these pay differentials affect require teachers to have specialized skills often requiring additional and/or advanced degrees. Along with paying back student loans from higher education pursued, the pay differentials attract and retain individuals who have invested their time and careers in these specialized areas, to our wonderful, yet costly state to live in. When you look up teaching in Hawaii, some of the first topics that appear include our shortages and our ranking as the lowest teacher salaries when compared to cost of living. In this critical time where we need to recover and enhance the learning of our students, now is not the time to deter teachers to the state or positions and by doing so dismantle the evident progress the pay differentials have made in the seven short months they have been in affect.

Not only am I appreciative of the pay differential and the impact it has had on my life so far, but I am also extremely pleased to learn of its success in both retaining teachers and filling positions and vital yet hard to fill positions. While I recognize these times are unprecedented and hard for all, I ask you to please keep this pay differential that is helping to improve a problem the state has faced for many years before. It is now more than ever that our vulnerable population, our students in special education, need qualified educators to recoup the regression experienced. Our need for dedicated and *qualified* teachers to help bridge these gaps and recoup skills and progress, and use our degrees specializing in these skills to differentiate, adapt, and individualize our instruction in the many new formats and platforms we are using, is more imperative now more than ever. While times are hard, I would urge you to consider keeping pay differentials as an investment in the education of our keiki who need it most right now.

As our students have higher rates of regression in comparison to their peers in general education, some of us teachers have already been back in the classroom this summer, instructing and establishing new and safe norms within our rooms with Extended School Year (ESY) Services. It is known and documented our students need effective and frequent instruction; and our students not only receive ESY, but are also part of the student population considered “most vulnerable” and in need of as much in school instruction as possible. As deemed safe to do so, it is special education teachers who have taught this summer and who will continue to be teaching in face to face setting, often having more hours with students on campus / face to face learning than our colleagues teaching general education. These bring up not only additional hours with students face to face, but also the predominate factors of health, sanitation, exposure risk, etc. all educators are factoring into considerations as we move forward in this time. Before the pandemic, as earlier stated, the state struggled to

both keep and fill these positions. As we work within our new normal and have our most vulnerable population on campus the most, the pay differential is not just an investment, but a vital retention tool for us as educators to stay in these demanding positions. Now is the time pay differentials will be needed; postponing the differentials during this difficult, demanding, and unprecedented time would be risking the retention of the educators needed more than ever.

As just one special education educator facing the many unknowns and challenges of our profession in this time, I urge you to keep the pay differentials to not only continue the progress of teacher retention and filled teaching positions, but also as an investment to our students, and through them, the future adult citizens of our state.

Thank you for your time,
E. Holland

Testimony BOE

From: kazuyo sugiyama <kazuyosugi@gmail.com> on behalf of kazuyo sugiyama
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:16 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Dear BOE 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 Kazuyo Kitaguchi and I am a teacher at Roosevelt High School. I already testified about social distancing guidelines in our classroom previously. I appreciate that you took our (teachers, students, parents and communities) concerns seriously and agreed to have six feet [distance.in](#) our classrooms. However, I must mention again that I will have 181 students for my subject classes next school year and 198 students in total including my advisory students. Our school administration chose the bell schedule that half of the students present at school on face-to-face instruction days. That causes 21 students to be in my classroom and it will be obviously not possible to keep six feet social distancing. Therefore, we were told that we will have to give up our classroom furniture and equipment to make rooms to place more students' desks. It will be a huge work not only for myself but also for our custodians. We will need more time to set up our classroom with collaboration with administration and custodians.

Moreover, there was a misleading comment that Dr. Kishimoto talked about distance learning at the news conference on July 20th. I believe that students are able to learn through distance learning with proper settings and appropriate help. They didn't access online much during the distance learning period from March through May because of the 'no-grade/no new contents' setting that DOE set. I understand that it was necessary to set it up that way due to sudden school closure; however, our new school year will be different. Students can learn each subject well by distance learning knowing that their work will be assessed properly. Also, they can learn new contents to stimulate their minds. However, many teachers need to be educated about a new platform, Black Board, more online tools for distance learning.

We only have four working days before school reopening on August 4th. We need more "physical" time to set our classrooms up for safer conditions, a training time for detailed protocol for managing our classroom safely and a time to collaborate with administration for mutual understandings.

We feel that we have to write our wills before going back to our classroom for teaching our students under current unsafe conditions. My students told me that they are scared to come back to school if teachers feel unsafe there. Both teachers and students need to feel secure for effective teaching and learning. Please consider delaying school reopening for face-to-face instructions for the above reasons. Thank you so much.

Sincerely,
Kazuyo Kitaguchi

Testimony BOE

From: S. Nonaka <missnonaka@msn.com> on behalf of S. Nonaka
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:17 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: S. Nonaka
Subject: Testimony

Dear Board of Education Leaders,

I am writing to you as a Kindergarten teacher, a mother of two young children, and a wife of a Police Officer, 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.](#)

We as a family are anxious, scared and worried about our health and safety of our friends, students, and other family members especially those who are older and have health issues.

As a teacher, we are not prepared. We can whip together a welcoming classroom in 4 days including working through the weekends with all family members on deck. But we are not ready, we cannot guarantee our families that we are going to keep them safe not with only 4 days to prepare. We know how to teach students, how to care for the social needs of young children, where to find resources for students when they are sad, hungry or forgot their slippers at home. We do not know how to check to see if a child is not feeling well, (and they have a mask covering 50% or more of their face), how to clean books and other school materials properly and what disinfectants are safe to use around when children are present. We ALL will be responsible to keep them safe and healthy, but I do not know how to protect them from an invisible virus.

At our school, our new Principal is trying. She is asking us to do what's best for our students. HSTA stood together and fought for 6 foot distancing, the next day an email was waiting for us asking to meet and allow the principal to ask for 3 foot distancing in the cafeteria with 3 other grade levels, without any masks on! She told us it's ok to mix students from other classrooms up to 10 people, what happened to keep everyone in a bubble? She said it's ok that children play on the same playground equipment or classroom materials and books as long as it's people in our own bubble. This cannot be safe.

School finishes at 2pm, we will have staggered pick up times. Our Kindergarten and First graders will be excused at 2 pm, teachers will volunteer our time to make sure they get to their parents waiting in the parking lot, in their car safely. I don't think it'll take 15 minutes, 20 minutes. There will be 50 or more students to find cars for, not to forget there will be 4 other grades of students before us. The remaining time will be used to clean and disinfect, we have 3 full time custodians for a school of almost 500 students! I need to leave for home at 3pm, my son and I need to race home to take a bath, wipe down the car then pick up my 3 year old from daycare. I can't go back to my classroom, which is what I usually did, to plan for the next day or correct work. I can't bring work home with me, it's not safe. We need time to figure out when all of this is going to happen and get done.

My son loves school. He started school at 2 years old at preschool. He is now anxious and afraid to go back to school. His teacher, principal, Mayor, President said we are shutting down schools. It is not safe. Now we are telling children to go back to school? We need time to figure out how to support these students emotional and behavioral needs. We have 1 counselor for Pre-K through 5th grade in a school of almost 500 students. We need help, help train our teachers on how to comfort students to make sure they are okay.

As a Police Officers wife, we as a family talk about being prepared for emergencies, scary confrontations, and the value and importance of helping others.

Please help our teachers, our families. I love being a teacher, I want to teach and be in my classroom, but I am not trained in disinfecting to kill the virus, I am not trained on how to glance at a student and see if they are healthy, or how to put on or take off masks, I am not trained on how to use an online platform to communicate with my families in a shutdown, I am not trained on how to comfort a student that things will get better with this situation, school with masks, no "normal recess or lunch", stay away from your teachers and friends. We need more time to unite and work together to make school the safe place for everyone, as it should be.

Thank you for your time. And I would appreciate your support.
Spence Irimata

Testimony BOE

From: Debra Yamakawa <debyamakawa@gmail.com> on behalf of Debra Yamakawa
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:19 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for Meeting on July 23, 2020, Agenda Item IV - G and H (comment)

Honorable Board Members,

I oppose the temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in hard-to-staff geographical locations, special education and Hawaiian Language Immersion.

I returned to work in this hard-to-staff location because I do like working with these students. However, due to the commuting distance and challenges working in this location, I was going to try and transfer to another school closer to home, but didn't because of the extra compensation.

I have worked in other locations, and teaching is a challenging job no matter what, but in the hard-to-fill locations it is even more challenging. Many teachers who start working in these locations usually don't last more than 5 year, many transfer out or leave the profession in less. For the teachers who stay, the challenge is continuously helping and training the new teachers.

Many teachers either stayed in a hard-to-staff school, transferred into one, or transferred into a special education or Hawaiian Language Immersion school, because of this extra compensation. Suspending this will have teachers attempting to transfer out of these positions in this coming school year.

I am grateful to have a job, and I understand the challenges our State is going through due to COVID-19. I have experienced losing my job twice in my lifetime, so I understand what so many unemployed are going through. I have friends and family members who have been laid off. But suspending this funding will only further hurt the quality of education in these areas.

As for our reopening for SY 2020-21, I don't feel that there is enough being done to keep students, faculty and staff safe. It's interesting that prior to entering a medical facility, you need to have temperature checks and health screening, but this won't happen in schools. Even prior to COVID-19, parents will give a child with a fever Tylenol and send them to school, or just send them with the fever. In secondary schools, there aren't these "Bubble" that Dr. Anderson spoke of, students will be rotating out of and into various classes, which won't be disinfected between classes because there isn't enough staff to do this. I would welcome the board members to sit in classes at each school for a day to help us feel that the conditions in all schools are safe.

Will we have enough substitute teachers to cover when teachers are out sick? What happens if I am exposed to another teacher who was exposed to a student with COVID-19, do we all stay home for 14 days? How will we be notified when a student, teacher, administrator or faculty person gets COVID-19? Will families be required to notify the school if their child or another family member becomes ill with COVID-19? Do I need to get tested each time I stay home sick in order to be cleared to return to work?

My hope is that no student or teacher becomes severely ill, die or permanently disabled from catching COVID-19 in school. We need to open schools, but we need to do it with safety as a priority, above providing childcare. Let us remember, many teachers are parents too.

Thank you for your time, stay healthy and safe!
Debra Yamakawa, Tech Coordinator

Nanakuli High and Intermediate school

Testimony BOE

From: Cheryl Hamane <hamanec002@gmail.com> on behalf of Cheryl Hamane
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:21 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Dear BOE,

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.](#)

At this time, as an educator I fear for the safety of all school employees and the students as they are set to return on 8/4. With our state numbers increasing daily, I feel it is not safe. Our daily numbers are significantly higher than when schools were closed down in mid March.

As you hold your virtual meeting today, reflect on any you are doing so. Is it due to safety reasons? No 6 feet social distancing? Gathering in groups larger than 10?? If that is the reason why your meeting is being held, what makes you think it's safe for schools to reopen? With hundreds of kids returning on campus to classrooms with poor air circulation and in an enclosed space.

Also, consistent safety procedures are not set in place by the DOE and DOH if a case were to occur on campus? What would happen if a school did have a case? Would an entire class be shut down or an entire school? If so, will teachers have to use their own personal sick leave to self quarantine for the 14 days? What if someone in a child's home is infected, does that carryover you the rest of that class to quarantine as well? How do you keep children from only staying within their family bubble? Don't you think it would be difficult when many of them have not seen their friends in nearly 5 months? If adults can't do this, what makes you think it would be easier for kids? Also, there is the situation where wearing a mask will not be enforced? As well as training for teachers to do effective distance learning in the case of a shutdown. Which chances are highly probable. The DOE had 4 months to create an effective and safe plan to reopen schools and have failed miserably. If you fully support teachers and the Keoki of Hawaii, I highly urge you to stop the reopening of schools on 8/4 until better plans and safety procedures and protocols are set in place.

Sincerely,
Cheryl Caffrey
Teacher, Mililani 'Ike Elementary

Sent from my iPhone

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Alison English <alison.english@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Alison English
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:23 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony, Action Item G

Aloha,

I am writing in regards to Action Item G, Funding of Teacher Differentials. I am asking that you continue to fund these differentials for our hard to staff schools. The differentials have cut the teacher shortage by 25%! That is very significant. I have been a dedicated teacher for twenty five years in a shortage area at my extremely rural, Title One school. When we finally received the differential for the first time this year, it made a huge difference in my life. I am a single parent. I have four children. I work 4-5 jobs year round to make ends meet. This differential came just as my car had broken down after serving me for nearly twenty years. Without the differential, I can't afford the payment! Now that we will be teaching full time as well as providing three days of online work, we will be putting in many more hours with no extra compensation. To take this differential away would add insult to injury. We just won't have time for that fifth or sixth job!

I started teaching making 23K right out of UH. I maxed out on the pay scale years ago. I stay because I love the students and cherish my job. However, without the differential, the new stresses, hazards and extra work associated with Covid 19 make it difficult to remain in the profession and will exacerbate the teacher shortage problem.

We should be looking to increase teacher pay and expand loan forgiveness programs while we put our lives on the line. Please kokua and continue to fund the hard to staff differential. The keiki are counting on you to keep a qualified teacher in the classroom.

Mahalo nui loa,

Alison F. English

45-1038 Kalehua Rd.

Honokaa, Hi. 96727

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Testimony BOE

From: Stacy Julson <sjulsonteaches@icloud.com> on behalf of Stacy Julson
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:32 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony- Align school planning to Gov. Ige's extension til September 1

A modified school in-person start schedule is a sensible, balanced approach. As a parent of four, I fully support decisions for the children of others made with highest regard for the severity of COVID19. Further, a delay in start date provides advantages which align best with State of HI leadership.

The Action Team 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.** should not ignore that children unfortunately require similar confinement and parental guidance that school personnel cannot guarantee outside the home under these very real conditions of global pandemic. Our nation's initial slow pandemic response in the White House is one not to be absorbed at the state level.

Accountability to full health and safety measure is paramount.

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: marvsaun@hawaii.rr.com
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:33 AM
To: 'testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov'
Subject: Testimony

I am presenting 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 Sandra Takara. I am a classroom teacher at Aliamanu Elementary and have been teaching for 35 years. Schools are not ready to reopen because there are so many questions that have not been answered regarding the health and safety of teachers and students. Although teachers are setting up their classroom to determine if they can meet the 6 feet distance between students, details regarding sanitization of the class, provision of sanitization supplies, PPEs for class, etc. have not been received. In my grade level, my fellow teachers are panicked regarding COVID-19. It has changed the dynamics in how we interact with each other. There is a great concern for safety for ourselves, our family, and our students. This virus is a demon we cannot see.

Secondly teachers have not been adequately trained to effectively carry out the new instructional model nor have they been given adequate time to brainstorm, reorganize, pace, and familiarize themselves with possibly new curriculum and/or innovative ideas. Teaching is not simply opening up a book and doing pages.

When I get ready for the new school year, I usually have my class roster by now. I am able to do a strategic seating arrangement, get the room organized for the class routines, prepare the beginning of the year papers, assessments, and lessons and activities. However, this year with about a week and a half before students come, I don't even have a class roster because my school is still figuring out how many students will be attending and how many will be doing full distance learning. I don't even know how many students I will have per day.

Within the month of July my school made the decision to reopen with a Blended Instructional Model. Our teachers still do not fully understand the scope of this new Blended Instructional Model. We do not know exactly what it entails. We need to know the details so we can plan and implement the instructional model effectively.

My experience with distance learning during the school closure from April – May 2020 was that I was not prepared to do it. I had to use distance learning while learning about it out at the same time. I learned what I needed in order to get through the day. Students sent their work to me online in a disorganized fashion because they did not know how to submit it. I was learning how to structure and organize my online class with piece meal information from peers. My time was not used efficiently. I spent many hours using a trial and error process. Since then, I still have not had any training on how to carry out distance learning except to REVIEW the Acellus Distance Learning curriculum. Is this what the Department of Education considers training?

When the Department of Education rolls out new things, teachers need training on the HOW TOs and TIME needs to be given to learn and familiarize themselves with the new. Time is needed to REORGANIZE the curriculum, and to REPACE WHAT WE TEACH so that we are efficient and effective with our students. However, past practice has shown that the Department of Education rolls out many new things but does not provide adequate time for teachers to effectively implement them. Don't make the same mistake.

Pushing back the reopening of school to address health and safety and other necessary things to implement a new instructional model during this COVID-19 pandemic, is a prudent

decision. Schools on the mainland recognize this and have set their reopening date to after Labor Day. Reopening later will allow schools to be thorough and work out the details needed to safely return to school. I am sure the Department of Education and the Board of Education support and encourage schools to have a well-planned and efficient instructional model. Don't rush the process. Think things out carefully. Work out the details so that schools are safe and effective for everyone, especially our students.

Testimony BOE

From: Jane Torricer <jane.torricer@gmail.com> on behalf of Jane Torricer
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:35 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

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

My name is Jane Torricer, 6th grade teacher at Keaau Middle School on Hawaii Island. I am also a mother of three beautiful children, two of which attend Chiefess Kapiolani Elementary School.

We are usually excited to go back, but this time there is much hesitation in the middle of this pandemic. Everyone else in our household is very much healthy, except for my son who has asthma. My husband and I made a difficult decision to keep our children home until we can be assured that our children can be safe to return to school. Our choice was not easy, as we are sacrificing work schedules, their ability to socialize with friends, and our health and well being. I, on the other hand, have to return to work. I truly enjoy teaching and it is our main source of income. My concern is if I get sick, I may pass it along to my children. While my husband, my daughters, and I might be okay, it is my son that I am most worried about. He has been hospitalized in the past just because a simple virus complicated his ability to breathe. I also have elderly parents who have sensitive immune systems that could be compromised if exposed to a virus.

To me, academic rigor and relationships mean nothing if people get sick and die. It would be wise to delay the start of the school year in-person until everyone's health and safety can be assured.

Testimony BOE

From: Katie Watanabe <watakatie808@gmail.com> on behalf of Katie Watanabe
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:36 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am testifying on the action listed below:

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 Katie Watanabe. I am a 1st grade teacher at Alvah Scott Elementary. Alvah Scott is a Title 1 school and I have taught there for 3 years now.

The state's current plan to reopen schools is irresponsible, reckless, and unorganized. State officials keep bringing up the "social and emotional learning" that students need and as a classroom teacher I am fully aware of that. However, if social and emotional learning is so important to state officials, why do public schools not have access to enough counselors needed? Why do Title 1 schools who obviously need more counselors to deal with specific issues, have to fight for it? Why are we lacking in resources for students with mental health issues or those in abusive households? Also, if the state really did care, they would be working to solve these issues rather than using them to support their personal agenda.

To continue, the statistics brought up about the likelihood a child can contract covid is thrown around as a reason we can reopen, however, I don't believe anyone has stopped to think about if it was their child. If your own child, grandchild, niece, or nephew just happened to be part of that "small percentage" would you feel differently? Would it make you feel differently to see them in a hospital bed on a ventilator because they can no longer breathe on their own? That will be the reality for some of my students. It is common knowledge that children in low-income households do not have access to good healthcare, so some parents may not even have the option of taking their child to a hospital. I am not a yet a parent, but even I understand that the pain of losing a child is not something a parent should have to endure, especially if the situation could have been avoided.

I mention this because I want those reading my testimony to understand how much I care about my kids. I don't just call them my students, they are my kids. I care about them and want to see them succeed. That is the primary reason I became a teacher in the first place. Knowing how much I care about my students, please do not mistake my opposition to reopen as laziness. If the circumstances were different and we no longer had any new cases, I would be more than willing to return to my class of 25 students. However, that is obviously not the case. You cannot send teachers back knowing the dangers that await them and their students upon reopening. I am not saying that schools should remain closed, but rather that we should reopen in phases. To start with distance learning first quarter, a possible hybrid model second quarter, and hopefully return to face-to-face in the third and fourth quarters.

Teachers also need to be trained. The training that was provided for us was basic and did not help us to feel prepared to teach in a situation such as this. If we feel unsafe and unprepared, it is not from a lack of trying as the superintendent alluded to. We were NOT given ample opportunity to be trained.

Only a few months ago, teachers were among the groups deemed essential for the state to keep running. What happened to that mindset? If we were really considered “essential”, like so many other workers, why are we being treated as expendable? In my opinion, it appears that the state needs us more than we need it. Teachers could walk out tomorrow and let the state try, and mostly likely fail, to figure out what to do to fill the void. However, we won’t do that, because we care so much for our students. If you want to avoid losing more teachers (in the middle of a teacher shortage might I add), you need to find a new plan.

You are our leaders, please start acting like it.

Mahalo for your time

-Katie Watanabe

Testimony BOE

From: Dee Wong <deardee@gmail.com> on behalf of Dee Wong
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:36 AM
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.

My name is Dee Wong, a special education preschool teacher at Maemae elementary school. My younger son also attends Maemae. I am very concerned about the safety for me to return to work and to send my kid back to school; and I have questions regarding the implementation of distance learning for parents who like to keep their children home for health and safety reasons.

Safety should be the priority before education planning. These would be my questions for DOE and BOE:

- 1) What is the plan when we have students/staff whose family members are under COVID quarantine?
 - * Will DOH notify the school?
 - * if that student/staff already came to school, will the whole class be asked to quarantine?
- 2) Are we allowing students/staff with family members under travel quarantine to attend school? Will staff/parents be required to complete a weekly travel (quarantine) survey?
- 3) If a student/staff is tested positive...
 - * what is the plan? school shutdown? whole school students, staff and their family go under quarantine?
 - * will school move to distance learning the next day? When will teachers be trained?
- 4) As a preschool special education teacher, it is impossible to maintain the social distancing when we are changing diapers, potty-training kids, or providing students with hand-over-hand assistance. Are we (along with classroom aides) going to get training for the standard practice procedures to keep everybody safe?
- 5) It is hard for most special education preschool children or children with developmental delays or Autism to keep face masks or face shield on. Most of them also are not able to keep social distancing. Does DOE or BOE have any good practical suggestions to keep these vulnerable children safe (such as smaller class size with total headcount less than 10; ESY policy this summer)

I am really worried about my students' safety after watching a recent Japanese news; a Preschool in Tokyo had COVID-19 outbreak and all 20 preschoolers were infected with COVID19. It started with just one staff, then it spread to the other staff and the entire class and their families.

- 6) Teachers will need more time to prepare quality distance learning for families choosing to keep their kids at home. As a special education teacher, I will need time to plan a quality distance learning plan addressing my students' IEP goals. For families who are seeking 100-percent distance learning, what are their/our options?

Overall, I think school teachers and DOE would require a longer time to prepare a safe returning plan with all the details (my questions #1-3) and quality distance learning options. Special education staff also need more time to be trained so we can better protect our students, their families, us and our families. Please consider a late return. We want students to be educated in a safe environment, and we want to help our students when we feel safe.

Thank you for your time

Dee Wong
Maemae Elementary Preschool Teacher

Testimony BOE

From: Nohea Stibbard <noheas@gmail.com> on behalf of Nohea Stibbard
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:42 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha e ka BOE,

I am testifying on Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year. My name is Nohea Stibbard and I am speaking as both a teacher and a parent. I teach at Ke Kula Kaiapuni o Hau'ula and my children attend Kahuku High & Intermediate School and Kamehameha - Kapālama. I earned a BBA in Accounting, a Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Teacher Education - Elementary Ed and a Masters of Education in Curriculum Studies from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.

As a parent and teacher, I am urging the members of the Board of Education to reject the Department of Education's request to a temporary discontinuance of the previously pledged differentials. As a current Hawaiian immersion teacher, I am one of the beneficiaries of the shortage differentials as Hawaiian immersion schools are one of the three areas with the **worst** teacher shortages. Just knowing that special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs are labeled as areas with the worst teacher shortages should be enough of a reason to continue the differentials. However, there is data showing that these differentials were highly effective and therefore it should continue!

As a parent, while I was working at jobs outside of the DOE or working on my degrees of higher education, I saw first hand the teacher shortages in my own children's Hawaiian immersion programs. There were multiple emergency hires each year and my oldest is now 15 years old. This does not help with the consistency within the program. I have also seen many licensed teachers leave for higher paying education jobs outside of the DOE and many also did not continue with an education career due to the minimal pay and other reasons. It is imperative that the DOE support these areas of education to ensure proper staffing and strong longevity of these programs.

Four years ago, due to the continued shortages I observed as a parent in my children's school, I decided to return to the classroom and teach in the Hawaiian immersion program that they attended. I left a good State job and the reality is that, even with the differential that I received this past school year, it still does not match what I was previously making! People thought I was crazy leaving my good paying State job to return to the classroom. However, teaching is something I love and I am happy to be with the students in the classroom and contribute to making a difference in their lives and their Hawaiian immersion journey. Although the differential still does not match the salary of my job that I left 4 years ago, receiving it definitely shows me that the DOE values our program and understands the challenges of teachers who are working in the immersion programs. It is a good start on their end but more needs to be done. The after work hours that I put into immersion teaching is unbelievable but I do it because the program is important to me. If you are not an Hawaiian immersion teacher working on the front lines, you need to understand how unequal the support is of Hawaiian immersion in comparison to the English medium programs in the State of Hawai'i. And because of this continued inequity, it is the front-line Hawaiian immersion teachers that are carrying this burden. For example, we don't have the same technology options that teachers in the English programs have and if you haven't noticed this before, this inequity was even more glaring during quarter 4 of the 2019-2020 school year. While English medium teachers could assign curriculum as easy as clicking buttons and pressing enter for distance learning, we immersion teachers had to practically build our own educational platform delivery in such a short time and it depended on

if the individual had the capacity to do this. This is just one example of the imbalance that Hawaiian immersion faces in the State.

So again, please reject the Department of Education's request for a temporary discontinuance of the previously pledged differentials. We are looking to the Board's leadership on this serious issue.

Sincerely,
Nohea Stibbard

Testimony BOE

From: Iwalani Torricer <largestarfish5@gmail.com> on behalf of Iwalani Torricer
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:43 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: DELAY SCHOOL FOR STUDENTS FOR HEALTH SAFETY

Dear BOE,

I've listened to every side of the coin and heard so many perspectives regarding the reopening of school. Please for our health safety, please I beg you to delay the return to school date for students. I believe teachers need to return to campus to plan and prepare for a safe reopening of school. Once we have everything in place and have taken every possible precaution, then invite students back to campus. It seems to me the DOE, Dr. Kishimoto, makes announcements for a big idea, but really has zero details on how to make this happen. I feel the DOE and BOE have forgotten what it's like to be on a school campus and the daily going-ons in a day. I have listed my reasons you need to consider:

- Many students ride the bus. **HOW ARE STUDENTS GOING TO BE IN "THE OHANA BUBBLE" ON THE BUS AND NOT HAVE CONTACT WITH OTHER STUDENTS?** There's now contact between students in different homeroom classes and grade levels.
- Once on campus, in the morning before the school bell rings to start the day students socialize with their friends from other homeroom classes and grade levels. At my school, as of yesterday administration has not figured out how students will social distance before school because they measured outside of our classrooms and there's not enough space for 19 students to be 6 feet apart. **HOW ARE STUDENTS GOING TO SOCIAL DISTANCE IN THE MORNING BETWEEN GETTING DROPPED OFF AND THE MORNING SCHOOL BELL RINGING?**
- There's so much talk about this "ohana bubble", realistic that will not work. Students are pulled out for other services, such as Speech Therapy, etc. During that time, they work in small groups with students from other homeroom classes. **WHAT HAPPENS WHEN STUDENTS RETURN FROM THEIR SPECIAL SERVICES? THEY HAVE NOW HAD CONTACT WITH OTHER STUDENTS FROM OTHER CLASSES, NOW WHAT HAPPENS?**
- Dr. Kishimoto and the DOH think that students will be with one teacher. Again that is not realistic! **DO YOU EXPECT TEACHERS TO NOT HAVE A 15 MINUTE BREAK DURING RECESS (TO USE THE RESTROOM AND COMPLETE OTHER NON INSTRUCTIONAL DUTIES)? DO YOU ALSO EXPECT TEACHERS TO NOT HAVE A DUTY FREE LUNCH? WOULD YOU BE ABLE TO GO OVER 6 HOURS WITHOUT USING THE RESTROOM?**
- Currently my school does not know what to do with students during recess. **WHAT'S YOUR SOLUTION? ARE TEACHERS EXPECTED TO GIVE UP OUR BREAK TIME AND LUNCH TIME TO SUPERVISE STUDENTS DURING NON INSTRUCTIONAL TIME?**
- **ARE STUDENTS EXPECTED TO SIT IN THEIR SEAT FOR THE ENTIRE DAY?** Imagine your workspace, without any extra space to spread out or stretch. Due to the fact my school is squeezing in 19 students in our classroom because they measured desks 6 feet apart. I was hoping to at least give my students a little more space in their spot so they can have the option of standing or sitting on the carpet next to their desk. But I can't do that because the class sizes are approximately 3 to 5 less students than usual. Let's get real, due to funding there's no extra teaching lines to hire more teachers to lessen the amount of students in a homeroom class. **IF MORE STUDENTS ENROLL, THEN WHAT WILL HAPPEN?**
- I'm still unsure of the detailed plan if a student, teacher, staff, and/or parent of a student on campus tests positive. **WHY IS THERE NO DETAILED PROCEDURE IF THERE'S A POSITIVE CASE FROM A STUDENT, FACULTY, STAFF, OR PARENT OF A STUDENT?**

- Every news announcement and article from the DOE and DOH speak about reopening schools to benefit parents so they can return to work and for the social well being of students. **WHY CAN'T ANY OF YOU FOR ONCE THINK, WHAT ABOUT THE HEALTH SAFETY OF TEACHERS? NAME ONE WAY YOU ARE PROVIDING A SAFE WORKING ENVIRONMENT FOR TEACHERS.**
- It was suggested that students eat their snack outside of the classroom. Sounds like a good plan, but at my school it was measured that only 10 spots 6 feet apart are available for students to sit. However, I have 19 students. **SHOULD I PLACE THE OTHER 9 STUDENTS IN THE SUN? WOULD YOU BE OKAY IF IT'S YOUR CHILD ASSIGNED TO THE SPOT IN THE SUN SO EVERYDAY THEY HAVE TO EAT THEIR SNACK IN THE SUN?** Once again, it sounds good, but come to the school campus and you will hear students complaining that they are sitting and eating their snack in the sun, trust me. I love being outdoors and if the kids are not playing, they don't want to just sit in the sun.
- I've seen that the DOE announced sports may start August 19th. **WHY CAN FOOTBALL AND VOLLEYBALL STUDENTS PRACTICE THEIR SPORT 5 DAYS A WEEK BUT WILL NOT BE ON CAMPUS FOR LEARNING 5 DAYS A WEEK? SO HOW ARE YOU KEEP THE PLAYERS SAFE AND SOCIAL DISTANCING?**

I would love to return to school with my students. But it's just not realistic! IT'S JUST NOT SAFE FOR OUR HEALTH. Are you waiting for a teacher and student to die before you care. The fact that it's only about the welfare of parents returning to work and student needs, what about the adults that are on campus who want to provide for our students. **We need school, we need teachers to make that happen. If the DOE, DOH, and BOE don't do your part to keep teachers healthy, there is no school. It's that simple. Dr. Kishimoto needs to show us teachers how we can put her plan into action. Show us what a typical day will look like for an elementary student, a middle school student, and a high school student. HAVE ANY OF YOU EVEN SPOKEN TO STUDENTS AS TO WHAT THEY DO IN SCHOOL DURING THE ENTIRE DAY? I suggest you all walk in the day of a teacher and see how much contact students have with other students. See how many times you need to repeat yourself to students to social distance. See how hard it is to go more than 6 hours and not use the restroom. Go more than 6 hours without a break.**

AND ONE MORE THING THAT NEEDS TO BE CONSIDERED. DR. KISHIMOTO CLAIMS THAT PARENTS FEEL DISTANCE LEARNING DID NOT WORK. HOW ABOUT STATING THE FACT THAT DISTANCE LEARNING WAS OPTIONAL DURING 4TH QUARTER. STUDENTS WERE GIVEN REVIEW AND ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES, NOT ACTUAL CURRICULUM. SO THINK ABOUT IT, IF WE WERE DOING ACTUAL CURRICULUM FOR DISTANCE LEARNING IN THE FALL, STUDENTS WOULD BE INVOLVED.

PLEASE CARE ABOUT TEACHERS! DON'T JUST SAY YOU DO, ACTUAL WALK IN OUR SHOES AND TRY TO UNDERSTAND THE HEALTH RISK YOU ARE PUTTING US IN. PLEASE DELAY THE RETURN DATE FOR STUDENTS SO TEACHERS CAN PREPARE AND PLAN FOR A REOPENING SO ALL PRECAUTIONS CAN BE IN PLACE (BECAUSE RIGHT NOT ALL PRECAUTIONS ARE NOT SET OR PUT IN PLACE). THIS IS NOT ABOUT MAKING PARENTS HAPPY AND YOURSELVES LOOK GOOD TO THE WORLD THAT HAWAII REOPENED SCHOOLS FIRST. THIS IS ABOUT BEING ABLE TO STAY ALIVE! PLEASE DO YOUR RESEARCH, SUMMER CAMPS OPENED ON THE MAINLAND AND TOOK EVERY PRECAUTION, SO THEY THOUGHT. YET THEIR CAMPERS WERE EXPOSED AND TESTED POSITIVE.

I INVITED ALL OF YOU IN THE SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE, DOH, AND BOE TO MOVE YOUR OFFICE TO OUR CLASSROOMS AND EXPOSE YOURSELVES TO DAILY CONTACT WITH STUDENTS AND OTHER FACULTY AND STAFF MEMBERS.

Please delay the return date for students so teachers can report back to campus to plan and prepare to receive students and have all the precautions in place.

Testimony BOE

From: Oceya Mcquillan <oceya.mcquillan@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Oceya Mcquillan
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:44 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony on Readiness to Reopen Schools

Aloha I am an educator, a special education teacher at a hard to staff school. I am a single mother and sole provider for my family. I am enrolled in national boards and possess my masters degree in education. These accomplishments are all a part of who I am. I want to return to school to teach because it is my passion. I want to do it when it is safe. It is not currently safe. I am writing my will as part of back to school planning.

There are many needs to be addressed that I and many others are waiting for.

I will be in at least 5 classrooms daily. That is not a bubble for the students, their family, staff, and myself. We do not have the training, personal, protective gear, supplies, or training to force school doors open before it is safe.

We are putting the lives of students, staff and families at risk during a surge in covid cases. There is ongoing research to determine transmission, long term effects, and who it affects. The message is clear that teachers are expected to return to classrooms without the proper safety to help recharge the economy, take a pay cut because the loss of tourism dollars, and take an active role in creating protocols of health and safety for classrooms. We are not ready. What happened to two weeks virus free. We are not ready. Who is responsible if sickness and death is traced back to the school? We are not ready. What happens when there is a suspected case, a confirmed case? We are not ready. We closed to flatten the curve. It is not. We are not ready. There is a lack of masks and guidelines on usage. It is now at the teacher's discretion if kids wear masks. We are not ready.

Parents have been given the option to have their child do virtual learning if they feel returning to school is unsafe. Teachers are not given that option. The guidelines keep changing and not in favor of optimum safety. The world and our community are dealing with a serious disease that may cause life long problems or death. We are not ready to deal with either.

I will not send my child to school as it is not safe for her, me, or others based on the watered down health and safety guidelines. We are not ready.

PLEASE DO NOT TAKE AWAY OUR SHORTAGE DIFFERENTIAL PAY INCREASE.

We are being asked to shoulder the largest burden with no assurances, and I am not confident that I can keep COVID-19 infections from affecting myself, my family, or my school community, especially my students. The option of working from home, which has been a successful mode of instruction for many of my students since March, is preferable to losing a life.

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Testimony BOE

From: thomas lee <passhappybear@yahoo.com> on behalf of thomas lee
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:46 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY

My name is Thomas P. Lee and I am Teacher/Coach at Baldwin High School. I would like to voice my opinion on this "new normal" regarding the Covid-19 Pandemic and the 2020-2021 reopening of school.

Obviously these past 4-5 months have put a strain on all of us. To think anyone has the right answers with this situation is ludicrous because with each new day the game changes.

My concern is with 2 weeks left before we head into 4 days of prepping, there is no definite protocol plan for us to follow. Yes there are guidelines but we still do not have our questions answered once the students get back to school. Funding for more health professionals and more tech devices doesn't answer the questions.

It's crazy to think that 4 days to get a handle on the coronavirus and what to do. Plus we have to prep for whatever else in those 4 days: lesson plans, department meetings, professional development, classroom prep, etc. Somehow I get the feeling that the state of Hawaii wants to push the opening of school just to say that we are the first school system to open up. I don't see that as a valid reason if that's the case. I also do not enjoy the idea of the students/teachers/staff being looked at as guinea pigs. What is the rush? Another comparison I see is athletics. Student athletes and professional athletes are voicing their concerns with safety protocols as well. They too want a detailed plan. Do they have it right now? The answer is no they don't. They too will have to make the choice of not returning to their respective schools or opting out. At least they have more time to figure things out.

And let me get started on our own HHSAA plans for athletics. Who is making the decisions?

When this coronavirus was becoming dangerous in March/April, the spring athletic season resulted in being cancelled.

WHY was the idea of having the cancelled Spring Sports season move to the fall NOT an option? There has not been one person who has answered that question. What if the Spring Sports get cancelled again for the second year in a row. There will be a lot of unhappy people. Who will have the answers for that? Everyone should have known that was a possibility. Again, if the higher risk sports were moved to the Spring, there would be more time to know how to be better prepared. As of now, we move it back another 2 weeks. It puts the coaches more in doubt and the time it takes to get the student athletes ready is more hurtful than beneficial. The organizers of the fall athletics season expect football to be ready to play in 4 weeks? I prefer at least 6 weeks. We had no off season conditioning and we'll have to alter our summer training program. This is Mickey Mouse because athletics still have the same questions that teachers have. THERE IS NO PROTOCOL PLAN. If you have it, please give to the rest of us. The NFHS has guidelines which we should be following. And we are hoping for what? The cases are not going down.

Low risk vs high risk sports. Seems like common sense to me.

I just want to know if we do open up and heaven forbid, things do go south, who is responsible? Who is going to be accountable? I don't feel safe going back into the classroom unprepared with the parents' children.

It's easy to sit back and say this and that but how about you putting yourself with us in the trenches and lead by example!

I admire a man who actually came out and said we should shut everything down until there is a vaccine. That is the only way we are all going to be safe. That man is Mark Cuban.

I hope you're not listening to remarks such as the Pandemic is "fading away" or it's going to fade away.

I definitely want to get back to school but if you say safety first, your way is not the way.

[Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android](#)

Testimony BOE

From: Katherine Sandor <kesandor@gmail.com> on behalf of Katherine Sandor
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:55 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony - Conditions of Work related to Covid-19 for SY 20-21

Hello,

My name is Katherine Sandor.

I am a Kindergarten teacher at August Ahrens Elementary School (AAES) in Waipahu, Hawaii.

I am emailing today to testify on 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 passionate and committed teacher who left a prestigious job in currency trading to pursue my calling. I have dedicated the last ten years of my life to becoming a teacher, getting my Masters of Education in Teaching, and teaching in Hawaii public schools. This was not an easy road, but I have never questioned my decision because I feel that teaching is what I was meant to do, and I am good at it. Until now. I never thought I would consider quitting teaching, until hearing the dangerous and irresponsible plans for reopening our public schools here in Hawaii. In fact, despite Covid-19, I added my husband to my health insurance plan in April because, as I told him, "I am never leaving teaching, so we will always have this coverage." That mindset changed when I heard the re-opening plans in July.

Not only are the plans disjointed, incomplete and unrealistic, the DOE has also gone back on what they have agreed multiple times, with no regard for teacher safety, and no input from the people whose fates they are deciding. We all want to get back to "normal" and get back to teaching face to face, but if we do not do it safely, many people in our state will die. Our cases of Covid-19 in Hawaii are already rising, without schools being open. The percentage of our cases that require hospitalization is also rising. As of July 21, 2020, 1.6% of people in Hawaii who tested positive for Covid-19 died of the virus. Once Covid-19 gets onto a school campus, it has the potential to spread exponentially.

My school has 1,200 students and about 200 staff, about 85 of them being teachers. How can we go from not being allowed to have a group of more than 10 people in one place, to reopening schools face-to-face? Even using an alternating schedule, my school will have hundreds of students on campus every day.

We do not have the appropriate plans in place to SAFELY open schools. We do not even have appropriate, concrete, measures in place for what to do when Covid-19 cases arise in our classrooms. If 1.6% of my school's population were to die, that would be 19 children and 3 adults. That is just at my school. The acceptable number of student deaths is zero. The acceptable number of teacher deaths is zero. Student and teacher deaths are not "inevitable," if we reopen with the current plan, we are **choosing** this, knowing that it will result in deaths. Will the DOE provide grief counseling for the students and staff after classmates and teachers die? How will the fear of death impact our students and teachers mentally and emotionally? Will the DOE provide counseling for students when they have a fever and are sent home, fearing that they have Covid-19 and may have infected their classmates?

According to the Mayo Clinic, Covid-19 presents in children with "mild, cold-like" symptoms ([Source Link](#)). We cannot send students home every time they have a cold. In addition to the asymptomatic cases of Covid-19, we will now have to worry that every time a child has a cold it may be Covid-19. If we do not send them home, is it our fault if other students get sick, or if their family members get sick?

I have never had a panic attack before, but after hearing the re-opening plan, I have been having panic attacks daily. I have increased my life insurance and have heard that several friends have done the same. Others have prepared their wills. Teachers already give so much of ourselves for our students and our schools. We should not have to take our lives and the lives of our families in our hands in order to teach.

There are many instances in which the reopening plan and the reality do not match up. Here are just a few.

- The DOE claims that teachers received training over the summer. I have received no such training, and neither have any of my teacher friends in the DOE.
- The DOE does not have a set plan for what to do when Covid cases appear in our schools. What do we do if the same class has to quarantine multiple times?
- Substitute teachers do not have any additional screening requirements at this time. If a teacher needs to call in a substitute, for training, a sick day, or for a personal day, that substitute may have Covid-19 after going from school to school and classroom to classroom. Right now, the guidance on substitute teachers is that administrators will provide "training" to substitute teachers upon their arrival at the school. It is not a matter of training, it is a matter of whether or not the substitute may have Covid-19. This is also incredibly unrealistic. Administrators will not have time to train substitutes each day before school, and most substitutes will not arrive at school early enough to receive impromptu training.
- Our school's re-opening plan states that:
 - "Students/teachers/staff/visitors enter ONLY through (a certain gate) as there will be a daily Temperature Checkpoint set up where students will be screened." However, we learned that taking students' temperatures will be up to the teacher's discretion at the classroom door.
 - "Teachers are expected to have students wash their hands at the entrance door to the classroom and should not let students in without having witnessed proper handwashing procedures." Yet, we do not have hand washing stations or sinks outside the classroom.
 - The third point on our school's Safety Procedures states that, "Teachers should designate one door for entering and one for exiting." My classroom only has 1 door.

There are also many scenarios where social distancing is not possible in actuality, especially in lower elementary grades, and particularly in inclusion and SpEd settings in which students often need direct adult support right next to them, help with toileting, etc.

- What do we do when a student has an accident?
- What do we do when a student throws a tantrum and tries to hurt another student?
- How will SpEd students receive their services?
 - If they go to Speech for example, how will we keep them safe if multiple students from different classes are going in and out of the speech room each period?
 - If the Speech/SpEd teacher is to "push-in" to the GenEd inclusion classroom, how will the students and other teacher in that classroom be protected, as the Speech/SpEd teacher will be traveling from room to room? How will the Speech/SpEd teacher be protected?

- If there are not concrete answers to these questions, are SpEd students and teachers somehow more expendable to the DOE?

These are real concerns that cannot be brushed off, as I, my students, and my colleagues will be the ones facing sickness and the risk of death by dealing with these situations daily in the classroom.

Our students and school staff should not be knowingly put into a situation that is known to be high-risk and has the potential to be deadly.

Rather than starting face-to-face school with an unsafe and incomplete plan, I urge the BOE to commit to the state's original plan to remain 100% online, or push back the student start date, until we have had no new cases of Covid-19 for 4 weeks. If this is not possible, I ask you to consider, that these numbers you are considering are living, breathing, thinking, feeling human beings and we are terrified right now. How many of us have to die before we admit that reopening schools is not safe and we need to go back to distance learning anyway?

Thank you for your time and attention to this crucial matter.

Sincerely,
Katherine Sandor

Testimony BOE

From: Brandon Cha <brandoncha3@gmail.com> on behalf of Brandon Cha
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:59 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY

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.

I am a science teacher at Pearl City High School, and I live with a family member who has an increased risk factor for COVID-19.

I will highlight my foremost question up front in this testimony: Who shoulders the blame if a student, family, or school staff member gets infected or dies because of COVID, and it can be traced back to school transmission?

I would like to quote the following from the Hawaii State Teachers Association, which augments my concerns:

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.

- A few days ago 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.

- 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. I've heard other principals have outright stated that they will not be offering ANY at-home learning option.

I would like to further augment with my own questions that I would like the Board and the Superintendent to address:

- 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?
- The DOE has said that schools must contact the Dept of Health if a certain amount of students in a school or classroom get infected, but how many infected students does it take to outright CLOSE a classroom or school? If a single student from my classroom gets COVID-19, will all of my students continue to learn from home immediately and self-isolate? Or will the entire school shut down? Can the state guarantee how quickly other parents will be notified of relevant infections? What if a family member of a teacher or student get infected? Or a co-worker of a student's parent?
- 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 many more people are going to die, that otherwise would not have if we had stayed home longer?

More importantly, who shoulders the blame if a student, family, or school staff member gets infected or dies because of COVID, and it can be traced back to school transmission?

These are important questions that need to be clearly answered, planned for, and spelled out, in all of their ramifications and consequences, and communicated to both school staff and parents on the front lines, before welcoming students back into school buildings.

Much has been made of comparing school openings to opening a restaurant or grocery store for business however these are different situations. Stores may have things like plexiglass when customers interact, but teachers are not being provided that in classrooms, and limited contact with the same person for only a few minutes, whereas teachers will be with the same group of students for possibly up to 6 or 7 hours a day.

It's true that Dr. Park has brought up the idea of ohana bubbles to avoid transmission, but it's also true that the DOE really hasn't made it clear how to handle closing classrooms or entire schools if those ohana bubbles become infected. Further, ohana bubbles do not really work when considering overlapping bubbles of school buses, extracurricular activities set to start again on Aug 19, etc.

I would like to point out my own experience that, this past summer, I received NO offer of training for the school reopenings from the DOE. I will further point out that any such training offered would have been optional for 10 month teachers on summer break, and so the implementation of this training would have been inconsistent and not mandatory. I would estimate a marginal fraction of teachers actually volunteered for or provided this training.

Others will point out that teachers get 4 days of student-free prep time at the start of the year. However, this is the normal amount of time given during NORMAL school years, SURELY a pandemic school year would require MORE? Further, 2 days of teacher meetings take up those 4 days, leaving only the last 2 days for teachers to truly spend time outfitting their classroom and developing quality lesson plans for their students.

They will also say that we have the first 9 days with students to prepare for things such as digital learning, but that is after students ALREADY RETURN to school, which is too late! We need thorough, prep time to adequately plan for our students and our safety BEFORE they come back to our buildings.

We as teachers are being asked to make a choice between our safety and our duty to our students, and that is a false choice to have to make. Fear and uncertainty is forcing the self-interests of teachers and parents to come into conflict, which is all the more ironic, since at the heart of it, teacher and parents both want what is safe and fair for our students.

We want schools to open, but do it SAFELY. We want a specific PLAN to give to principals and teachers, as well as our student's parents, and until we get that, we are asking to delay students return to school buildings. Honestly that's not asking for a lot when our students and staff safety is at stake.

Thank you for your time.

- Brandon Cha
Pearl City High School

Testimony BOE

From: Kaleleonalani Blaisdell-Dods <kalelebd@gmail.com> on behalf of Kaleleonalani Blaisdell-Dods
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 1:08 AM
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: (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 Kalele Blaisdell-Dods and I am currently a 2nd grade teacher at Lincoln Elementary School. I am writing in response to opening schools at a later time. First and foremost, I would like to thank our essential workers, administrators, office staff, both custodial and cafeteria workers and our educators for being consistent and flexible. It seems as though things are not thought out well enough to make our schools prepared for what is to come. The uncertainty of all that is happening is visible and alarming. I don't think that all schools should choose what kind of schedule they would like to use, I think that we can simply say "Blended" and how that is defined is up to the school.

Secondly, starting to open schools now is not safe at this moment. Having 6 ft between students is one thing, but having them wear masks ALL day long is hot and at times unmanageable. It was hard enough during our summer hub teaching program with only 6-8 students per class. I feel we need to work on the scheduling, providing face to face learning along with online/virtual learning since we are unsure of what the future may hold, how our lunch period is going to look like on a daily basis, staggering recess time and who will be watching students at that time, if our classrooms are at the maximum amount of students and new students are to enter our school, what should happen to them and their learning, staggering pick up hours, staggering beginning hours and the list goes on and on. These discussions need to be all done and finalized before students return to school.

Lastly, we as educators are risking a lot ourselves, not only do we need to look out for us, but our families who we come into contact with daily. That is why it is important to provide a uniform schedule that will benefit all, and to show that you support us at all times, especially now during the increase in the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thank you for your time!

Mahalo - Kalele Blaisdell-Dods

Testimony BOE

From: Jason Pavia <jasonpavia@gmail.com> on behalf of Jason Pavia
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 1:09 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Dear BOE Members,

I am writing to you as a Hawaii public school teacher and as a father of a Hawaii public school student. I am asking you to please postpone the reopening of schools so that our schools, faculty and staff have time to prepare for students to return safely. As you know, teachers return to work on July 29 and students return to school on August 4. Four days is simply not enough time for our principals and teachers to meet, collaborate and implement safety protocols and prepare for everything that's needed during this pandemic. For the health and safety of our students, employees and everyone, please delay the reopening of schools until we are truly ready.

Jason Pavia
Kaiulani Elementary School

Testimony BOE

From: Alice Kimura <4fun2learn@gmail.com> on behalf of Alice Kimura
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 1:13 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony: Re-opening Schools Safely and Pay Differentials

Aloha Chairperson Payne and Members of the Board of Education,

The DOE schools are not ready for in-person reopening. Many schools have not come up with adequate procedures for keeping children and staff safe throughout the entire school day. Details such as walkways, recesses, play areas, classroom setup, mask and face shields, cleaning schedules, distribution of materials and supplies, temperature checks, and plexiglass dividers are still being examined by some schools. In some classrooms, air circulation and air conditioning maintenance or cleaning have not yet been addressed. Class lists have not yet been finalized for 6' distancing for all students. Some teachers have not yet entered into collaborative discussion with their administrators on new safety protocols. Many families have not been informed and assured that classrooms can accommodate students at 6'. Many parents have not been told of their options for distance learning. The task of making schools safe is daunting given the time constraints of an August 4th deadline.

The "Ohana Bubble" is just a model. Truth is the model does not take into account the reality of the actual classroom. Teachers daily deal with larger student counts, more student interaction, and more student movement in and out of the classroom. The Ohana Bubble model is unacceptable in that it fully expects that covid exposure and transmission will occur. The Ohana Bubble erroneously assumes contact tracing will happen easily within a classroom bubble. But the bubble is actually a whole bathtub of suds involving sibling bubbles, multigenerational extended family bubbles, employment bubbles, transportation bubbles, and so forth. The news reports that the Department of Health is already strained with contact tracing and testing. Since DOH fully expects our children and staff to get covid, how can they manage the additional strain of in-person school and subsequent outbreaks?

The risk is too great. Like many teachers, I love teaching and want to come back. For 25 years I have looked forward to the arrival of students and instilling a love of learning. This time the risk is too great. Like many teachers, I fall into the high risk category and have health conditions. Like many teachers, I care for and share my home with a senior adult who herself has health conditions. I must consider my own family so I am currently weighing my options for leave or early retirement. If you reopen schools with poor and inadequate preparation or unrealistic models, then I have no choice but to leave school.

Finally, please do not take away pay differentials for teachers in special education or in hard to fill areas. Doing so will cause teachers to leave the classrooms. Needy students will not get the services they deserve if we lose these valuable teachers. Regular education homerooms will struggle to provide the same quality of care that these highly trained teachers provide. Taking away the pay differentials will exacerbate the teacher shortage as teachers leave the field to take higher paying jobs in mainland locations where they can afford basics like food and housing. If you lose a teacher, you lose the person in school that has the greatest impact upon a student.

I thank you for your time and for hearing my concerns.

Alice Kimura
Puu Kukui Elementary

Testimony BOE

From: Daniel Schuster <dark_carnival76@hotmail.com> on behalf of Daniel Schuster
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 1:16 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Concerned parent

Aloha I am a parent of a 2 sons that is 8th and 12th grade and a daughter who is in college. I believe that we are not ready to open schools because there is no plan. From what I was told that it is up to the teachers choice if they wear there mask in class . My son has asthma and wearing a mask affects his breathing , I also believe that the schools are just being rushed to open for other reasons and not the safety of the children, teachers, office administration and all that works at each school. If 1 person tested positive doesn't that mean who ever was at school would have to Test and self quarantine? Also wouldn't that mean the family would have to test and the family work place and where ever they went to buy food, store, gas station wouldn't that cause a chain reaction for more people. We are told a lot of ways we can catch the virus and a healthy looking person capsule have it and not show it and spread it to our children. Myself, my wife, my son has asthma, I have severe sleep apnea so for one of us to catch it and spread i would feel we would be on the worst end of it. I know everyone is saying the that the survival rate is 97-99.75%, even though our island counts is lower then other states it is still 24 to many deaths of this virus. In closing I really would like to say please push back the opening till the schools have a solid plan. From what my son school is telling me I heard 2 people and it was 2 different but kind of the same.

Thank you

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Liana G <poohbear4554@gmail.com> on behalf of Liana G
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 1:29 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Liana Garma and I'm a special education teacher at Mililani High School. 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.

I'm concerned about students returning to campus on August 4th. Based on information presented these past couple of weeks and the number of new COVID-19 cases reported each day, I don't feel it's appropriate for students to report to campus on the scheduled date. I feel more needs to be done to prepare the campus to make sure there is enough sanitization supplies and equipment and that we can ensure the model decided upon to safely return schools to campus is actually one that is possible. I feel schools need more time to plan how to handle the time between classes especially for secondary students to minimize their contact with other students on campus. To also ensure our campuses stay safe, there needs to be a clear plan in place on what happens when either a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19. I haven't seen a clear plan on this. I have elderly parents that we live with who have underlying health conditions and I don't want to bring the virus home to them. I'm not even comfortable sending my own child to campus because I'm not positive right now we can keep them all safe. I'm not asking to delay the start of school, just delay the return of students to campus. Please consider delaying the return of students to campus until we can ensure all schools have everything they need to properly clean and sanitize the schools.

Another topic which I'd like to talk about is the possible removal of the pay differential hard to staff positions are receiving. As a special education teacher, I know all the extra time for planning and paperwork that we have. We have to not only plan lessons for our students, but we also need to keep in regular contact with parents/guardians, monitor students' grades and progress in their classes, conduct meetings for all the cases we are the care coordinator for and to complete all the paperwork required for an IEP. It would be like a slap in the face to all of us to take this money away after we have been previously told it's in the budget. And I do believe we would lose special education teachers if this differential is taken away as there are some who either decided to go into special education because of it or decided to stay in teaching because of this differential. So I ask that you please consider keeping this provision so that we don't lose any more teachers especially since I know we experience a shortage each school year.

Thank you for your time!

Sincerely,
Liana Garma

Testimony BOE

From: KeolaOKeKai CanoeClub <keolaohana18@gmail.com> on behalf of KeolaOKeKai CanoeClub
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 1:30 AM
To: Testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Delay the opening of schools

Aloha,

I am very concern about schools reopening and allow my 9 children to go back to school, when case numbers has yet to be single digits.

The superintendent says in her video that its safe to go back to school and that all school will have the proper PPE to reopen, Question does this mean I will not need to provide any Hand sanitizers, clorox wipes, paper towels and all the other products you ask of us because you have Grant money and are prepared.

All my kids are on a rotation of 2 days of in class and 3 days at home, however I have yet to hear from all 4 schools as to how the 3 days at home would work, are my kids going to be on a device all day with a teacher there for assistance or are we going to have to play teacher. Is it only half a day of school online or a full day as if they were in school?

The superintendent has not as of yet explained what will happen if my child is exposed to a classmate with the virus, who will pay for my children's medical expenses if they catch Covid-19. Will all children exposed be tested by the state immediately?

The superintendent is jumping the GUN!!! Her videos don't make me feel safe not one bit. My family members works for a school and he has not once all summer went to any meeting and or training and you expect me to believe the schools are ready. I have several teacher friends who also have yet had any training!

Our teachers are already short handed and under paid, now you are asking them to come to school and risk their lives and our children's lives for your own ego without a sure fire plan, is just ridiculous!!! What are you going to do when more teachers quite? Will the class sizes stay the same size its already like a 30 to 1 ratio and with they way you are going it will be 60 to 1, if all the teachers decided to not teach anymore! Will you be paying teachers more to ensure they stay in the education system?

I really feel that you all need to pump the breaks and push school back until either 1. You have a way better plan state wide 2. Can better outline for all parents what distance and in school learning would really be. 3. Stop using our children as your guinea pigs? 4. When all the BOE and DOE can have a meeting in person then a lot of virtual world (you be in a room 3 ft apart and mask optional as you are asking of our kids)

Our children's future is to stay Alive to see their future! And our Job as adults is to protect our Keiki! I don't see the BOE or DOE doing this by reopening prematurely!

Thank you for your time and understanding. Please reconsider postponing the reopening!

Mahalo Nui

Concerned mom of 9 keiki in 4 different public schools

Testimony BOE

From: Jen Au <kame554@hotmail.com> on behalf of Jen Au
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 1:35 AM
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 fourth-grade teacher at Pearl Ridge Elementary. This will be my 17th year of teaching and students will begin stepping into my classroom in two weeks. I am nowhere near feeling ready to begin this unprecedented year. I do feel it is important for our keiki to get back into the classroom but we must do so in a cautious, safe manner before having to shut down again. I also have two children attending public school. Although some parents may have the option to choose to have their child participate in distance learning for the school year, that is not an option for me since I have to work. I am putting trust into my children's school that they will be able to return to a safe learning environment. Therefore, it is crucial to delay the start of the school year so we have more time to prepare and questions can be answered.

This "new normal" that we are living comes with many questions about how procedures will change, what protocols we need to have in place and most importantly, what safeguards we will have to protect our students, to protect us. The teachers at our school have not had much opportunity to hear about the details on how our school will run differently this year. There have been numerous questions teachers at the school brought up, but there hasn't been many answers yet. We don't know what our beginning or end of the day will look like. We don't know what the students will be doing at recess. We don't know what will happen if a student or staff tests positive for COVID-19. We don't know how that positive outcome will affect our class or our school. We don't know what teachers will do if schools shut down and are forced to do online learning. There are too many unanswered questions to feel confident about opening up our classrooms to students in two weeks. If I'm not feeling confident about doing so, how will I ease my students' families anxieties about having their children return to school?

Our school selected the blended learning model where some students are face to face, while others are learning at home. This new way of teaching is going to take time to properly plan for. It's not something we can whip up in a few hours or even days. We need time to figure out how we will take the lessons we would normally teach in class and teach it online for the students learning at home. In addition, we have to consider changing our lessons to avoid close contact and avoid sharing materials. By starting school a little later, it will give teachers more time to figure out how we will take on this challenge.

Another challenge teachers are facing is arranging our rooms to accommodate social distancing expectations to help keep our students safe. I currently have 29 students on my roster and even though my class will be split into two groups, if I'm able to balance out my groups, I will need to set up my room for up to 15 students each day. I was able to figure out a way to accommodate up to 16 students at a time, but with double desks, it made it extra challenging.

I have spent many hours moving my desks and furniture in the classroom to get a configuration that might work. These are all hours for love. Normally at this time of year, I am prepping for back to school, but doing other things to prepare like my seating chart, creating desk tags, labels, making copies of worksheets and packets, etc. I have not even begun to start those tasks yet because I have additional considerations to tend to before the school year begins.

I'd like to add that Dr. Kishimoto claims teachers have been trained or in the process of receiving training. I'm not sure what training she is referring to, but I know I haven't and numerous other teachers I know in other schools also haven't.

I am not against returning to school, but I don't think we are ready to do so. There are too many unanswered questions, and not enough time has been given to prepare or train the teachers. It is for those reasons that I am urging the BOE and DOE to make the safe decision to delay the start of the school year.

Sincerely,
Jenny Au

Testimony BOE

From: Jacquelyn Ho <jacquelyn.ho@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Jacquelyn Ho
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 1:36 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

My name is Jacquelyn Ho. I am a first-year teacher at Lanakila Elementary School on the island of 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.

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a lot of uncertainty and fear in regards to reopening schools for the upcoming year. With the increase of COVID-19 cases in Hawaii and the United States, there are a lot of unanswered questions on how Hawaii schools will reopen with the safety of our students, teachers, and staff in mind. As we approach the reopening date in less than two weeks, I am uncertain that Hawaii schools are equipped with the necessary guidance and protocol for HIDOE students and employees to return to school to decrease the spread of contracting COVID-19. As the upcoming school year approaches, there are a lot more questions than answers on how schools should proceed to reopen, or if schools should even reopen at all. Many of Hawaii's residents live in multigenerational households, and I fear that if we open schools without substantial guidance and protocol, it will potentially jeopardize the health and well-being of our communities. As an isolated island in the Pacific, Hawaii has limited medical resources to care for patients who are diagnosed with COVID-19. If we reopen schools too soon, it will also potentially cause a crisis where our hospitals will be overwhelmed with COVID-19 patients. As a result, healthcare workers have to decide whether or not a patient is worthy of being under their care based on their chances of survival. It should not something that should be taken lightly.

Furthermore, teachers are not prepared with scenarios that may happen in their schools. There is no communication in regards to what will happen if schools are ordered to shut down and go virtual online, or what are the next steps if someone at the school or someone in their household is diagnosed with COVID-19. I agree that we live in a particular time, and the world is continuously changing due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Still, there needs to be accountability and communication on how teachers and staff will meet the academic and, most importantly, the safety needs of our students. As a first-year teacher, it scares me because not only am I still learning my place as a full-time teacher, and I am not trained with the resources for distance learning because I am just recently hired. Four teacher workdays are not enough to teach not only first-year teachers like me but many other teachers who were thrown into distance learning in the recent school year. I cannot speak for other teachers, but with the lack of guidance in distance learning, I am afraid that we are ill-prepared for an event where we have to go back to distance learning.

All in all, the safety of our students, teachers, and staff should be upheld to the highest degree. We are not sacrificial lambs for the sake of reopening schools. Even though I have not met my students yet, I care for their safety, and I want to provide them with the utmost care during these unprecedented times. For this reason, I implore that you revisit 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 and delay the reopening of schools, so schools are more prepared and equipped with the resources to navigate these unusual times with the safety of our students, teachers, staff, and community.

Sincerely,
Jacquelyn Ho

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Testimony BOE

From: Elsa Pascual <elsa_pascual@kesdolphins.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Elsa Pascual
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 2:05 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Delay Student Start Date
Attachments: Dear BOE representatives.pdf

Please open the attached pdf file.

Thank you for allowing me to make a testimony of delaying the start date for school.

E. Pascual

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Dear BOE Representatives,

I am writing regarding delaying the **Start Date** for this school year.

This is an important issue for me because my mom is a healthy 91 years old.

I enjoy learning, I enjoy teaching and challenging my students.

I want to be ready for this school year and know I have done what I can to prepare and be present for all my students.

I believe teachers need more time to prepare their classroom for 6 feet social distancing, provide physical guides such tape on floors or sidewalks to ensure children remain at least 6 feet, install plexiglass to ensure safety measures when working individually with students at close proximity, implement a detailed screen protocol for students (use temperature checks properly), inform and assist parents about provisions to ensure safety such as asking them for help to self-screen their own children prior to attending school, consider having parents be aware and sign a liability form to say they are aware of the risks in sending their children to school and most important have the necessary tools to keep children, teachers, and staff safe.

According to CDC guiding principles, the more people a student or staff member interacts with and the longer the interaction, the higher the risk of COVID-19 spread. With this in mind, the district should provide plexiglass sneeze guards for all teachers. Schools do not have the funds to buy plexiglass and thermometers for all teachers. Please consider the importance of providing plexiglass to help teachers especially when they need to be in closer proximity to connect and observe students in listening to a child read and providing feedback to help the child with improving skills. For example, students who have individualized educational plans need daily face to face instruction with a teacher.

BOE should consider adopting a screening policy for anyone who enters a school facility to include taking temperatures and asking health related questions.

Please take into account that many hospitals and businesses have instituted a required questionnaire that must be answered each day prior to entering a facility. Health officials recommend including the following symptoms of possible COVID-19 in any questionnaire:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing

- Chills or repeated shaking with chills
- Loss of taste or smell
- Fever or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100 degrees Fahrenheit
- Known close contact with a person who is lab confirmed to have COVID-19 if exposure to the active confirmed case occurred within the last 14 days

This is a school year like none other we have had before. It is challenging and it is our new normal indefinitely. It makes sense to invest in time to ensure safety and provide items that will protect the students and staff.

I am fortunate that I have family members who are healthcare workers at San Francisco hospitals. Sharing their experiences with working protocols for screening healthcare workers as well as literature to help me understand why it is necessary to ensure safety. ***What I believe is the most important lesson I am learning is that there is a need for local school leaders, public health experts, educators and parents to work together to decide how and when to safely reopen schools.***

I am thankful that our principal and administration has been open to our concerns, open and honest with our suggestions and have provided a weekly optional web meeting to help provide important information in our reopening of our school.

Now I ask the Board of Education to consider this testimony on delaying the school start date to focus on safety of teachers, students and their families in order to ensure schools stay open. Because it only takes one positive case to close a school.

We are scheduled to return on July 29 to prepare our classrooms and participate in Administrative duties. That is a total of 2 days to physically prepare and 2 days of Administrative days. Children & Parents will return on August 4 in hopes of seeing their new classroom and are expecting to know that their teacher and school have a **safety plan and are ready to take charge and tackle what is most important: welcome the kids into a safe environment and be able to return home safe & sound.** My wish is for this to happen, I would like to be able to return home to my mom safe and sound so she will be too.

I believe our school and teachers can provide peace of mind if we were given more time and recommended tools to be fully prepared. I appreciate your help in delaying the start date for reopening schools.

Elsa Pascual

Testimony BOE

From: Steven Kam <steven.kam@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Steven Kam
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 2:16 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am Steven Kam , a 21+ year English Language Arts / Drama teacher at Pearl City 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.**

Gov. Ige earlier delayed the opening of the State to visitors from August 1 to September 1 under the premise of continuing safety concerns and protocols—are those continuing safety concerns and protocols no longer valid when it comes to opening our school on August 4? Furthermore, data used by state officials regarding the parents and students concerns about safety and distance learning is skewed. The surveys were based on this past quarter 4—which was ungraded, enrichment only, and no new instruction. Are those concerns now invalid because it is a new school year? There are still ongoing safety concerns and protocols that have yet to be addressed and detailed.

Parents and students are allowed to request for 100% distance learning if they feel that there are lingering safety concerns—why is that same option (100% telework) not given to teachers and staff? The procedures for reasonable accommodations that teachers and staff must follow are inadequate, and they do not allow the same request that is given to parents and students.

This past summer had 100% distance learning pilot programs, as well as little professional development for teachers—are the schools now prepared to open 100% virtual / distance learning? The schools need more time.

Rosenlee from HSTA is correct on stating that “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 to campus. This is a process we cannot afford to rush.”

I formally request that the state of Hawaii and the Board of Education delay the opening of school buildings to students.

Thank you for your consideration.

Steven H.Y. Kam
Pearl City High School

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Steven H.Y. Kam

English Language Arts Department
Sophomore English Language Arts (II) Teacher
Drama / Acting

Pearl City High School
2100 Ho'oki'eki'e Street
Pearl City, Hawai'i 96782
Phone: (808) 307-5500
Fax: (808) 453-6521
www.pearlcityhs.org
www.edline.net

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Testimony BOE

From: Melissa Ellison <ellisonhawaii@gmail.com> on behalf of Melissa Ellison
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 2:21 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony by Melissa Ellison (Kaimuki Middle School)

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.

To: Hawaii B.O.E. Leaders

As we rapidly approach the opening date of the 2020-2021 school year, I find myself overwhelmed with anxiety...anxiety over how to best continue keeping those that I care about (students, colleagues, ohana) safe during the unpredictable times and the ever-shifting events forced upon us by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Almost every moment since the pandemic moved us to shelter in our homes has been shadowed by the constant efforts and concerns over how to keep my loved ones safe. The greatest of our family's concern is for my 92 yr. old mother who lives with me. My five brothers and I have taken every precaution to maintain a perimeter of safety around our mother. Two family members in the healthcare industry (both doctors) and their families have sacrificed seeing our mom to keep her safe.

These sacrifices have not been easy for any of us, and now, with a directive to restart in-person instruction without clear safety protocols and a response plan in place for teachers, I find myself unable to explain to my family what steps I will take to keep protecting my mom and fulfill my responsibility for her care. I am so worried about how I will keep my mom safe that I find myself putting aside the warnings from my nephrologist about how my inherited polycystic kidney disease puts me at a higher risk for not surviving the COVID-19 virus and that stress is bad for my blood pressure which in turn is bad for my kidneys.

I must admit that as August 4th draws nearer, my stress has increased a hundred-fold. Teachers at our school will have personal contact with 150 students twice a week. Our students will have daily cross contact with hundreds of other students via their bus rides or walking to school, elective classes, the common use of bathrooms, recess and lunch zones, after school socializing, traveling to homes, etc.; consequently, I find myself having massive doubts and anxiety regarding the safety of students, teachers, and our community. I don't trust the proposed safety of "bubbles" presented by the DOE. No matter what grade level, it will be virtually impossible to keep these tenuous bubbles from bursting.

By the time a positive case of COVID-19 is identified on campus, I wonder how contact tracing will be done proficiently and in a timely manner to limit exposure? The lack of clear and precise communication between those responsible is evidenced by the fact that at this 12th hour, we still do not have clear communication about issues vital to so many lives, and even if a plan was solidified and agreed upon today, there are only 9 working days left for leadership to communicate the plan to all, for admin/teachers to gather the tools necessary to implement the plan, for teachers to prepare classrooms, rewrite classroom policies and procedures, lesson plan for both distant and in-person learning, and to receive necessary training or clarification. More time is needed at every level of leadership and implementation.

To succeed at the task of providing quality education while also keeping students, colleagues, and our families safe, we need more time. Please give us more time.

Respectfully,

Melissa Ellison
Gr. 7 ELA Teacher
Kaimuki Middle School

Testimony BOE

From: Kari Odo <kari.odo@hotmail.com> on behalf of Kari Odo
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 2:24 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Differentials

My name is Kari Odo. I am an elementary school, Special Education teacher. I ask really hoping that you can continue to post Special Education teachers the differentials, especially this year. During a normal school year, I already work 9-10 hour days. I stay late for IEP meetings and I never have enough prep time for those meetings— this year will be even worse because of the Covid pandemic. There will be more meetings for Special Education and possibly compensatory education.

My former student teacher will begin her first year of teaching and is so excited to have been placed in Special Education (she is dual certified). It is sad that I had to warn her that this would be such a tough year to start her teaching career, especially in Special Education. She is still excited but I fear she will get completely burnt out because of all of the additional demands on top of the already hectic, stressful, and busy lifestyle of a proficient Special Education teacher.

My student teacher was originally interested in pursuing Special Education because of the differentials. That made me realize that those differentials really do help to get more qualified teachers into our profession!

I know that this will be a tough financial year for the state, but the differentials are important and seem to be making a difference! Thank you for your time and for considering to continue the differentials to improve Special Education position interest.

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Testimony BOE

From: Shelby Loo <shelby_loo@wmpccs.org> on behalf of Shelby Loo
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 2:33 AM
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.

My name is Shelby Loo. I am a 6th Grade Mathematics teacher at Waimea Middle Public Conversion Charter School on the Big Island and a mom to two children who are students at Waimea Elementary School.

I strongly believe that our schools are not ready to welcome students a little less than 2 weeks from now. 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 their faculty and staff to safely welcome its students back to campus.

COVID-19 cases are on the rise in our State. Community spread is prevalent. Why would we consider re-opening schools? The opening of schools will surely contribute to the spread of the virus. Yes, in an ideal world, students would keep 6 feet apart and not share objects, sanitize regularly and thoroughly, wear their masks for hours at a time without trouble, and everyone would remain in their 'ohana bubbles, that Superintendent Kishimoto keeps referring to, but isn't an option for middle schools and high schools. The reality, however, is that it will be very difficult to enforce all of the above, while still trying to create and deliver an effective and engaging instructional program. Students come to school to feel safe. If teachers don't feel safe, how are they supposed to help their students feel safe? I do not feel safe. I am concerned about the safety of my children.

I listened in on the state Senate Special Committee on COVID-19 meeting last week and it was evident that there are still a lot of unknowns as far as how positive cases will be handled (who will be required to quarantine, who will sub for a teacher should a teacher test positive, who will be held liable should a child test positive and die from the virus). How can we be expected to safely open up schools if we do not have written, clear guidance on what to do should anyone on campus become infected? The DOH director, himself, said that they are still in the process of convening a panel of experts to come up with guidelines for opening and closing schools and help answer the question, how much disease is too much in our community. How can we open schools prior to this panel publishing their findings and guidance? The amount of concern shared among the senators in that meeting made it clear that they didn't feel comfortable with the current plans to re-open schools. When Bruce Anderson made comments about the risk factor being low for children, which doesn't help the teachers and staff on campus, I felt uneasy. He recognizes that the adults on campus will be put in an unsafe environment. He went on to provide the mortality rate of children from the virus. The thought of even 1 of our children/students dying from this disease is unbearable

and doesn't seem like a reasonable risk. Shortly after the meeting, I emailed your board to inquire about your next scheduled meeting because I felt like the decision lies in your hands.

I trust that you will do your part to protect our community from this deadly disease.

Mahalo for your time!

Shelby Loo

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Shelby Loo
6th Grade Mathematics Teacher, NBCT
6th Grade Level Chair
Waimea Middle PCCS



Waimea Middle School
Pa'ahana - That's My Tradition

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Testimony BOE

From: Kathleen Wong <kathleen.wong@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Kathleen Wong
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 2:38 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Dear Hawaii State 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 Kathleen Wong and I am a teacher.

I strongly believe that reopening Hawaii schools campuses to students on August 4 would be a potential disaster waiting to happen. We prepare for hurricanes all the time so why not prepare when it comes to safe education and medical emergencies? We live in the 21st century. There is so much technology available right now to teach students via webcams to avoid physical contact and continuing to practice social distancing during a pandemic. There is no real benefit in reopening school campuses to students right now other than for visual and socializing purposes, so why take the risk to spread COVID-19 even longer?

The reality is that students and adults will not keep their mask and face shields on all day without touching it, especially in a hot classroom. They will touch and contaminate it accidentally (especially the younger students) before the school day is over. Students will not learn better by looking at a teacher's eyes and struggling to hear behind the masks and face shields. They will play with their friends in their cramped classroom (avg. 20+ students per class) at "6 ft. apart" when the teacher is not looking no matter how many times you tell them not to. Then when students go home, parents will constantly worry if today is the day that their child will show symptoms of the flu or worse, COVID-19. How honest will parents be about reporting it? What would be the protocol when they finally notice but already passed on to other kids? How can we figure out patient zero when there could be multiple patient zeros in one location?

Hawaii schools do not need to rush to be the guinea pigs for the nation to see how sending our students back to school will work out and affect us all. This is not just something we can wing it and see how things go. We are not just gambling with our lives, but also the lives of our students, staff members and their families. Our physical social lives should not be more important than actual life itself.

No, I'm not a doctor. No, I'm not a parent. However, yes I have been an educator for the past nine years. Yes, I am an elementary teacher who teaches at least 400+ students on campus. There have been many times where I've caught the flu from being in the classroom and recovered but it only took one incident to permanently damage my health forever. Yes, I now live with an weakened immune system that's considered by doctors as high-risk. I will continue to spend my entire teaching career with an immune system that's high-risk. Like many other high-risk immunocompromised individuals, my odds are even at a higher risk now with COVID-19 circulating. No amount of PPE materials or disinfectant wipes (which I'm allergic to) would fully protect me. Contracting COVID should be treated as a matter of life and potential death.

Speaking from experience, staying healthy is the most important thing in the world. When you're sick, you're not able to do anything worthwhile except concentrating on getting yourself better. There are safer solutions out there for communication. Of course, they aren't ideal but we all have to adapt and adjust our way of living during this COVID-19 pandemic.

1. Teachers could be in the classroom by ourselves while teaching our students online throughout the day.

2. Families can still stop by their schools/classrooms by setting up appointments with their teachers to pick up learning materials as needed such as workbooks, textbooks, laptops, etc..
 3. Employers could be more flexible with the work schedules of parents with children or at least provide a quiet space in their workplace where their children can learn online when students can't be at home by themselves.
- We need cooperation from everyone in our communities.

We can't open school campuses to students yet on August 4, 2020 please.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Kathleen Wong

Teacher

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Testimony BOE

From: Susan Shire <ikai97@hawaiiantel.net> on behalf of Susan Shire
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 2:39 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

My name is Susan Shire and I am the mother of a teacher at Aiea Intermediate School. I would like to testify in regards to Action Item H and urge the delay of students returning to the classrooms on August 4th. Contrary to Superintendent Kishimoto's video this evening, the State and the schools are NOT yet ready to open and it is NOT safe for teachers, staff, students and their families. My daughter's school is among the more organized when it comes to re-opening. Yet, there seems to be no concrete safety protocols, measures and equipment offerings being clearly conveyed. If the schools have them, why would they not share them with their teachers? Right now teachers are scrambling to be ready on time with little guidance and direction, and with many unanswered questions. At the moment they are pretty much being left to their own devices to decide how to handle important issues and to determine what the best safety practices might be. This is truly appalling. My daughter has been in her classroom measuring and moving desks around herself, as well as taping off distance barriers. She's trying to figure out effective methods for keeping active young people from hanging all over each other as they are want to do. She is trying to decide which are the most effective PPE's and if she has to buy them for herself. As yet, there are no procedures for assessing student's health, nor how to deal with those who are sick. Importantly, she has not been given any information as to personal COVID testing. Nothing has been said about how or even if her classroom will be disinfected throughout the day since the students will be changing classes. (The much touted "bubble" strategy does not work in middle and high school.) Her father is busy building plexiglass desk shields for her and several colleagues. The list goes on, and exemplifies a grave lack of preparedness for the health and safety of the teachers, staff, students and their families. To open at this point would be insanity. All the experts have said that for schools to have any chance of success at re-opening, sound, specific and consistent plans, procedures and protocols must be firmly in place - backed up by the necessary money.. If these important safety measures are being left up to the individual schools and teachers, the State is merely passing the buck. That isn't going to cut it. It's extremely dangerous and, frankly, unconscionable. The State, in conjunction with medical experts and principals must together firmly address the safety processes much more comprehensively before the schools will be ready to open. The State must listen to and honor the requests of the teachers as well as respect them (for a change) as the invaluable heroes they are.. The State must stop dealing in feel good platitudes, half truths, agendas and delusions that are not based in reality, nor backed up by real action. In doing so, they are deluding the parents who are probably unaware of the reality and the ramifications for their children and families.

Beyond that, our own Health Director Dr, Anderson has said that when the schools open there will be a rise the number of COVID cases, it will happen fast and there will be spikes. The following day he also said whenever there are people working together and staff working with them . . . it is a dangerous situation. There have already been COVID clusters identified with other learning situations. This should serve as a serious warning there will be consequences in opening the schools too soon. To do so without adequate preparation will be even more foolhardy. Postponing the opening until such time it is safe will not unduly harm anyone. It doesn't have to be forever. Schools in Hawaii open way too early as it is. This early opening is a harbinger to the time when Hawaii tried to go to year round school and failed. No one ever shifted the schedule back. Even to shift the schedule a bit for just this one year is not going to have long term consequences.. To Ms, Kishimoto I would like to say, no child's psyche will be irreparably harmed with a necessary delay. Is it not better if someone's life will be saved? Further, the CDC is not officially putting out their guidelines for the re-opening of schools until August. Wouldn't it be wise to wait and have their input? Relative to all this is the other major reason to delay the opening of classrooms. Hawaii is currently experiencing a spike in COVID cases that is greater than when we shut down last Spring. We were able to contain cases rather swiftly back then by shutting down most of the state. (On an island this can be done). However, we then opened up too fast and let people get lax, causing the big jump in cases. The State now has the good sense to postpone the upcoming opening to tourists so as to not subject us to the rampant horrors occurring on the mainland. Lets continue to tamper things back down even more by not rushing to open schools which will cause additional internal virus spreading and spikes. Lets not render all our sacrifices to date

meaningless. Every time we have to go back and shut things down, we do more harm to the economy and people than if we'd done it right the first time. The current argument by Gov. Ige and Mrs. Kishimoto that opening the schools is the first step to slowly opening the state back up to tourists is ridiculous, We are under no obligation to open anything right now if it is not right. Rather this is just a truly blatant, after the fact, rationalization to placate the tourist industry. It was never mentioned until the (propaganda campaign) news conference the other day and is merely a convenient argument that actually turns the schools into the scapegoat.

In conclusion, we are indeed in very shaky and uncertain times, but the right answer here is actually quite clear. The preservation of human life is the bottom line and it trumps everything else in the big picture. The State must follow its responsibility to insure peoples safety before considering anything else. No one should ever have to potentially "take one for the team' . If the State cannot guarantee each and every classroom will be safe come August 4th, the schools must not yet be opened. If the State continues to see spikes in COVID cases, the schools must also not be opened until outbreaks are under control. If there are viable alternatives, then those must absolutely be chosen first. The correct course of action is to properly prepare, dial it back and act smart until things calm down (here and also on the mainland), Then we can move forward with a better chance for success in insuring the health of both our economy and our people. Ahonui a na'auao.

Thank you for your attention.

Testimony BOE

From: Tatiana CHAUVET-MARTIN <marama77@gmail.com> on behalf of Tatiana CHAUVET-MARTIN
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 2:47 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Dear Hawai'i 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 Tatiana Chauvet-Martin. I am teaching at the Roosevelt High School and I need to share with you my apprehension regarding the reopening of our schools on August 4th.

I believe that because of the current situation regarding the numbers of cases that are back up daily in double digits as well as our preparedness to safely have teachers and students in class, it is important to delay students start date or provide a distance learning program safe for myself, my family, my students and my community. Although I appreciate the efforts of having students and teachers back in the classroom, It is important to be patient and ready while exposing anyone to any risk of contracting the COVID 19 virus.

Please delay the students' start date at this time.

Thank you

Tatiana Chauvet-Martin

Testimony BOE

From: Andie Chen <r_andie@outlook.com> on behalf of Andie Chen
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 2:49 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Delay in-person schooling - Require distance learning

Dr. Christina M. Kishimoto
Superintendent
Department of Education
State of Hawaii

Dear Dr. Kishimoto:

My name is Andrea Chen and I am a teacher who teaches at Mililani High School and a parent who has 4 children, each attending a school in Mililani Complex area.

My children and myself all suffer from moderate to severe asthma. My youngest child (2nd grade) has been hospitalized several times due to this and other respiratory illnesses. Unfortunately, I have no choice but to send her to school full-time to take her chances of catching a respiratory disease as there are no online options available for her. I will also be working onsite at school full-time and wouldn't have child-care or tutor options for her even if there were. I am deeply concerned about the State of Hawaii's plan to reopen public schools on 4 August. I don't feel the current state plan not only does not ensure the safe return of our students to school, but it jeopardizes the lives of our students, teachers, parents, and other members of our community.

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 protect the health and safety of our community. When in a poorly ventilated room with 20 people for up to several hours, air is stagnant and even masks won't protect us from breathing everyone else's air. Not to mention that it is doubtful our children, especially elementary-age, will be safely wearing their masks even with rules put in place.

For myself as a teacher and my high-risk children who will be attending school, I am asking that distance learning be required for all classes and in-person learning be delayed until the numbers are low enough for a safe in-person setting to be implemented.

I appreciate that the state sent out a survey to parents; however, I feel like the data was misrepresented. Especially when communicating that a high number of parents support in-person learning. Of course, we feel that it is most beneficial to be in class learning; however, this question was out of context. It was a survey performed during the last school year and before COVID 19 numbers rose dramatically. It was also sent before the plan for the new school year was put in place. Based on conversations I have had with other parents, I feel that if another survey was to be sent out with the current circumstances and careful wording, the support for in-person learning at this time would be very different. The benefits do not outweigh the risks being taken for our community's health.

Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to hearing about improvements and revisions to the state school reopening policy.

Best regards,

Andrea Chen
95-861 Paikauhale St
Mililani, HI 96789

Testimony BOE

From: Sarah Cannon <sarcann7@gmail.com> on behalf of Sarah Cannon
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 2:52 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: VERY IMPORTANT: Continue Funding our Differentials

Dear Hawaii BOE,

I am testifying on Action Item G: [Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year](#). It is extremely important that the HBOE continues funding for teacher shortage differentials.

This action will hurt our most vulnerable keiki as it will destroy our dwindling supply of qualified teachers. I am a parent of a student at Makaha Elementary. Students come to school with severe trauma and are from a low socio economic community. Due to this, we need the strongest and best teachers to support these students. As a parent in this community, I know that educators have to do much more than a "normal teaching job" to support these students. A temporary discontinuance of extra compensation will diminish the number of necessary educators to continue supporting these students who need us so much. Overall, it will negatively impact my child, this school, and this community.

Please support your teachers and your most vulnerable keiki even during this unprecedented financial crisis.

Sarah Cannon

Testimony BOE

From: David L. Kupihea <lono_68@yahoo.com> on behalf of David L. Kupihea
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 2:54 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

I am writing this email to testify my support on Action Item G: Board action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for class room teachers in special education, hard to staff geographical locations and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

Again, School Superintendent Kishimoto and the board members are breaking a promise that THEY made in keeping this program. How many times do we need to go through this. This differential is important! You said you would use HIDOE funds if the legislature did not approve funding for differentials. But now, you intend to take back the money from the teachers where there are critical shortages in SPED, geographical location and Hawaiian Immersion.

Please don't do this again! **Honor your commitment** to the teachers and stop taking things like this away from them. With the DOE having the biggest chunk of the budget for our state, **the teachers salaries make up a paltry amount**. THERE ARE OTHER DEPARTMENTS THAT YOU CAN REALLOCATE FUNDS FROM WITHIN THE DOE TO MEET BUDGETS! You made a promise. You stood on the proverbial line and said you would keep it. Make it so. Or you can expect to lose face and respect from within the teachers group, their families and the parents of the students this directly affects.

STOP THE STUPIDITY!
WORK TOGETHER!
DO THE RIGHT THING!

Sincerely,

David Kupihea

Testimony BOE

From: David Brown <hidbro@gmail.com> on behalf of David Brown
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 2:55 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: School re-opening

I don't think schools in Lahaina are fully prepared to have students start in person on August 6.

Thank you,
David Brown
Kam III Teacher
Lahaina

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: B. Nakamoto <honukahu@icloud.com> on behalf of B. Nakamoto
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 2:56 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: Rosenlee, Corey; Inga Park
Subject: Testimony on Action Item G: Temporary Discontinuance of Differential Pays for SY 2020-2021

July 21, 2020

Board Chairperson Catherine Payne
Hawai'i State Board of Education
P.O. Box 2360
Honolulu, HI 96804

Aloha Board Chairperson Catherine Payne,

My name is Brian Nakamoto and I work as a teacher at Hawai'i School for the Deaf and the Blind (HSDB) as a high school mathematics teacher. I have worked at HSDB since the fall semester of 2011 through multiple roles, starting from a substitute educational assistant to long-term substitute teacher until I landed on the full-time, salaried teacher in February 2016.

I am testifying on the 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 in the strong disagreement on the Action Item G because of multiple reasons, but I am going to share few significant reasons why I am testifying against this action item proposed by the State of Hawai'i Department of Education Superintendent Christine Kishimoto.

I testify against this because I am working at HSDB and it is scarce to find highly qualified teachers to fill in the teaching positions for many years as I could remember, as I was often considered to continue working at HSDB since the fall semester of 2011, which I became a long-term substitute teacher in September 2011 and I even became a teacher on the emergency hire and maxed all three years, but I was unable to complete my teacher training program with the Pacific Islander Learning Initiative, conducted by Dr. Judith Coryell in collaboration with University of Hawai'i. However, they reassigned me to the long-term substitute teacher once again because there are no other teachers who are willing to take the teaching position of mathematics teacher for high school at HSDB. I finally completed my program in December 2016 and I was expedited to be hired as a full-time teacher, making my position to be permanent instead of a prolonged temporary position. It is very hard to acquire a highly qualified teacher who is a native of the State of Hawai'i and an alumnus of HSDB. As of today, I am still the only one teacher who has the experiences of being a student and working as a teacher at the very same school. With this action item proposed by Superintendent Kishimoto, this will make our school even harder to fill in the vacant teaching positions. In fact, our school still has not found a replacement for the middle school English teacher yet. Please take this into your consideration, do you really want to roll the time back to the past where we were dealing with the hardship of hiring teachers to work at our schools, given that the salary for teachers are far below than the national average of salary for teachers?

I am also testifying against this because this will also hurt not only HSDB, but the entire special education within other public schools in the State of Hawai'i. We all know that being a special education teacher requires many more workload than the general education teachers. We work on the students'

individualized educational plans, Section 504, and accommodations for our students who are placed in special education environment. It is definitely not easy for us to take extra work of doing those things in order to maintain and ensure that our students in special education still receive their free appropriate public education. It is also very important to consider that our students under special education should receive the best education to their extent as much as possible. With the differential pays in place, thousands of the teachers like us felt like our tedious work is finally recognized.

Now, with the novel coronavirus pandemic threatening the State of Hawai'i, many special education teachers take themselves further in order to ensure that the students under special education still receive their education through distance learning and I cannot say that it is an easy task. I am saying this because, as a teacher who works at the deaf school, many teachers among myself take many extra hours of developing our instructional videos, making the instructional packets to be accessible via either form of online or paper versions, and setting up the videoconferencing with our students based on their availability because we also need to take into consideration that many of our students at HSDB have siblings who are doing their distance learning through online as well. It is no easy feat to achieve.

If you take the Action Item G into the consideration, it tells many of us that our efforts and hardships are no longer considered as the sincere admiration by the Board of Education and the Department of Education. In my own opinion, this action item makes me feel like my work is being swept away in favor of the economy recovery. Do not forget that the economy will never survive without teachers. Economy recovery is something that can be considered while we, the teachers, deserve to have comfortable salaries in order to make our living more decent and saner in the State of Hawai'i, one of the places with cost of living much higher than the national average. It is imperative to have highly qualified teacher to be working at the hard-to-staff schools and under either the special education or Hawaiian immersion programs.

Once again, I testify against the Action Item G in regards of temporary discontinuance of extra compensation. Mahalo for your time to read my testimony and take this into your consideration.

Aloha,
Brian Nakamoto
High School Mathematics Teacher & High School Department Chair
Hawai'i School for the Deaf and the Blind
Honolulu, Hawai'i
honukahu@icloud.com

Testimony BOE

From: Herman Yagi <vyagi@aol.com> on behalf of Herman Yagi
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 2:58 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov; AEshelman@hsta.org
Subject: Testimony

This email is 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.

My name is Vicki Yagi. I am a retired elementary school teacher on Maui. I could have possibly been a teacher returning to the classroom this fall not knowing I had an immune disorder. While it is unfortunate to be diagnosed with an immune disorder, knowledge is power. So right now I feel grateful and blessed. However, I worry for my sister and brother teachers and staff who are returning to school to take care of our keiki.

Just about two years ago, I was diagnosed with Chronic Inflammatory Response Syndrome (CIRS). Evidently I had been suffering for fifteen years. It effects multiple systems of the body and has multiple symptoms. Couple that with my age (over 50,) I am in the high risk group for severe illness if infected with coronavirus.

What I would like people to know is that people, like myself, can live practically their whole lives not knowing that they have a genetic disposition for an immune disorder. It takes an event of 'exposure of sorts' to trigger the immune system over-response to an invader.. In my case it was long term exposure to a water damaged building and mold toxins. The statistics are that 24% of the human population has the genetic disposition for CIRS. An HLA test can determine that. However, there are many other immune disorders out there.

Research is currently being done to shed light on the question, "Why does COVID-19 cause only mild or no illness in some individuals, but severe or deadly in others? The answer lies in our genetics. I wonder, could genetic testing be better than testing for the virus? Virus testing would require daily testing anyway. These are questions we must ask and seek answers to, because imaginary invisible bubbles are not going to protect people. Without answers to the question why COVID effects some and not others, plans to reopen schools prematurely becomes a dangerous game of roulette with peoples lives.

Please read/listen to:
Immune Response COVID-19
COVID Human Genetic Effort Consortium
What is a Cytokine Storm?,
Revolution Health Radio & Dr. Richie Shoemaker on Chronic Inflammatory Response Syndrome

In addition, adequate time for schools to "restructure" is needed for successful reopening and a **request that is at minimum.**

When school starts up, asymptomatic human transmitters of COVID-19 will be present no doubt. So basically teachers are being asked, for the sake of students who are abused or neglected and for the economy, to put themselves on the frontline of a warfare with an invisible enemy. It's enough that teachers have to worry about shooters and practice lock downs. Now this.

In a time when people are saying "let's be caring and supportive towards each other during these uncertain times", **let all of us be sensitive to what we**

are asking our teachers to do. Apart from baby sitting, social work, and preparing students for high stakes testing that somehow determines college and career readiness and somehow determines a teacher's satisfactory performance, we are now asking teachers to risk their lives.

The top down callousness of the politic that threatens states if they do not reopen in the fall is indecent. Particularly now as we are in the midst of the 2nd wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. Each day we are learning more about coronavirus, but there are still too many unknowns, creating too many variables.

"Successful" reopening depends on adequate funding to hire additional staffing to support the new normal protocols. Simply moving desks apart and wearing masks are not enough. Who cleans and when? Students cannot be in the room when cleaning occurs. Will students eat in the classroom? What happens when students need to go to the restroom?

Or heaven forbid that the teachers may need a bathroom break, lunch break, or a moment to wipe the fog off ones glasses from wearing a mask and a shield all day, sip water, or a moment to take blood pressure medication from the stress of trying to keep students apart.

As we all do, I have great concern for the health and safety of teachers, staff, and students slated for back to school on August 4th, 2020.

According to HSTA, there are many unanswered questions in regards to written guidelines on reopening, distance learning models, response to positive COVID tests, etc. This puts schools at a major disadvantage to respond in a timely manner to the restructuring needed to move from the old normal to the new normal. Therefore, pushing back the start date for opening schools is imperative to any kind of success.

The State is still in double digits for new cases of COVID 19 and we are planning to reopen to travelers here in the near future.

There is still a window of time for reopening of schools to be pushed back. Many of our students parents work in the tourist industry.

Therefore, pushing back the start date for opening schools is imperative to the health and safety of all.

Testimony BOE

From: Linda Boyland <lindaboyland4@gmail.com> on behalf of Linda Boyland
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 3:06 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I implore you to reconsider opening the public schools in Hawaii until we have a cure or a vaccine against Covid-19.

I ask this on behalf of your precious children and the health of teachers and all family members that come into contact with each other due to the fact that Covid-19 can be spread even if the infected show no signs of being sick.

I ask this on behalf of all your teachers, administrative staff, cafeteria crew janitorial staff, and especially for my own daughter who teaches 3rd grade on Maui.

I ask this because it is impossible to keep each life safe. I ask this because of the shortage of PPE.

We must stay united and focus on keeping apart, teaching your keiki how to stay safe and keep to themselves.

It is simply too soon to consider opening. Remote teaching is what we have for now.

We must work hard to make it safe to go back to the classroom but now is not the time.

Thank you for your time,
Linda M. Boyland

Testimony BOE

From: Jolyn Stephen <jojo.gee1022@icloud.com> on behalf of Jolyn Stephen
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 3:15 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Returning to school

With the number of coronavirus cases still rising is it wise to send our children back to school now. I do agree they need their education but I fear for what might happen if my child or children is exposed to this virus especially with the fact that it concerns their health also the health of a elderly person I have living with me. I hope this statement says a lot and helps with the delay of students returning to school. Mahalo

Sent from , Jolyn Stephen a mother of 3 children and a daughter of an elderly woman.

Testimony BOE

From: RAB <robertallenbeckvall@gmail.com> on behalf of RAB
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 3:17 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov; rbeckvall@waialae.edu
Subject: testimony ITEM G

testimony on item G: board action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation. . .

Why should it be a surprise that the most vulnerable students, along with the teachers or lack of teachers in these areas are the first to be hit?

Special needs, Hawaiian students, and students from the far sides of the islands will continue to get the short end of the education stick.

I returned to teaching in the special education field because with the covid-19 I could see the disaster for special education. Now a critical crisis area that you in essence threw 10,000 dollars at, you now take away, as easy as that.

Well, the need is critical as these students need the help the most. How to solve it? Disrespect the teacher, in turn the child, in turn the family, in turn the DOE by taking away the monies that really don't approach anywhere near countries that take their education systems seriously, and pay their teachers like professionals.

Do not stop the funding of the 10,000 dollars. You are now in crisis shortage, with many more senior teachers retiring, and not so many wanting to travel from the mainland. Crisis shortage, now bleeding and broken. Solution? Stop the triage.

For once, do the right thing.

Robert Beckvall
22 year sped. teacher
Waialae PCS

--

Thank you, Robert Beckvall



Love sees what is invisible. Simone Weil

Testimony BOE

From: Maria Karen Sheff <10014788@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Maria Karen Sheff
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 3:19 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Don't open quite yet

Schools ARE NOT READY!

- 1) Need sufficient PPEs for all staff and kids w/o masks & sanitizing systems n material availed for every classroom
- 2) need staff designated to regular sanitizing of critical/contaminated likely areas
- 3) need formal plan for the 'in case of' scenarios
- 4) need principal to work with teachers making effort to avail more areas for learning... Outside Areas
- 5) get team of teachers to structure classes for teachers who are NOW available n back from summer, for technology in the classroom classes!!

Open Sep 15,2020

Tip: look at how TRADER JOEs retail store is handling their retail operations!!! Brilliant and demonstrates clear plan and clearly communicates well with staff!!!!
HI DOE is not ready

Sent from my iPhone

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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: RoadRunner <brucec002@hawaii.rr.com> on behalf of RoadRunner
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 3:24 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Schools re opening Too Soon

I am a teacher and I am Scared to return to the classroom due to The Covid 19 rise in Hawaii. I do not want to die!
I love teaching but shouldn't have to put my life on the line. I am in my 60s and have 28 kids in my class. Please please
DO NOT reopen schools now. Let's give it some more time to see if we can have fewer Covid cases daily& then make a
prudent decision. Opening schools now will be a death sentence to many teachers. Do you want that on your
conscience?

Carmen Bruce. Honowai Elementary School

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Zohreh Furtado <zohrehfurtado@yahoo.com> on behalf of Zohreh Furtado
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 3:49 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony
Attachments: letter to board of ed. 2.docx; Untitled attachment 01833.txt

Aloha; I am testifying on action item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and 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.

In contrast to previous years of teaching, this year, my excitement for a new school year is replaced with anxiety. Anxiety that includes life and death possibilities if not severe illness for all who enter my classroom. My name is Zohreh Furtado, and I teach at Kealakehe Intermediate School. I am a dedicated educator, parent, and grandparent. The anxiety that I feel is due to multiple concerns that the rush to open schools safely or as safe as possible during a pandemic is not prepared for or has answered yet. Teachers are most at risk of being infected due to lengthy (85-minute class periods) that repeat multiple times a day exposing them to 50 or more students per day at least. While children have some natural immunity to the virus, over 7000 minors have been infected in Florida, and California has begun to offer remote schooling only, in multiple districts due to the virus surge. CDC asserts that one in four teachers are at severe risk of COVID-19 infection and advises against school reopening. Dr. Fauci indicated yesterday that COVID-19, similar to HIV-AIDS and Chicken Pox viruses lives in the body forever and can re-infect the same person in as little as sixty days. The uncertainty of the virus's behavior, its mutant and evolving characteristics, its deadly force, and the rush to reopen schools create justifiable fear amongst many teachers, parents, and students. Thanks to the efforts of our Governor and physician Lieutenant Governor we have enjoyed some degree of protection from the pandemic in the state, but that can and will quickly change with the school reopening. We need to delay the school opening until teachers have been amply

trained in remote teaching because the two designated administrative days in the beginning of the school year will not suffice for this purpose.

Additionally, we have not received written guidelines from the State of Hawaii Department of Health on school reopening, and we don't have clear protocols for wearing face masks or exceptions to wearing masks at schools. We don't know what will happen if a child, family member, or teacher test positive for COVID-19 or how to mitigate the danger from asymptomatic carriers in schools as occurred in a Honolulu child care facility.

Although administrators are working to answer questions and listen to teacher concerns, they are operating within parameters that were not set by them, hence limited in their ability to respond outside the parameter. As our overseeing and guiding body, please imagine yourself entering public school classrooms daily with apprehension and anxiety while wanting to restore hope and safety for the children. How would you feel if you were a classroom teacher now? I have faith in your deep thinking on issues of urgency such as a pandemic and hope that you hear our voices as our guiding body. I hope that your decisions empower rather than marginalize the lives of teachers who are also families and parents and children to parents.

I thank you for your service and ongoing efforts to support education and informed citizenry by engaging in educational affairs and decision making. Please be mindful that online learning will not cause death, but COVID-19 will. Me ke aloha nui

Testimony BOE

From: Dana <dana517@gmail.com> on behalf of Dana
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 3:55 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Start Date

To whom it may concern

I am emailing to express my concern with the August 4th start date for students. I attended the optional summer training last week and left feeling more confused and overwhelmed with the lack of preparedness and direction the doe has for us. I have more questions than answers and hope the decision to push the start day back will give the doe and my school more time to prepare for us to welcome the students back safely.

Thank you for your time

Dana Plotkin
Teacher 15 years

Testimony BOE

From: Pualei Jarrett <pjarrett@waiaues.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Pualei Jarrett
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 4:07 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Re: Pay differential and Opening date

Aloha BOE,

Hope this email finds you in good health. My name is Pualei Jarrett. During this pandemic, I'm blessed to one of those who are in good health. Im emailing you for two purpose. 1) To continue the differential pay for those hard-to-fill positions, and 2) to push back the date for in person instruction at our public schools.

Even though I do not receive differential pay, I know first hand the extra work it takes for the Hawaiian Immersion program to translate and create new curriculum. I am a Hawaiian Immersion teacher, and spend hours translating and creating work for my students. There is no program we can buy or anyone else who is available to create or translate the programs we need. We are more than deserving to receive differential pay. If budget cuts need to be taken, suggest that the state take it from other departments, and not for the low paying teachers.

For the same reason, the extreme amount of work to prepare, I could also argue that we are not ready to open for in person instruction and teach distant learning. We need the time to prepare, and the few days we are allowed in the beginning of the school year is not enough for us to teach both programs. Teachers are not trained to be able to do both. Neither are they paid to do both! But are expected to prepare now to do both without getting paid. No, this is not right. We are being taken advantage of, used, and being asked to risk our lives.

While virtual meetings are a norm right now, the state is asking us, teachers, to go back into a classroom! That is not right! We shouldn't go back into a classroom until all BOE and DOE members are able to hold meetings in person. When in person meetings are a norm again, then it will be safe for children to go back to in person instruction.

Another reason to push back the date is not all schools are fully equipped nor staffed to be able to bring students back for in person instruction. We are risking our children's lives without the right PPE, sanitizers, disinfecting supplies, and their own ability to remain 6ft apart. There should not be any kind of health risk when it comes to children and their education.

Thank you for your time. Please make the right decisions to continue to allow the differential pay and to push back the start date for in person instruction. We miss our students! We want to back in the classroom too! But we know this is not the safest time to return.

Mahalo,
Pualei Jarrett

Testimony BOE

From: John Bonewitz <john.bonewitz@keaau.k12.hi.us> on behalf of John Bonewitz
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 4:17 AM
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.](#)

I am a science teacher at Kea'au high school. We are not prepared to reopen schools. We need more time. We are one of the first districts in the nation to attempt to reopen our schools. I still have so many questions about how we are going to reopen. We need more training and time to plan. We are rushing in to this reopening and it is the teachers and students who are going to suffer.

Please do not rush to reopen schools. I am very eager to return, but I want to do it safely and correctly so that we don't have to close again before the end of the year.

John Bonewitz

Testimony BOE

From: donald ellison <ellisonthai@hotmail.com> on behalf of donald ellison
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 4:33 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: School opening

I am a teacher at an elementary school. My doctor has written me an at-risk letter due to my age and an underlying condition. I have reached out to my principal and others for help in getting a position that would be safe for my return. So far I have received no help and no answers as to how my safety would be taken care of. I'm also concerned for the safety of the students who will be returning. I don't understand how a group of second graders is going to social distance all day. How do I teach a group of second graders and expect them to social distance? It is unrealistic and not possible for this to happen, and I do not feel any of us sh to return to unsafe conditions.

As was stated in the meeting. I have had no training on how to accommodate this, and I am teaching at a brand new grade level for me.

Who is going to be responsible when Covid breaks out amongst us? Or when somebody dies from Covid due to being faithful to their job? Are we to be true to our safety or our duty? I'm sure my children and family would say be safe.

We are not babysitters. We are educators. Online education is a viable option. At least delaying the start of school is a reasonable beginning while we try to sort this all out and see what happens when we reopen.

While I want to see students educated in the best manner possible, the most important thing is to save lives. I do not feel safe returning to work.

Please delay the opening of schools or turn to online education for the welfare of all.

Thank you,
Karen Ellison

Testimony BOE

From: Kailani <kailani.ross@gmail.com> on behalf of Kailani
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 4:45 AM
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.](#)

I am in support of the efforts of my representatives to bring our students into a safe and well prepared learning environment.

“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.

Mahalo,

Kailani

Jessica Kailani Ross

Aloha kekahi i kekahi

Testimony BOE

From: SherryLynn Casinas <scasinas@gmail.com> on behalf of SherryLynn Casinas
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 4:55 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To Whom it May Concern,

As a teacher, parent and concerned citizen in my community I truly feel that our school systems are not ready to welcome our students back to school.

I am a teacher at Salt Lake Elementary. During a normal beginning of the year setup, I am usually excited to prepare for the next school year. As I have been preparing myself for this school year excitement is far from what I am feeling. Yesterday, I stepped foot for the first time in my classroom to "setup". It was unfortunate that it felt no different from other years, except for the fact that I was measuring the distance between desks. There has been no clear directions or training that were provided to help me feel confident to open my doors for my students this year. I've attended voluntary meetings this summer to learn about the new schedule for the new school year. Will that help me keep my students safe? Will that help me feel that I am safe when I go into work? NO.

As a parent of an eight month old baby there are so many fears running through my head. Will I bring the virus back to my home where I have my baby and my parents who take care of him? Will my husband bring back the virus, since he interacts with a lot more students because he is a high school teacher? Not hugging my own child due to catching the virus even runs through my head. We've been staying home since he's been born to protect all of us, and it would be a waste of effort if either one of us ended up contracting the virus because of our return back to school.

As a concerned citizen I want to do my part. I've seen grocery stores, dentist and doctor offices change protocols to protect their workers and customers as they stay open. When I walked into my classroom there was no difference. My class looked the same. All the changes made were due to me. I bought the mask I was wearing to school, it is me measuring to make sure my desks are set up appropriately. It really hurts to see nothing being done for the teachers when they are asked to return to school and are expected to teach and keep our students safe. Where is something as simple as providing teachers with masks, gloves, face shields, plexiglass, cleaning materials. I've spent my summer looking for things to keep me safe but opted out to not purchase anything with my own money in hopes that the DOE would provide everything and anything to keep their teachers safe so that we can teach our students and help our community.

Please give us more time to figure this out. I know we are all uncomfortable with returning to school. From the very beginning I've been wanting to be in my classroom, with my students. But due to the lack of training and preparations I feel unsafe for myself, my family and my students.

Sherryl Odoya

Testimony BOE

From: Sara <sbj04609@gmail.com> on behalf of Sara
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 5:21 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To the 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.

I am a Kindergarten teacher at Kihei Elementary School, and in the last 6 months I have recovered from a serious illness requiring a major surgery which increases my risk factor for COVID-19.

I will highlight my foremost concerns up front in this testimony: With August 4th, rapidly approaching, how are we going to be prepared to keep ourselves and our students safe? What is the protocol if a student or their family member tests positive? How will the BOE or DOE help me if my family gets sick? Who shoulders the blame if a student, family, or school staff member gets infected or dies because of COVID, and it can be traced back to school transmission?

I would like to quote the following from the Hawaii State Teachers Association, which augments my concerns:

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.

A few days ago 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.

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. I’ve heard other principals have outright stated that they will not be offering ANY at-home learning option.

I would like to further augment with my own questions that I would like the Board and the Superintendent to address:

- If a teacher tests positive for COVID-19 are they required to quarantine for 2-3 weeks? Is their sick leave covered, paid?
- If a teacher is exposed to a student or staff member who tests positive and has to quarantine for 2-3 weeks and their spouse also has to quarantine and loses pay for that time, what is the BOE going to do for those families?
- Do students who have been exposed 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?
- The DOE has said that schools must contact the Dept of Health if a certain amount of students in a school or classroom get infected, but how many infected students does it take to outright CLOSE a classroom or school? If a single student from my classroom gets COVID-19, will all of my students continue to learn from home immediately and self-isolate? Or will the entire school shut down? Can the state guarantee how quickly other parents will be notified of relevant infections? What if a family member of a teacher or student get infected? Or a co-worker of a student's parent?
- 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 many more people are going to die, that otherwise would not have if we had stayed home longer?

More importantly, who shoulders the blame if a student, family, or school staff member gets infected or dies because of COVID, and it can be traced back to school transmission?

These are important questions that need to be clearly answered, planned for, and spelled out, in all of their ramifications and consequences, and communicated to both school staff and parents on the front lines, before welcoming students back into school buildings.

Much has been made of comparing school openings to opening a restaurant or grocery store for business however these are different situations. Stores may have things like plexiglass when customers interact, but teachers are not being provided that in classrooms, and limited contact with the same person for only a few minutes, whereas teachers will be with the same group of students for possibly up to 6 or 7 hours a day. In addition to that, in my teaching position, I am regularly exposed to my students bodily fluids. They are sneezing, licking, sometimes spitting or biting, crying, blowing their noses, regularly. It is a part of their development. I am sure this doesn't regularly happen to grocery store workers. For those essential workers who are exposed to bodily fluids, they are given complete head to toe PPE to protect them. The thought of having to wear that instantly brings a picture of the terror and fear on my students' faces.

It's true that Dr. Park has brought up the idea of ohana bubbles to avoid transmission, however how can this bubble idea work in a school like mine where any number of my students have many siblings in other grade levels and possibly other schools. This also doesn't take into account extended families with cousins, etc. Our school alone has 750 students. It's a tangled web of contact and I just don't see how the BOE is going to be able to create protocols that will truly protect us from community spread. It's unrealistic and the stakes are too high.

I would like to point out my own experience that, this past summer, I received NO offer of training for the school reopenings from the DOE. I will further point out that any such training offered would have been optional for 10 month teachers on summer break, and so the implementation of this training would have been inconsistent and not mandatory. I would estimate a marginal fraction of teachers actually volunteered for or provided this training. In addition to that, we return back to work next Wednesday. We are told we should focus our first 9 days on teaching safety protocols, assessment and SEL, yet we have yet to learn the protocols ourselves!

Others will point out that teachers get 4 days of student-free prep time at the start of the year. However, this is the normal amount of time given during NORMAL school years, SURELY a pandemic school year would require MORE? Further, 2 days of teacher meetings take up those 4 days, leaving only the last 2 days for teachers to truly spend time outfitting their classroom and developing quality lesson plans for their students. In my specific case, I have no access to my classroom due to construction work. It's looking like July 29 may be the first day I can even step foot in my classroom so in addition to learning the protocols and planning on how to teach them, setting up distance learning, planning for the in person classes, creating a schedule for the A/B group hybrid learning students,

the students attending all days and then the students who are distance learning only, I also have to set up my classroom, which will probably need to be cleaned.

They will also say that we have the first 9 days with students to prepare for things such as digital learning, but that is after students ALREADY RETURN to school, which is too late! We need thorough, prep time to adequately plan for our students and our safety BEFORE they come back to our buildings.

We as teachers are being asked to make a choice between our safety and our duty to our students, and that is a false choice to have to make. Fear and uncertainty is forcing the self-interests of teachers and parents to come into conflict, which is all the more ironic, since at the heart of it, teacher and parents both want what is safe and fair for our students.

We are not asking for extra summer vacation. We want schools to open, but do it SAFELY. We want a specific PLAN to give to principals and teachers, as well as our student's parents, and until we get that, we are asking to delay students return to school buildings. Honestly that's not asking for a lot when our students and staff safety is at stake.

Thank you for your time.

Sara Hathaway
Kindergarten Teacher
Kihei Elementary School

Testimony BOE

From: Donna Hallock <dhallock53@gmail.com> on behalf of Donna Hallock
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 5:34 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: risking our lives

Aloha, I am a teacher at Na'alehu Elementary School. I am 63 and my husband is 72 years old. My husband is now planning on moving out because he firmly believes I will bring Covid 19 home from school and he will get sick and die.

Why has there been no discussion regarding taking student temperatures before they get on the bus?

I am going to be forced to retire or risk my life while my husband leaves me.

Please wait to open schools when we are better prepared.

Testimony BOE

From: dianecarolspencer@gmail.com
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 5:34 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

While I have spent endless hours daily at my new school since March 14, I do not feel like we are prepared to open. Many of my safety items have not come in and my students are in the same situation as they were in quarter 4 with no devices and no connectivity.

I have three custodians to clean my school of 550. They had a 12 minute video training. They are asking for help. My additional purchase of a .5 custodian sits on superintendent's desk waiting for approval.

Teachers are filing for CARES Act leave. I have little idea of who will be on my campus on August 4 with no substitutes trained and ready to jump in.

I want to open schools. I think, however, that we need time to truly prepare for a safe return and how to do blended learning. Teachers will have only be on campus for 4 days since March 14 when students return. Its been difficult to effectively communicate trainings and protocols virtually with an entire staff not present.

School administrators have been left to figure everything out by themselves and compete for PPEs with other schools. We need directives, not choices,during a pandemic. We need a reality check if anyone thinks that schools are truly prepared.

Thank you for your consideration.

Diane Spencer
Principal
Konawaena Elementary School

Sent from my T-Mobile 4G LTE device

Testimony BOE

From: Erin G <firstteacher70@gmail.com> on behalf of Erin G
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 5:36 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

As a teacher I am eager to get back to school, but not at the risk of my life and fellow co-workers. I've been teaching here for more than ten years and have watched as we as an educational facility catch up to the schools on the east coast.

We can not afford to "catch" up to safety protocols that need to be put into place at schools. This is too risky. I have seen two different very comprehensive plans that mainland schools have developed with parent input to keep their teachers and families in their communities safe. This is not what my school here has.

Parents are texting teachers directly asking what's happening and teachers don't have the answers. Discussions are happening on social media as parents try to sort out the specifics to how this will happen for their children adding to their fear when no one has a comprehensive plan in place. How will the children ride the bus? (Still working on that) How do I know if my student is in A or B group? (We don't know yet?)

A grade level teacher text just yesterday, if our school isn't taking student temperatures, do you know if we can? Or does admin not want us too?
Teachers are worried!

I am sure some schools here in Hawaii are "ready" and their parents and staff are well informed. That is not true for my school, that still has piles of things needing to be constructed, doesn't have a concrete drop off and pickup plan, or a lunch plan. How about riding the bus? Who knows? Feels like we wing it until we make it. That can't happen, this is life or death for some.

I join teachers in asking you to give schools time to get ready before sending students back and protect us all. Delay opening until schools and the health department have protocols in place and teachers and parents know these.

I miss my students and I want to make sure they stay safe and I stay safe.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

Erin Graig, Big Island Teacher

Testimony BOE

From: JM <kenj10@hawaii.rr.com> on behalf of JM
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 5:37 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: School Reopening

To the members of Hawaii BOE :

I don't want to be a statistic. I don't want to be a number on a medical report to a government official. I don't want to be a part of the number that is reported on the local television stations news reports. I don't want the people I live with be a part of those numbers. I don't want to see our students, their parents, their uncles and aunties, their siblings, or their grandparents be a part of those numbers. I don't want my coworkers to be a part of those numbers.

There is no absolute safe way of opening schools right now. There probably won't be, until they can come out with an effective vaccine. To try to rush into a situation which is unique is a foolish endeavor. Schools are unique in that individuals would be exposed to other individuals for prolonged periods of time. I am not in any way a medical professional, but I do understand virus transmission. Longer exposure means a higher possibility of transmission. While there are people who will down play the transmission of the virus among children, it does happen. Symptomatic and asymptomatic, it is still possible to transmit the virus to others. All it takes is for one person to infect four others and those four to infect four others each, then you will have a huge problem. Clusters happen in homes because of exposure, so why do people think it won't be the same in schools? I know some people will say that stores have been open and that most employees don't catch Covid-19, but that is again due to exposure. Customers coming in only have intermittent contact or no contact with employees. Just as other government agencies, exposure to outside individuals is intermittent at best.

I would like for there to be a delay in the opening of schools so that those in charge can make a better plan. I don't think the majority of a school can go back to in person classes or should even be on

campus. There needs to be mandatory temperature checks for students that have to go to school and the staff that has to work. There needs to be training done for all who work in the schools. There needs to be virus testing for all those working at the schools, before schools even open and welcome back students. PPE is only effective if you know how to use it and even then it minimizes the risk not eliminate the risk.

We all don't want to be a statistic.

Thank you for your

time, Jon Maeda

Maui Complex

Maui High School

Testimony BOE

From: Ashbea Oyadomari <aoyadomari@gmail.com> on behalf of Ashbea Oyadomari
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 5:39 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony - Action Item H
Attachments: Testimony BOE.docx

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this 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.

Thank you for the work you have done to plan for the safe reopening of Hawaii's public schools. I understand that these are incredibly difficult times, and there are no perfect solutions to the obstacles that this pandemic has thrown at all of us. However, I strongly believe that August is too soon to reopen our schools. It is not safe enough yet.

Please delay the return of students to campuses. Please provide the written guidance and training time necessary for all teachers to adequately prepare for the reopening of schools and online learning programs. If structured, consistent policies are in place for mitigating the spread of COVID-19 in our schools, the learning environment will be safer, less stressful, and more effective for students and educators alike, as well as their families and communities.

Please consider these changes. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Testimony BOE

From: Joshua Pieper <joshua.pieper@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Joshua Pieper
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 5:52 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha Board of Education,

My name is Joshua Pieper and I am a special educator at Radford High who would like to testify Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

This will be my first year receiving the differential as I received my teaching license from the University of Hawaii at Manoa this past spring. I have had deliberations on whether or not the increase in salary would be enough to finance my own future and sustain a career where the cost of living is high. The full \$10,000 compensation as a teacher in a hard to staff field makes the decision clear: That the state of Hawaii sees our field as a priority and that I am a young up and coming teacher who can build a flourishing career here. The compensation helps the young generation of special educators realize that their contributions to the community is not unnoticed and taking that away in the form of young special educators relocating can have an avalanche of negative outcomes that have already been stressed with this pandemic.

The compensation differential serves as my own personal tipping point as I prepare to start my own family one day, and I would very much like it to be in Hawaii. Our burden of responsibility at this time is high with the vulnerable population that we serve and taking away the compensation could exacerbate the environment the students are dealing with.

Thank you for considering this testimony as you consider allowing special educators to feel empowered financially to make the right decision to stay in Hawaii or in the field of special education.

Mahalo,
Joshua Pieper

--

Joshua Pieper
Radford High School Special Education Department
Radford Varsity Boys Basketball

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Testimony BOE

From: Shaunna Au <shaunna72@aol.com> on behalf of Shaunna Au
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 5:59 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Reject Proposal

To whom it may concern:

I am asking to please reject the proposal of deferring a huge amount of money for the special education teachers and other educators. My son is autistic and is in the SPED class at Waikiki school. They have worked wonders with him. I wouldn't know what I'd do without them. The teachers have taught him so much. He is non verbal and they have taught him ways to communicate with us. They have so much passion and love for all of their kids. They work so hard and do all they can to help their kids succeed. The SPED teachers aren't just regular teachers. They are almost like parents to the kids when they are in school. They give the extra love and care to their kids. Don't forget a lot of patience. I know teachers already don't get paid enough but to cut it more would be devastating. For all that they do for our kids with special needs, it's not right at all. They have more challenges during this pandemic. They had to figure out how to teach their kids when they can't be face to face. It's not easy when you have kids that are autistic or nonverbal or kids that need the face to face contact to learn. My sons teachers went above and beyond to provide activities and ideas to keep the kids going. She got gift bags for the class with all types of goodies for them. For my son, she dropped off activities that he could do to keep his motor skills going. It's unexplainable in words to say how much I appreciate them and what they do for my son. It takes special people with special hearts to do what they do. They need to go the extra mile for their kids and they always do that. Please reject the proposal and keep our special education teachers and other educators as well paid as possible. They have changed so many kids and also parents lives. Thank you for taking the time to read this.

Shaunna

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Erin G <firstteacher70@gmail.com> on behalf of Erin G
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 6:03 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

I am writing to ask that you continue the teacher differentials that have been promised. Teachers have taken positions and changed schools based on the pay increase for special education and hard to fill schools.

During this pandemic special educators will be at a much higher risk working with these high needs students and often with multiple staff as well. It is not a time to make cuts and not appreciate the hard work and high risk these teachers are placing themselves in.

We could not fill special education positions before these differentials, too often putting unqualified teachers and or substitutes in these positions. This was not even a slightly adequate education for some of our most vulnerable students. It has been happening for years and it needs to change, now!

The numbers show that differentials work. These positions for the first time in years have an increase in qualified teachers don't take that from our students.

During these tough times our hard to fill schools are also at an increased disadvantage. Both the last two schools I've worked at on the Big Island show this. One lost about 17 teacher positions, two years in a row. Seventeen new teachers learning to teach at a new school. All of these new hires didn't stay the whole year. Yes, that means those kindergartners didn't learn to read and poor behaviors developed from inexperienced teachers and substitutes.

This same school started one year with two open positions in fifth grade, filled by long term underpaid substitutes at the last minute. One class was later redistributed half way through the year because the other teachers couldn't watch this fifth grade class fail without an adequate teacher.

When we don't pay teachers enough to survive in these hard to fill schools the repercussions last a lifetime. Please, the data shows in only one year differentials make a difference, imagine where our schools could be with this continuation. Now is not a time to loose good teachers don't go back on the promise of funding these differentials.

Thank you!

Sincerely, Erin Graig, Big Island Teacher

Testimony BOE

From: Leilani Sills <808sills@gmail.com> on behalf of Leilani Sills
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 6:04 AM
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 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.

My name is Leilani Sills and my son will be attending Papa Mālaa'o ma ke Kula Kaiapuni 'o Waiau. As a former educator for almost 10 years, I realize the importance of school for our keiki. COVID-19 has forced our education system to play catch up in ensuring education can be delivered in the digital realm using 21st century tools. It is unfortunate that many of our schools are antiquated and teachers are forced to find ways to create meaningful educational experiences in the 4 walls of an outdated education system. COVID-19 in fact, has forced education to transform in ways that we could have never imagined.

As the 2020-2021 school year approaches, and the numbers of COVID-19 positive cases begins to rise, I am deeply troubled with the statements the Health Department has made in reasons for starting the school year. While my heart aches for families affected by COVID-19, I do not believe opening schools is the answer.

Teachers have been put in an impossible position - to teach in this new world. It is my understanding that the decision for the way the classes would be held was only made a few weeks ago.

With all of these modified schedules and time that will be spent developing curriculum that is meant to be delivered in this new type of school schedule, has time been given to teachers and schools to prepare?

Our teachers are severely underpaid and the burden is put on them to find a way to make it work. They not only sacrifice time with their families to figure this out, but now have the added stress of being exposed to so many keiki coming from different households.

How will the school ensure families will not send their keiki to school sick because the parents have to go to work? As a former educator I have seen countless times students sick with fevers being sent to school. What about substitute teachers? What about teachers that have underlying health issues leaving them vulnerable to exposure?

I understand that there is not easy answer. No easy solution. Parents need to be able to work but at what cost? School should not be opened to be a babysitter for working parents. We can't shelter our keiki forever but I also don't think we should be rushing to open schools. T

Why can't the start date be pushed back just like the tourism start date?

Give schools more time to prepare their staff and more time for teachers to prepare. Has the schools modeled systems in other areas of the world that has successfully reopened schools during the pandemic? We are living in a new world and the old way of education isn't necessarily the best way. Why is it ok to push back tourism but not ok to push back school. Yes education is important but the health and safety of our keiki (and teachers) is more important.

The state claims that the health and safety of our keiki (and teachers) is important so it's time for them to show it. SLOW DOWN the opening of schools.

Mahalo for your time,

Leilani Sills

Testimony BOE

From: Matthew May <maym@hawaii.edu> on behalf of Matthew May
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 6:07 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony on Action Item G

Aloha,

My name is Matthew May, I am a new hire SPED teacher at Stevenson Middle School.

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

These differentials, though secondary in my mind to raising the overall pay of all teachers to a living wage, are effective and sound means of incentivising qualified teachers to accept or stay in positions that need them most.

I know this because these differentials were weighed by me in my own decision making process while on the job market; and key in deciding if I would continue onto a newly promoted administrative position at the organization I was working at, or devote myself full time to serving students in my community that need special services to get a fulfilling and effective education.

Teacher colleagues in the SPED field have also remarked on the usefulness and satisfaction to be recognized by such boosts in pay, and I have no doubt that given the pressure of the current situation, a move to discontinue differentials will give them second thoughts of continuing in an environment that is both unsafe and full of uncertainty.

I would compel the BOE and the State government to look for other sources of money, as many teacher, staff, young and old are anticipated to leave the education field in droves as the pandemic plods along and other options begin to be identified as safer and more sound than education.

Pay cuts and furloughs would drop educators further below the median wage and chase off even the most dedicated and qualified, leaving our youth and Hawai'i further behind in the present as while burdened with rebuilding the future.

Teachers are essential workers both in crisis and recovery, and these differentials have proven in short time since their brief introduction to be an effective aid in retaining those workers. Please commit to protecting them as such.

Mahalo,

Matthew May, Stevenson Middle School, Honolulu

Testimony BOE

From: Kailani <kailani.ross@gmail.com> on behalf of Kailani
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 6:08 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha Board members and Legislators,
Re: Differentials.

Please do not remove the differentials for deserving teachers that are long overdue this compensation. Special Education teachers perform triple duties as teachers, case managers and Care coordinators. There is a shortage in this department because the work load is much more demanding than that of a subject only teacher. The differential is highly deserved.

We all worked hard to balance the State budget in years past and the teachers willingly went on furlough with your promise to restore our pay when the economy improved. But when the economy improved, our salaries were not restored to pre-furlough levels. We also lost our step advancement opportunities to advance our pay.

Please do not balance the budget on the backs of your teachers again. Please do so elsewhere this time. Thank you.

Now we finally have differentials to help those who are in positions where there is a shortage of teachers because the work load is very demanding, much more so than the already demanding positions of our standard teachers.

Mahalo,
Kailani

Jessica Kailani Ross

Lahainaluna High School

Dual Certified in:

Social Studies Hawaiian 6-12

Special Education K-12

Aloha kekahi i kekahi

Testimony BOE

From: Christina Kelsch <ckopenec@hotmail.com> on behalf of Christina Kelsch
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 6:10 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Re: 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.

Fellow educators,

I work as a substitute teacher for the DOE in the Central District. We have two children, ages 8 and 10, that attend a wonderful public school. Please allow our children to attend in-person instruction this year as each school has deemed fit. Our school has put forth a video of what the classrooms will look like and I am comfortable with the layout. Of course, it is everyone's choice whether to attend or not. You have made a decision, please follow through and leave it be. I accept that chance and possibility of contracting any virus. Schools will always be filled with germs. We cannot teach our children to be afraid of everything. We must learn to go on and continue to live, not in fear, but persevere. Take this time to teach our kids to be healthier to reduce complications and illnesses instead of sheltering in place and weakening our immune systems. My kids did not do well with virtual learning. It just doesn't work for us as I am sure is the same for many of the families. The lack of peer socialization really had a negative impact for us. It is not an experience I wish to endure again. Please leave the option open for families to have in-school instruction. Please provide a virtual learning option for those who wish to stay home.

Best regards and mahalo for reading my statement,

Christina K.

Testimony BOE

From: Sarah Moon <mo0nlight_15@yahoo.com> on behalf of Sarah Moon
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 6:11 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Hello,

My name is Sarah 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.](#)

Best,

Testimony BOE

From: Robin McDonald <robmcdonald808@gmail.com> on behalf of Robin McDonald
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 6:12 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: 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 t

Aloha,

I ask that there be a delay in the opening of schools. When teachers have met to discuss the safe instruction of students, criteria that was shared prior to July, is now not being honored. To be specific, certified staff has repeatedly had to address the 6 ft. of social distancing and has inquired of the 10 person maximum guideline, only to be disregarded. Currently, some classes will have up to 15 students. Safety protocols shared in May 2020 are now not relevant. Educators are informed that many adjustments, for the instance of positive COVID-19 case on a campus, are now on "a case by case basis." This evolving disregard for student and teacher safety is a demonstration of DOE's cavalier treatment of the safety of children, families and educators. I have little confidence that campuses are supported and positioned to open safely. As a twenty plus veteran educator, I have never felt so marginalized. The BOE must support Hawaii's families and school staff so that everyone is properly supported to be safe.

Robin McDonald
Kalihi Waena Elementary School

Testimony BOE

From: Adria Noguchi <adriat716@yahoo.com> on behalf of Adria Noguchi
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 6:12 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: hi.ms.noguchi@gmail.com
Subject: Testimony

Aloha Chair Catherine Payne and Hawaii State 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 Adria Noguchi, and I am speaking as a second-grade teacher for over twenty years at Salt Lake Elementary School. Salt Lake Elementary is a Title I school, which means we have a high percentage of children from low-income families. I do not have children, so I take seriously the fact that I am responsible for the education, safety, and health of other people's children while I am in school.

I'm writing to support a phased return to school for the following reasons. First, Superintendent Kishimoto has assured teachers that all schools have adequate PPE and supplies. I have not heard of any supplies that I will receive to disinfect my room nor have I been told that I will receive sanitizer for my students. I have been informed that I will receive one face shield. When asked about thermometers, my Administration said that each grade level chairperson will receive a contactless thermometer so we'll need to figure out how the other teachers will be able to use it. I am one of five teachers who teach 2nd grade and my school has an enrollment of about seven hundred students. Is sharing one thermometer for five classes of about twenty students each adequate? I spent over fourteen hours and about ninety dollars out of my pocket to make sneeze guards out of presentation boards, skewers, duct tape, and lamination film for each student. Another teacher was kind to teach me how to do this and also secured supplies for me. Am I expecting these materials to protect students? No, but this is a small part of the many things that I need to do to keep my students safer while in school. Schools need more time to ensure that all teachers have adequate PPE and supplies. It is the responsibility of our employer to supply these items to ensure a safer workplace.

Another reason I support a phased return is that I have been given NO direction or training to transition to online teaching. Training should have been conducted during the beginning of summer. When our teachers asked about training to successfully teach online and improve distance learning, we were told that it would happen when we started the school year and that's why we'd be having half days. No one in their right mind would build a plane and fly it at the same time. Yet that's what's being asked of teachers. To add another stressor, the technology coordinator who supported our school with distance learning in March has been assigned to a classroom position. Now I have no one to support me in the use of technology in learning new platforms such as Acellus, which by the way, I heard about from the Superintendent and not my school Administration.

I'm appalled at the lack of direction and leadership that HIDOE and DOH have displayed thus far. Superintendent Kishimoto said, "It's time for us to do our part to support our parents, communities, and our state." I have supported my students, their parents, our communities, and our state every year that I've been teaching. I do not appreciate her casting doubt on my commitment to my students, their families, my community, and my state. What has changed since March when our schools closed? Nothing, except the COVID-19 cases are continuing to rise as our state reopens.

I am further horrified at what I've been seeing and hearing in the press regarding the reopening of schools. This has caused additional stress and anxiety as our employer, HIDOE, does not address the significant safety risks that opening schools place on all students, their families, and teachers and staff. HIDOE signed the MOU in agreement with HSTA. However, HIDOE has not fully addressed many items that were agreed upon in this document.

The lack of leadership along with the lack of compassion for our community is alarming. I do not want to shoulder the responsibility and guilt that I would feel if my student became sick with COVID-19 and spread it to their family or another child or adult. I believe the HIDOE's failure to answer important questions in dealing with the reopening of schools will cause serious harm to all involved and I cannot be a part of that.

Superintendent Kishimoto is right about one thing, "Every student matters." This is true and we must make sure we don't lose any students. The majority of teachers teach because they love children and helping them learn. It would be crushing if there were illnesses and fatalities in the classroom. I'm begging you to please reconsider and open schools when the areas of PPE, training, and safety have been prioritized by the HIDOE. Thank you for your consideration and help in this matter.

Respectfully,

Adria Noguchi

Grade 2 teacher
Salt Lake Elementary

Testimony BOE

From: Detina Santiago <detinasantiago14@gmail.com> on behalf of Detina Santiago
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 6:14 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Delay the students start to let schools prepare.

Despite some thinking the schools have had plenty of time to prepare in reality they have not. The Superintendent didn't roll out guidelines until mid June. One month is not enough time to move furniture out of classrooms and make room to have students sitting 6' apart. Teachers need more days without students in the classroom to put safety measures in place and work out how to reach everyone in their classrooms (online and in person).

We are already taking on more responsibilities and jobs during this time. Many special education teachers who have students opt for online only learning are going to have to provide that. Suggesting to take away differential pay at a time like this is going to push away the staff we have in these hard to fill areas. Treat your teacher's better!

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Kimberlee Peterson <kimberlee001@gmail.com> on behalf of Kimberlee Peterson
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 6:14 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Good morning,

Thank you for your time. Please reconsider the cut to teacher shortage differentials. I understand this is a very strange, uncertain time; however, if this happens, there will be increased potential of an even higher unemployment rate and it may possibly create more of a shortage if teachers are already paranoid about how returning to school will be in regard to health and safety for themselves and their students in addition to teaching and their respective duties.

I also believe it is soon to return to school as we have no idea how certain scenarios may play out, such as if a teacher gets sick. I understand that students need to be back in school; however, the health and well being of the entire community should not be jeopardized.

Thank you again,

Kimberlee

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Mercy Ann Bumanglag <macb808@gmail.com> on behalf of Mercy Ann Bumanglag
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 6:22 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Delay face to face school

It's obvious that it's too soon for our teachers and keikis to return to school. The COVID-19 case are climbing everyday... And so clearly if kids go back to school, there's a good chance of spreading the virus even more. Not safe at all.

Mercy Ann Bumanglag
macb808@gmail.com
808.780.6374

Testimony BOE

From: Alec Richardson <alecjrRichardson@gmail.com> on behalf of Alec Richardson
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 6:24 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Differential Pay testimony

To whom it may concern,

The differential has given me breathing room in my budget. With the differential I felt able to stop working after school programs to supplement my income. Prior to the differential going into effect I had to work by regular hours plus at least 4 days during the week I would stay to work on our after school program. Then at 5:30 sit back down to complete IEPs, or prep for upcoming lessons, or review student assessments. It is not uncommon to see my car, as well as many other teachers cars in the parking lot until after dark. I finally felt like we were being recognized for how hard we work just to barely exist in the middle class.

I understand that due to The COVID-19 pandemic the state is looking for areas of the budget to cut due to a lack of revenue. In my opinion, the state has the resources available to invest in education but has for decades chosen to allow the schools to fall into disarray. The differentials are only one step in a long journey towards ensuring a quality education for the students of Hawaii. To take the differential away, after many people decided to enter a classroom they would not have otherwise, would erode the trust teachers have with their employer.

Rather than look at taking money away from the middle class, perhaps the DOE/state should explore other sources of revenue. An increase of a liquor tax, advocating for the legal sale of recreational marijuana (look at how CO has used that money)? A value added tax applied to all digital transactions, an increase in the sales tax? Maybe cutting ties with "consultants" would be a way to save money?

Perhaps the state should have been paying teachers a living wage comparable to other professionals that require a college degree all along? Last I checked the police in Hawaii county do not all have 4 year degrees but they make significantly more and have the opportunity to earn overtime which drastically increases their salaries.

All I'm saying is this was never a bonus, the differential should be part of every teachers base salary. We are the most chronically underpaid state employees. We are being asked to put our health and the health of our families at risk to return to in person instruction as well as take a pay cut. If anything every highly qualified teacher, that has earned and proficient rating through EES should be getting hazard pay, not the threat of a pay cut.

I'm sure since this is in the agenda you have already made a decision. It's time to look elsewhere to save money and stop always looking at the schools when money is tight. A cut to law enforcement overtime pay should accompany this cut to teacher compensation.

Skeptically,

Alec Richardson

--

Alec Richardson
alecjrRichardson@gmail.com
570-954-0035

Testimony BOE

From: Heidi Unten <heidi.nten@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Heidi Unten
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 6:23 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: testimony

Hi. 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 are all facing tough times, and disregarding this pay compensation is a real blow to teachers. Already we face unequal pay, and sometimes it feels like a disrespected pay with no compensation for what we do, for the many MORE things we have got to do (especially now). Please do not end the pay compensation for those teachers who are in special education, hard to staff, and Hawaiian language teachers. If education is valued, then pay would be greater for all teachers, but for those hard to fill teachers? Let's give them a reason to stay in the profession.

High school teacher for 20 years, parent of 3 public school children

Heidi Unten
Kailua High School Secondary Science/CTE Health Pathway
(808) 263-1439

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Testimony BOE

From: Donna Nunes <ponogracie@icloud.com> on behalf of Donna Nunes
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 6:26 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

As much as I'd like to see my son start school. I'm in favor of delaying the reopening in hopes that covid cases will decline by then I would like to see my son who will be a senior go back in class face to face instruction. I feel it is so important for student to have social interaction with proper cdc guidelines of course Parents. Families are under enough stress. We do not need added stress on worrying if our children are learning properly through distance learning and are safe Teachers feel like they are not ready is a great concern Delay for another month then hopefully schools can reopen more prepared and I am praying that schools can reopen with most face to face instruction It is important for you to listen to the teachers.

To be honest. I do feel more added stress worrying if my son will be safe At this point My son does want to go back into the classroom and not do distance learning.

I am in favor to delay and focus on getting students back into the classroom Thank you and let us pray for hope and healing

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Kiele Gonzalez <kiele.aloha@gmail.com> on behalf of Kiele Gonzalez
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 6:26 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Delay opening school campuses & give kumu a raise (NOT a pay cut)

Aloha,

I am a concerned parent of two DOE students. Our 'ohana is having a hard time deciding whether to send our keiki back to school. My youngest daughter has wanted to go back to school since schools closed at the end of last school year. She loves school. And she'll be entering kindergarten, her first year in elementary in a new school. We are so excited for her to start this new journey, most especially because of her own excitement.

But we do not have confidence that our community spread numbers of Covid are low enough, and we do not have confidence that schools are ready to reopen safely.

Of course we want things to go back to normal, if that's ever going to be possible. Of course we want them face to face with their teachers and peers, learning and growing. But while we can recover their education should schools be delayed in reopening, it is less guaranteed that a person's health can be recovered from Covid-19.

My keiki's grandparents help watch my keiki every day after school and on the weekends. We are concerned for their health as well as our keiki's teachers.

Follow the lead of other states that are waiting to reopen schools and starting with full-time distance learning instead.

And how dare you consider decreasing teacher pay! There is no good time to consider this, but especially at a time like this, when teachers are working even more above and beyond than they normally do. How shameful of you!

If helping our keiki's distance learning at the end of last school year has taught me anything, it's how grateful I am for our educators, for their patience, skill, and aloha for our keiki. They took up a noble, challenging profession that, especially in Hawai'i, does not pay a living wage and does not get the respect it deserves among our state leaders, as evidenced by the constant threat of pay cuts.

If children are our future, educators are the key to our future. They have the power and the ability to inspire, challenge, grow, nurture, love, and change keiki's lives. My older daughter in her DOE elementary school has had some of the best teachers I've ever met. One in particular really made it a point to find my daughter's strengths and capitalize on it. My daughter is super shy, but somehow the teacher found out that she can read aloud confidently, so she often has my daughter read aloud the assignments for the whole class, which my daughter, as shy as she is, does with a loud, happy, confident voice.

That same teacher learned that I have background in Hawaiian language and culture and had me help their class with their May Day performance and give feedback on a list of historic figures for a class assignment, wanting to ensure that Hawai'i and Hawaiians were well represented in the international list. I've had skilled, experienced teachers in my life—I should, I only attended private schools. But I can think of none who were as skilled, as caring, as collaborative, as community-minded as that DOE teacher.

You wanna cut pay? Go look somewhere else (I can think of a few state leaders who don't deserve their pay). But don't touch our teachers' pay. Actually, take that back. Touch it by increasing it. They deserve a raise—a great raise—and have for years. But actually do it this time. I know I and many, many others in the state would be willing to pay more taxes if it went to those who hold the key, not to mention the hearts and minds, to our future.

Mahalo,
Keiko Kiele Gonzalez

Testimony BOE

From: Amithea Love <amithea.love@gmail.com> on behalf of Amithea Love
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 6:29 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Delay School Reopening

As a 12 month employee who has already been on campus, I continue to have grave concerns regarding the August 4th reopening of schools. Below are just a few of the issues yet to be addressed:

When how and what type of training will be given? Was my boss reading the paragraphs on cleaning procedures and social distancing from the DOE reopening guidelines in a meeting considered my training?

Who is screening employees and children as they arrive?

How are recesses being conducted?

If a staff or student is diagnosed with Covid from the school, what happens?

What about when you have to give services (mental health) and your office is too small too allow 6 feet?

Thank you
Amithea Love Psy.D.
Kauai Complex Area

--

Amithea M. Love, Psy.D.
Hawaii-Licensed Clinical Psychologist

Testimony BOE

From: bigislandhonu-mail@yahoo.com
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 6:40 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Please stop the nonsense

I am a 16 year Teacher.
I am single family income
I am a family of 3 My wife takes and our 15 month baby
We have no family support here im case of emergencies

I am unable to receive teacher forgiveness for my school loans of 60k
I receive differential pay which helps tremendously

We are already under paid to inflation of costs of living here
Don't make it worse by compounding it

When things good we still dont get respect we deserve
Why do we have to fight so hard and beg for raises we deserve
Why do the rich get loopholes
And when things get rough why is it the teachers who get bashed as selfish and
The state punished us by using our pay
To help the economy
That is being mismanaged by our rich politicians
At crossroads again..always bc I can take my degree make more money in a different field
Do I stay or go ?
Why do I always have to ask this question as a teacher
Bc we are not respected by those in power as professionals at what we do and as people of families who we
support and a part of a community we live in.
We are a commodity to you. Change that please
When does the nonsense stop
I am grateful I am employed but
Why I always have to sacrifice the things I work hard for and earned and be threaten it will get taken away

Big Island
Middle School Teacher
TEACHER
FATHER
HUSBAND

[Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android](#)

Testimony BOE

From: Paula Paula <blinks2000@hotmail.com> on behalf of Paula Paula
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 6:40 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: testimony

Aloha,

I am testifying of Action Item H Board Action on MOU between HIDOE and HSTA SY 2020-2021 Covid-19 response. My name is Paula Evans and I am a teacher at Mokapu Elementary School.

Although our principal and some school leaders have been working hard on figuring out the logistics of opening the school, there has been absolutely no training for distance learning, no common understanding of how we will be working with half of the students one day while teaching the other half online, and most importantly, no idea of what we are to do in case of a sick student or teacher.

We have not been provided the time nor resources to move forward with such an important task as reopening our schools. We ALL want our students back, but the usual four days of preparation will not be enough to train and prepare for their return among rising numbers of infections. Many teachers do not feel safe returning to school. We do not want to see community spread of Covid-19 among our keiki, our staff or our communities. We understand there will be cases, but we are NOT near the point of mitigation preparedness necessary for such a vital process as welcoming our students back to campus in person. We have not been offered PPE, we are not even trained in how to use protective equipment. Although our custodial staff has been working throughout the shut-down to maintain and clean our buildings, we have no idea on what cleaning procedures will be or if they can be followed with the number of classrooms we have on campus once students return. Additionally, working on a military installation presents the added questions and concerns of parents and students moving into and out of the state. We are working within multi-tiered systems of support, and hearing so many different things from various state, military, and local agencies. All this leads many of us who are older and may have underlying health conditions to feel extremely anxious about returning to in-person instruction.

Please consider postponing school reopening while teachers and staff work with the DOH, DOE and BOE to ensure safety for our keiki, ourselves and our communities. We are not test subjects in a science experiment. We are humans living through a global pandemic. We are trying to do our part to err on the side of caution; we implore you to do the same.

Respectfully,

Paula Evans

Testimony BOE

From: Crystal Shigeta <crystalshigeta@gmail.com> on behalf of Crystal Shigeta
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 6:43 AM
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 Crystal Shigeta and I am a teach at Pu'u Kukui Elementary School in Wailuku on Maui. My classroom count has consistently been in the range of 27-31 students. Although I love teaching and working with my students, I do not feel safe and I am worried about the safety of my students. My principal has stated that safety is their first priority; however, I do not feel very confident that the school can provide the safest environment for the students. In order to do this, they need more time to prepare for the arrival of the students. Teachers also need thorough time to prep before the students come back into our classroom to ensure their safety and appropriate education. I implore you to reconsider opening school to students on August 4th. We really need to take a stand for the health and safety of our students, school staff, and communities.

Sincerely,
Crystal Shigeta

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Chris Santomauro <csantoma@gmail.com> on behalf of Chris Santomauro
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 6:43 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Regarding Board Action H and Return to Schools

Aloha,

I am an educator currently working at a public charter school and I am a member of HGEA. I am writing to ask you to delay the planned return of students to schools.

Here are a few questions I have:

- What type of PPE will be provided to school staff and to students if they show up without masks?
- Who will be screening employees, students, and others for signs of illness?
- How will school meals be provided, and who will be supervising students during these times?
- What happens if staff or students are incapable of or are refusing to socially distance?

And for me, the most important question: what is the protocol for when a student or staff member tests positive for COVID? I am highly concerned about the transmission of COVID and the safety concerns associated with this transmission. I have yet to understand what the protocol is for all of the possible events related to school infection:

- A staff becomes infected
- A student becomes infected
- Someone living with a staff becomes infected
- Someone living with a student becomes infected

I know that Dr. Kishimoto noted that the Department of Health will be notified and consulted on next steps, but we already know that the timeline of notification and isolation is critical for the containment of the virus. I am concerned that there is not a clear plan in place, and without a clear plan, containment and communication will be haphazard and will further endanger our community.

I definitely understand the need for students to be interacting with their peers and the equity challenges associated with continuing distance learning. However, I also believe that the trauma students may experience as a result of potential deaths from COVID will do much more damage than social isolation.

Please vote to delay the return of students to campus and require distance learning so that we can prioritize the safety of our people over everything else.

Chris Santomauro
Educator, Honolulu

Testimony BOE

From: Louise Patrick <louisepatrickslp@gmail.com> on behalf of Louise Patrick
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 6:44 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Concerns Regarding Reopening Schools on August 4th 2020

Aloha, I am speech/language pathologist working in the KKP Complex on the Big Island as an Autism Consultant for 16 school years. I have not received formal training to ensure that we are safe when returning for the school year. Here are some of my core concerns.

1. How will school staff be provided with PPE?
2. What are the various plans for physical distancing of 6 feet for both adults and students?
3. What is the process to obtain permission for individuals who are at risk for covid due to health conditions such as Type 1 Diabetes, heart disease etc.. to work remotely from home?
4. Also, what is the process for individuals who have a family member with a condition such as Type 1 Diabetes , heart disease etc... to obtain permission to work remotely at home to protect the family member?
5. What will be the protocol for testing for covid? And what is the time period between being tested and obtaining results?
6. What is the plan if an adult or student does test positive for covid?

Safety is always first!

Mahalo,

Louise Patrick MA/SLP/L
Hawaii South Complex, Big Island

Testimony BOE

From: Felix Maoga <felix.maoga@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Felix Maoga
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 6:45 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Delaying Student Start Date

Hi,

I am writing to ask you to delay the student start date or push it to a later date, as we await to assess the situation regarding their safety and the safety of all staff involved during this pandemic.

Your consideration will be greatly appreciated.

Mahalo.
Felix Maoga

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Testimony BOE

From: Serena Nishihara <snishiha@hawaii.edu> on behalf of Serena Nishihara
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 6:48 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for teachers going back into the classroom.....I am ready

Aloha Board of Education,

I am a teacher from Hilo High School and I am ready to be back in the classroom but concerning the students, I would have each parent sign a waiver that if they contract the virus that the DOE or the State is not going to be responsible for the students contracting this virus.

I know at the elementary level the parents want the school to babysit for them and my concern is that if their child contracts the COVID 19 do not hold anyone accountable but themselves for allowing their child to attend school when online service as well as face to face were offered to them. So now it is a matter of who is going to be responsible for their child and not holding the State or DOE liable. Kumu Serena Nishihara

Testimony BOE

From: Robson Ohana <wcrobson@msn.com> on behalf of Robson Ohana
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 6:49 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha State Leaders,

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 concern is the premature opening of our schools. Teachers need an additional week to plan and articulate our curriculum pacing to meet the needs of our students under our Blended Learning Model. I am eager to return to school, but I feel like it's a race to get my classroom and materials ready all while being provided professional development for the pandemic circumstances. Because of the increased training on procedures I am behind on preparations I normally would make for a normal school year. I have already started moving classroom furniture to meet the guidelines this week, unpaid and on my own time, because I know this needs to get done. However, we are lacking the time to change our curriculum pacing with our grade level team. It's also difficult to ask for planning time because there were no funds available to bring our teachers into the classroom during the summer break. Had we had these funds available, the teachers were more than willing to come in earlier to get this done. The other matter is the delivery of the 100% virtual instruction. We are already struggling with our pacing, fitting in all the most important standards or building blocks into the school year. We believe that most of our students will either not have access to the internet or technology or have technology issues as barriers to their learning. Also, I am a parent of 3 students, 1 in middle, 2 in high school. I won't be home with them to facilitate their learning. My husband is also working as an essential worker. If I am in this situation, I can only empathize with other families who are in the same situation, or their children are left with their grandparents. This is a barrier for students with the blended or virtual learning model. What program are we to use? Most college teachers who have taught online have received years of training, not 2 sessions in 2 days. They also have a well thought out instructional plan, we are basically winging it. My concern is with having the proper distance learning program and the proper planning time to deliver virtual instruction. It is also an idea that you designate specific teachers, preferably with health concerns that are uncomfortable with returning to the classroom, as a virtual teacher. What you are asking of me as a Kindergarten teacher is almost impossible. To manage 10-15 Kindergarteners to safely distance at 6 feet apart and seated in their desks for 1-2 hours at a time. You are asking me to also attend to my other group of students online. And you are asking me to develop and deliver an online teaching program that doesn't exist, while I am trying to teach with my 10-15 students. I would like to think that it is possible, but not with the time constraints you are giving me of 1 week, with no planning and prep time but only professional development. Our leaders should have allowed the time, funding, and resources for the teachers to prepare during the summer.

Sincerely,
Wileen Robson
Kindergarten Inclusion Teacher
Pu'uKukui Elementary School

Testimony BOE

From: Melinda Johansen <mindyjohansen@icloud.com> on behalf of Melinda Johansen
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 6:50 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I taught ESY this summer. Here are my concerns :

1. Room had not been cleaned prior to student's arrival.
2. One student was tested because of covid symptoms. Fortunately he was not positive and parents were proactive in notifying staff. It took 3 days to get results back.
3. Two weeks later room was cleaned. It took 2 hours to put furniture etc back . The students enjoyed the extra play time while teacher made room safe.
4. We were provided with mostly used bottle of hand sanitizer, limited paper towels. Teacher used personal funds to purchase hand sanitizer, disinfectant, Clorox wipes, Lysol spray and paper towels as the cleaning crew took the one bottle of unlabeled cleaner provided by district.
5. Teacher was expected to use prep time to provide virtual services as one student was virtual yet the other 3 were in person.

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Kathleen Duhaylongsod <keaolani@icloud.com> on behalf of Kathleen Duhaylongsod
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 6:52 AM
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 soon as school closures were announced in March, my Administration, cafeteria staff, and my grade level team mobilized for the sake of our school community's families and for our students. Breakfast and lunch Grab and Go's were served, and we abided by the HIDOE/HSTA agreement to provide enrichment activities, no new lessons, in the ensuing week. When closures continued, we collaborated and we mobilized again, addressed the lack of equity in the digital divide and provided learning devices for our families. Spectrum and Hawaiian Tel immediately collaborated with the DOE and mobilized by providing free internet access to our struggling families. Even Google collaborated with us teachers, providing extensions to our distance learning conferencing platform.

Unsatisfied with merely providing learning enrichment packets that many of our families couldn't download because of lack of home printers or couldn't pick up from the school weekly because of work or lack of transportation, I started distance learning. With no turn around time and no HIDOE training in sight, I spent many, many hours researching how to teach through distance learning, watching YouTube videos and Googling solutions to problems, sometimes *in situ*, as I was in my online classroom.

I continued these virtual classes until the last week of school in May. I then voluntarily continued distance learning summer school for my students from June 9 through July 16 so that I could actually teach the 4th quarter content that my students didn't learn.

I did all of this because that is the first and foremost responsibility of my job—student achievement. All of this would not have been executed without the collaboration of our school community.

In the meantime, the Governor, Superintendent, and Department of Health (DOH) were supposedly collaboratively working together to execute the reopening of school. Instead, we were given a one page memo from the Superintendent in June. Still no word from the Dept. of Health.

Finally on June 28, the HIDOE entered a MOU with our union agreeing in contract language that collaboration and guidance would be provided before schools reopen. The MOU stated that schools and worksites "shall work to minimize the risk of COVID-19 spread" by maintaining 6 feet of separation between and among students and staff members on all parts of campus.

Expectantly, we waited for the plan of action. My colleagues in other states shared with me their school reopening guide-books, some that could actually be called a manual because of the detailed language and course of action in it, so they'd be prepared to start in SEPTEMBER. With July 29 looming, we were feeling the understandable concern from the public. We were aware of the onus placed on us educators because reopening schools is a crucial factor in reopening our economy. Surely the State, DOE, and DOH trifecta would be

collaborating with a well-thought and intentional plan? Surely it would be soon so that we teachers could prepare distance learning in the event the second surge of Covid-19, as the medical experts predicted would happen, we would be ready to mobilize again?

Come the beginning of July, the unraveling and cracks became evident. The HDOE releases their new plan, indicating that 3 feet between desks facing the same way was acceptable which was in direct conflict from our HSTA MOU and the HDOE on appropriate spacing between students. But the Superintendent stated she was deferring to the Dept. of Health, mind you, who still hadn't given us any directive in the last 3 months since the school closures began. State epidemiologist and pediatrician Dr. Park assured that 3 ft. distancing was fine because, in a controlled setting, they're "all facing the same direction and in their seats." Anyone, much less a pediatrician, would know that a school classroom is not a controlled setting and that children can't face one direction in their seats for the 6 hours they are in school.

And, still, the ultimate malfeasance? That a face covering would not be required. The HDOE would not come to terms of agreement with our HSTA language that students *must* wear masks, instead agreeing that students *should* wear them. And if they don't? Then we need to deal with it at the school level. So they're telling teachers to control our students and make sure they're always facing forward, and stop your instruction each time a child takes off their face covering. Easy to say.

So the HDOE goes back and reinstates the 6 ft. distancing. Meanwhile, teachers go back to their classrooms and rearrange their desks and furniture from 3ft. back to 6 ft. Our custodial staff removes our extra desks and furniture and places them in nonexistent storage.

Meanwhile, still no word about professional development or training in distance learning.

If we teachers visited the offices of the Governor, the Superintendent, the Dept. of Health or the BOE, would we see less than 6 ft. distancing? Would we see no protocols in place for face coverings? Would we see people guessing how to do their jobs without proper training? Would we see no procedures in place if an employee is infected with Covid-19?

No we wouldn't. Yet you are asking this of us?

Do not give our families false claims that their child will have the option for 100% distance learning when most of the teaching ranks STILL haven't been trained.

Just the fact that DOH Director, Dr. Bruce Anderson, stated that Gov. Ige asked him just last Thursday to finally determine school reopening or closing is telling. Unlike all of us in the trenches since late March at the school level, the Governor, the Superintendent/HDOE, and the DOH have no sense of direction.

No collaboration effects No execution.

No execution effects No mobilization.

Do not reopen schools until you can execute a mobilization plan.

V/R,
Kathy Duhaylongsod
Waipahu Elementary School

Testimony BOE

From: Koryne Acob <koryne.acob@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Koryne Acob
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 6:53 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY

Aloha BOE,

Please consider delaying the start of the school year. I am a middle school teacher who is currently pregnant and does not have childcare for my toddler. I am fearful that there are no set plans in place for scenarios such as what to do if teachers and/or students get sick. The ohana bubbles will not work for middle school and high school because of the high frequency of movement from class to class.

Also, substitute teachers are also at risk. They are not protected by the HSTA and it is unfair for them to be assigned to different schools. Substitute teachers are chosen for jobs throughout the state, thus putting them at greater risk.

Lastly, I need time more time to prepare for my lessons. I teach TWO subjects and am now expected to prepare online material. I need an additional month to feel confident that I will provide quality education for my students in class and distance learning.

--



Koryne G. Acob
Team 8-2 English and Social Studies
Ilima Intermediate School

"If you were born with the weakness to fall, you were born with the strength to rise." --Rupi Kaur

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Testimony BOE

From: Anna Bartels <anna.bartels@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Anna Bartels
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 6:55 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: 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 the Board of Education Members:

I am a secondary teacher in Hawaii County and am very concerned that there is no clear state guidelines as to how the schools are suppose to handle if a positive case appears in a student, staff, or faculty member on their campus.

Also, I am very concerned that there are no protocols to completing safety checks on our campuses. In line with that, everyone should be required to wear mask or face shield on campus. Since the governor has already issued a mask mandate for any person going into a public space, schools should fall under this mandate. I honestly do not feel safe teaching groups of students who are 30 years younger than me without all of us wearing masks. Lastly, I am concerned that there is talk about suspending the teacher differential pay. It has helped to decrease the teacher shortage in certain areas and is effective. I know that safety and pay differentials don't seem like they belong in the same email, but they do. In this state, we have a teacher shortage and so teacher as well as keiki safety needs to be considered during this time. If teachers can not afford to teach, they will find jobs in other sectors. Two years ago, one of the teachers in my department left to go drive trucks because it paid much more.

Please understand that most qualified teachers in the state are over forty years old and at a higher risk of becoming very ill with the COVID-19. There needs to be clear state guidelines on safety checks, reporting cases, and mask mandates.

Mahalo,

Anna Coggin Bartels

(M.Ed, N.B.C.T)

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Testimony BOE

From: Marilyn Coloma <colomamh@icloud.com> on behalf of Marilyn Coloma
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 6:56 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Shortage differential

I am writing to the Board of Education to please continue the shortage differential for special education, Hawaiian immersion, and hard to staff positions.

My name is Marilyn Coloma. I am a special education teacher at Lihikai school. All teachers work beyond what we are asked to do most specially special education teachers. We do not only teach Reading, Writing, and Math. We deal with student's extreme behavior, emotional distress, etc.

If the shortage differential is stopped, SpEd teachers will be forced to find other employment, move back to the mainland, or retire. We are short 2 teachers in our school alone. You take away the school differential and more teachers will leave.

Enough! Support us teachers! We need each other to bring our economy back.

Sincerely,
Marilyn H Coloma

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Laura Gregg <laura.gregg@hotmail.com> on behalf of Laura Gregg
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 6:57 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony - Please do NOT delay the start if school

Dear Board of Education Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding the reopening of Hawaii public schools after the extensive COVID 19 closure.

My name is Laura Gregg. I am a school counselor at Makawao Elementary on the island of Maui. I welcome the opportunity to address this Finance and Infrastructure Committee and General Business meeting on July 23, 2020.

My testimony will be brief. I implore you to reopen schools as scheduled, without delay.

Our students have been denied access to education, socialization, and a return to normalcy for far too long. As a department, we have the capability and commitment to reopen school safely; moreover, our statewide community has demonstrated a high level of mutual respect and concern for one another by working together through consistent social distancing, the wearing of masks in public venues, and diligent frequent hand washing. With those efforts, we have done a tremendous job of protecting one another. The time for healthy community members to stay at home had passed - now is the time to move forward with living.

Please do not continue to put our most vulnerable citizens at emotional, social, and academic risk by keeping them apart any longer. Learning is a dynamic endeavor and is achieved best by challenging one another through real time, face to face interaction in learning communities - not in isolation.

Thank you for considering my thoughts on this important matter.

Sincerely,
Laura Gregg
school counselor (grades 3 - 5)
Makawao Elementary School

Testimony BOE

From: Christine Martinez <honumana01@yahoo.com> on behalf of Christine Martinez
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 6:57 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to testify on the [H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association \(SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response\): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.](#)

As a school employee who returned to work in our school building on June 1st and participated in summer school & ESY services, I know for a fact that school staff and students are not prepared to safely and properly return to in-person learning.

There was no training given to school staff or teachers, only memos to read and loose guidance when asked about safety measures. In order for everyone to fully understand what safety measures are required, what steps must be taken to safely teach students and get 100% buy-in and agreement from all staff that they will follow these protocols the DOE needs to provide a live Webex training to all staff, parents and students or it will NOT be safe to reopen schools!!

Staff, parents and children need to fully understand what is being required and asked of them-a memo home to parents that many won't read is not sufficient and is dangerous! School staff need specific plans to follow and trainings on how to fully go online if needed again. Staff also need a chance to talk about their concerns & fears and have them properly heard and addressed before they can be expected to properly and fully feel safe and emotionally regulated to teach and support our keiki.

The idea of "classroom bubbles" is ludicrous when the fact is that students and staff all go home & out into the community and interact w/ others outside of their "bubbles"!!! This bubble protection thinking is short sighted, naive and dangerous!!

I urge the BOE and DOE to postpone the start of school so that teachers and all school staff have time to be trained and properly supported to open schools safely & properly. Teachers cannot teach if they are worried for their health & safety, and school staff cannot support students either for the same reasons.

Mahalo,

A concerned & worried school employee
Maui Island

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

Testimony BOE

From: Bryanie Ramirez <bramirez@waipahuis.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Bryanie Ramirez
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 6:57 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: We Need A Better Plan

Aloha,

I am an intermediate school teacher for Waipahu and I believe that students should be getting the education the NEED and DESERVE. However, I feel with the rising cases it is very risky to send our keiki back to school without the proper needs to keep them safe. It's very difficult to "social distance" in a classroom setting and 3 feet apart is just not enough. As a teacher, I am worried to go back because I feel I might catch the virus and bring it home to my loved ones.

I really do want students to return so they can get their education and school is an important place they need to be, but I just think waiting would be better. We need to have a better plan for keeping our keiki safe, one that everyone can agree with.

Bryanie Ramirez

Testimony BOE

From: Shaun Snieder <snieders@knights.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Shaun Snieder
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 6:58 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony Against the Reopening of Schools

Hello,

My name is Shaun Snieder. I am a 9th grade English teacher at Castle High School, in Kaneohe. 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 2020-20201 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

Simply put, I do not believe that we are adequately equipped to reopen schools this August 4th. There are simply too many unanswered questions regarding what we should do or what might happen if a teacher or student contracts COVID-19. Will the whole school quarantine? Will just that class quarantine? How will we ensure that kids are properly social distancing outside the classroom, such as during lunch or to and from school?

However, even if we theoretically did have the answers to these questions, I still do not believe reopening schools would be worth the risk. Right now, we have more active COVID-19 cases in the state than when we shut down initially in March. It doesn't make sense to reopen schools when the environment for doing so is actually worse than before. I understand that it is very important for students to resume a normal education, but these are not normal times, and we need to adjust to them. Many of my coworkers are older ladies and gentlemen, and they are in the age bracket where COVID might actually be lethal for them. On top of that, we don't know the long-term health detriments for COVID-19 yet, and a student that catches it could have health problems for life. Many of the students at my school as well live with their elderly family members, such as grandparents, and students could potentially transmit the virus to them and be a danger to their lives. All of this is a very real possibility when we take into account that it is near-impossible to contain the virus during the school environment, even with the modifications being put in place. This could happen to dozens of kids, if not more, their families, and their teachers. If one student happens to get it, it's a very real possibility that the entire class might get it, pass it on to other friends in the hallway during lunch or passing, pass it on to even more students in other classes, then go home and pass it on to their families. It's simply not worth it.

Again, I understand the importance of having a proper, in-person education for the students, but this is not the environment for it right now. We need to cut our losses, do the right/safe thing, and distance learn until the virus is under control or there is a vaccine. The single life of a student, teacher, or students' family member is not worth it.

Thank you for reading,
Shaun Snieder
Castle High School

Testimony BOE

From: Dayna English <dayna.english@gmail.com> on behalf of Dayna English
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:01 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony -- High School Math Teacher with 14 years of experience

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 provide a testimony from the perspective of a 63-year-old mathematics teacher teaching in an overcrowded and underfunded high school on Oahu. I have no confidence that my administration has taken the appropriate steps to keep me or my students safe and worry that the greatest concern of the BOE is to find child care for teenagers and not for their safety of the safety of their teaching staff.

One of my first assignments for students in my Geometry class, was to calculate how many students can SAFELY fit in a 20 x 20 feet classroom when we typically uncomfortably squeeze up to 33 students in for 90-minute classes. My school did not have more than 15 individual desks, so a literally scrounged 12 mismatched, carved up, moth-eaten tables and put up to 4 students at the larger tables, 3 and 2 per table for the luckier students. Kids sat in the aisles, corners, and at my desk when everyone showed up for the day. My classroom is not air-conditioned so extra space is needed for powerful standup fans throughout. That calculation is roughly 6 students and one teacher. ($C = D\pi$)

Although my school is indeed limiting the number of students in the classroom, there is no indication that students will be required to wear masks, or what the consequences are for them if they fail to do so. We cannot keep our kids from eating, drinking, chewing gum and eating sunflower seeds in our classes. They hug, kiss, laugh, talk loudly, cough, and sneeze without concern for their fellow students or teachers.

We know that teens lack executive functioning skills and this deficit causes great concern that a poorly constructed model will cause greater disruption in the long run and of course, I fear for my own life and general health.

On a personal note, although I grew up in Hawaii, I went to the mainland for college and prospered in New York City. I came home because of the severe teacher shortage thinking that I should do my part to the state and the culture that did so much for me. I found that my pay from teaching as a full-time teacher in New York City to teaching full time in Hawaii was cut by 55% -- my health and dental benefits were no longer covered. I also found that my teaching load doubled and I taught an extra period a day. An aver teacher load in the Bronx, Washington Heights and Harlem (all title one schools) was just over 100 students -- I had a roster approaching 200 last year and taught 3 different courses. Teachers barely receive a subsistence salary given Hawaii's cost of living and certainly are not receiving the hazard pay required to risk one's own life and the life of their family.

All of this said, I am still honored to teach in my home state and feel that there is much valuable work to be done to approach other state standards of success.

I would like to do it right when we have sorted out things like classroom sizes, use of outdoor and indoor trophy spaces in our buildings, and have ensured that students and teachers will wear masks, however uncomfortable they may be. In the meantime, I have spent all summer preparing to teach online --I am better at it, I have more resources and ready and willing to welcome students to my online classroom on August 4th.

I suggest that we focus our resources on students who cannot learn from home or do not have the resources to do so. The majority of my 17, 18 and 19-year old students can and will be able to learn productively and safely at home until we can welcome them back to the physical school setting.

Malama pono,

--

Dayna English

(917) 291 0346 cell

Testimony BOE

From: Terri Smith <tsmith@inouye.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Terri Smith
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:01 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: Terri Smith
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 would like to add to my testimony emailed yesterday prior to hearing the video message from our superintendent sent to me at 8:15 PM.

The video clip I watched made me feel like we/teachers are being “selfish” about putting off the reopening of schools. This is not the case. It woefully attempted to remind the teachers to remember that “we need to do our part” and “now it’s our turn”. It also clearly communicated that we did not lose our pay (yet) during this pandemic and just made me wonder about when it would be “our turn” for this as well. It made me upset because I did not need to be reminded of why I chose to be an educator, what my heart feels for the families and students who need the schools to reopen. I miss my students and grieve their loss of educational experience, I am very concerned about their social emotional wellbeing during this pandemic, and would like nothing more than to be back with them.... teaching. I also did not appreciate the perspective the superintendent took trying to appeal to my raw emotions about this entire pandemic and although children have a lower risk for developing serious symptoms if infected with the virus I would be exposed and infected then would not be able to teach, and infect my family with the virus as well. Additionally, she stated that “all teachers had an opportunity to participate on their own time for distance training” reveals how disconnected she is from what is really happening in the schools as I was not aware of any distance learning instruction that I could participate in and if something was available it was not made known to me properly as I was on summer break. Further, whether I had known about it and was not able to participate during summer break should not be a reason to defer training for teachers once they return from summer and prior to children returning to our campus.

Rather than motivate me to begin the school year it made me feel guilty about sending in my initial testimony (yesterday) to delay the opening of schools. It tried to touch my heart in a way that was wrong, making me feel bad for advocating for a safe environment for teachers (and students), requesting more time to plan for instruction, to receive proper training for distance learning, and the right to receive a clear understanding of what I will be expected to do as a teacher implementing face to face instruction for my preschool students with special needs. There are many questions I have about the type of work caseload I may have this upcoming school year. Will I have to teach and prepare for 3 different educational scenarios that were options provided to the parents at my school? 100% distance learning, blended learning (combination of face to face and virtual learning) in addition to the 100% face to face instruction for my special education students who will be in the classroom for the entire school day 5 days a week (1815 minutes/week). I am unsure about what my caseload will be and what my work load will be as a special educator.

After listening to the superintendents message I reminded my self of the following:

As an educator, I am a professional, I have a two masters degrees (special education and school psychology) and although I am thankful for the service they provide, I will not be compared to other workers in a "blue collar industry" who have been providing services to our community. Nor will I be compared to the healthcare frontline respondents who have clear guidelines for safety and resources readily available to them to keep them safe from the virus. I am asking for more time to adequately prepare because 2 teacher work days is not enough for lesson planning and arrangements of the physical space. Although my principal (administrator) is the best

and I'll say that again, "the best" as she has been clearly communicating to our families and teachers during this entire pandemic and in preparation for school to resume in the fall. I am asking for more time as a school to prepare our campus' once all staff is back to work from summer break. I am asking for a clear understanding to what will be expected of me within the guidelines of my teacher contract. I am asking for more time for proper training of how to do distance learning. I am asking for answers to the questions posed by 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?

I am grateful that I have and am part of a strong teacher's union that will be there to advocate for safe working conditions, appropriate pay and then provide our right to vote to determine what the majority of educators agree to be a fair and just option.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my concerns.

Aloha,
Terri Smith
Preschool Special Education Teacher
Daniel K. Inouye Elementary School

Testimony BOE

From: Rachel Silverman <rbsmurray@gmail.com> on behalf of Rachel Silverman
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:01 AM
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 Silverman

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Laurie Madani <laurievmadani@gmail.com> on behalf of Laurie Madani
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:01 AM
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 res

Testimony

Ref: [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 BOE:

I am a 3rd grade classroom teacher at Kaunakakai Elementary School on Molokai. I am writing today to urge leaders to delay the return of students to our schools. We are simply not ready and during these times it is not safe.

I have been watching closely events throughout Hawaii and the world. I have attended the never ending meetings and press conferences. I have watched and seen contradictions in agreements, and straight out lies spoken by our Superintendent.

1. We have not had training, or been provided training opportunities. This goes back to 4th quarter when we were thrown into On line enrichment. Any training teachers have received has been at their own expense and time, no pd was ever presented. Training during the first 9 days while having students attend ½ days is unrealistic and unsafe. Especially since we have had no training on protocols, in fact do not have protocols even planned out.
2. Our school doesn't currently have a cafe manager, and that goes back to 3rd Quarter.
3. Classrooms and Facilities have not been sanitized, only floor waxed in my room.
4. Airconditioning and ventilation has not been cleaned/maintained since they were installed years ago.
5. We do not have a plan ready, just a tentative bell schedule that is still being argued and discussed. We have zero done in regards to protocols.
6. Nurses? Schools have "health aides", and I know of one school on island that doesn't even have that. When our health aid was absent last year, we had zero. That was often.
7. What happens if a student gets covid? What is protocol?
8. What if I get covid, and it is from school? Why should I use my sick days when forced into quarantine?
9. There are so many unanswered questions, I could go on.

Anything that has been done in regards to preparing, has been from "volunteer/not required" meetings, very slow progress. There is no way I as a teacher can provide for students when I am unprepared. I have no clue where to begin in planning, and I do not feel safe going on campus due to the unsanitized condition and lack of protocols. After listening to the superintendent repeatedly aggressively speak, I feel degraded and disregarded as a teacher. She is obviously unaware of the

conditions of schools, and should come see for herself. Suggesting taking away the pay differentials will definitely have me looking elsewhere for work. I am looking at my leave bank now, to see where I stand. If I could retire early, I would. I love teaching, and am heartbroken at what I am watching.

Please postpone the start of school for students. Schools need the time to prepare for our students. I, as a teacher, want to provide the best quality driven education and safety to my students. I can not consciously start unprepared, knowing that this disease is real and not to be taken as a joke. Molokai is one big bubble, all it will take is one carrier.

Thanks for listening,

Laurie Madani
3rd Grade Classroom Teacher
Kaunakakai Elementary School

Testimony BOE

From: Rachel Silverman <rbsmurray@gmail.com> on behalf of Rachel Silverman
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:03 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha

If you require teachers to return and teach face to face in order to open schools during an active pandemic the least you can do is fund and distribute the hard to staff differentials. You should be offering hazard pay too. The BOE has a responsibility to teachers!

The outcome of your decisions will be your legacy, please think about all the stakeholders in your plans and above all remain humble and know that you don't know how your decisions will play out in the real world. I wish you resiliency to make tough decisions to protect our communities and their loved ones. Safety is our number one concern!

Mahalo

Rachel Silverman
Kailua Kona Resident
Science Teacher

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Rachel Silverman <rbsmurray@gmail.com> on behalf of Rachel Silverman
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:04 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha

I am a science teacher and mother. I am also high risk for COVID-19. I have two options; go to school and risk my and my family's health or take a leave of absence without pay. That sucks! Why can I not request telework as an accommodation? It was available last school year but not this one?

Schools in Hawaii are not ready to reopen, the risk to students and faculty and in turn the whole of the school community is too risky. Please push the date back for in person education until we have all of the contact tracers, testing and other back up procedures and training in place so that our communities are not risking their lives to learn. Why are we rushing in to this, what happens in a month when school is open and tourism opens and there is still a surge on the mainland? How many times will a school get closed and reopened before distance learning returns? What happens if a school gets shut down more than once or twice? What is the procedure if a staff member dies due to transmission from a student? What is the procedure if a student dies due to transmission from a staff member or another student? Is there mental health assistance for staff and students who feel scared, stressed, depressed from this situation? Help we are lost, slow this train down before we crash!

Mahalo

Rachel Silverman

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Jim Nolen <jnolen21@gmail.com> on behalf of Jim Nolen
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:07 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: school open delay

Ridiculous to try open schools with so many limitations and unrealistic expectations to maintain proper distance. Even your meeting to discuss how to open school is virtual because you need to maintain social distance. How do you really think schools will function in person when you can't. Kids will carry covid home and grandparents will die because you need school to save the economy. Oh yeah do it on a limited budget too that's logical.

Testimony BOE

From: Dana Von Kolen <dvk1125@gmail.com> on behalf of Dana Von Kolen
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:07 AM
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.](#)

.Aloha,

I am writing this testimony to share my concerns about the HEALTH, SAFETY, and READINESS of the opening of our schools on August 4th.

- We are not ready: Our “Ohana bubble” is not a viable, secure or safe plan. Students, teachers, and staff will come and go from home to school to other locations with more multi-generational homes than any other state. The need and use of substitute teachers will be extremely high and there is no magic bubble that can handle the exposure, health risk, and safety.
- Training has not occurred and worse is expected to take place while the students are at school.
- A constant reiteration of this magic Ohana bubble is foolish and unsafe and is nothing more than a catch phrase.....it is not a secure, safe, or viable plan! Doctors, nurses, etc. attend years of schooling and training and now we are supposed to become medically prepared, plan for online or distant training as well as risk health and safety and possibly death with in-class teaching. Your inadequate plan is to wear mask and social distance. Ridiculous and unsafe!!! First, you are not mandating mask must be worn? Do you expect young children or special education students to wear mask. Second these same students don’t understand and will not maintain social distancing especially the special education students with behavioral problems. How many high school students will choose not to wear a mask? Will they social distance away from school or as sports start up. So much for your magic bubble.
- Who will be responsible when we have to tell a parent we cannot change their child because we do not have the proper equipment or it does not allow for safe protocol.
- Who will be responsible for the child who is running around classrooms hurting him/herself or possibly others and cannot be stopped because safety protocol is being enforced.
- There are too many “shoulds” outlining this flawed “we are ready to re-open safely” plan.
- Teachers and school staff have family at home as well and we are being asked to put ourselves in harm’s way. There are countries like South Korea that handled the virus better than the United States yet when they opened their schools they had to be shut down because of a flare up the Coronavirus infections. How many people died because of that decision? Is even one death okay? Will you sacrifice a member of your family?
- Why are you doing virtual meetings and expect teachers etc. to do face to face. It has been proven that air conditioners and fans can blow the virus...again so much or your magic bubble!
- Exposure...Sickness...Suffering...Financial Hardship...More suffering...Death?

From June 28 to July 4th in Hawaii a COVID-19 Sentinel Surveillance Program which took samples for the Sentinel Testing Program collected from outpatient clinics across the state determined that 10.4% of the people tested had positive results for the Coronavirus.

NOT THE 1% RATE THAT IS BEING FORWARDED

Simran Khalsa

Kapaa Elementary

Special Education Teacher

Testimony BOE

From: Shayna Decker <saadecker@gmail.com> on behalf of Shayna Decker
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:09 AM
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.**

Mahalo to the Board of Education for providing the ability to submit testimony regarding the reopening of schools on Aug. 4.

As a parent of a public school keiki and a family member and friend to many of our public school teachers and staff on Oahu and Maui, I humbly ask for you to please support the postponement of the opening of the school year.

There are still questions on how to safely reopen schools that need to be addressed. Let's give all of our dedicated teachers, staff, and administration more time to properly and responsibly prepare a safe and healthy learning environment for everyone involved.

Thank you,
S. Decker
Maui County District

Testimony BOE

From: Pamela Johnson <pammycash2@yahoo.com> on behalf of Pamela Johnson
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:11 AM
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.](#)

Timeline of Decisions Regarding Hawaii's Teacher Shortage

SY2016-17 SY2017-18 SY2018-19 SY2019-20

Hawaii's has suffered for too many years from lack of action to remediate the teacher shortage so that our keiki are provided certified classroom teachers.

Dec 2019 - Hawai'i Responds to Teacher Shortage by Offering Shortage Differentials

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 shortage

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

Jan 2020 - HIDOE finally implemented a plan to secure certified teachers in hard to staff position which produced positive data that their plan worked!

July 16, 2020

DOE Superintendent Christina Kishimoto told Tuesday's news conference, "We have a shortage in our state and we must take bold action to recognize Hawaii's exceptional public education system. Inaction is not an option. This is an equity issue."

July 17, 2020 HIDOE Wants to Defer Differentials Next Year

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

New figures prove differentials worked

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.”

On July 23, 2020, the agenda for this general meeting states *“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).”*

We have had extraordinary challenges prior to Covid19 due to lack of certified teachers in difficult to staff positions in Hawai'i. You remedied this challenge by implementing the pay differential with great success to increase appropriate staffing.

Help me understand how I'm given new information in January 2020 regarding differential pay prior to the posting of teaching positions that helped make my decision whether or not to transfer into a GenED position and was reconfirmed by Governor Ige to HSTA in May 2020. But as of now, you want to take budgeted monies away from hard to staff positions that funds were pledged by *“Kishimoto and Board of Education Chair Catherine Payne, a retired principal and longtime educator, **pledged to fund the differentials from existing HIDOE money if state lawmakers did not fund it for next school year.**”*

This feels like a bait and switch operation that occurred three (3) weeks prior to the start of the new school year.

What is the plan you will implement to continue decreasing teacher turnover and to continue to increase staffing of certified educators in hard to staff positions that will be as effective as your plan put into effect in Jan 2020?

Without violating FRPA, I can only state our SpEd students have regressed after receiving instruction from emergency hires that have had no educational training and have not earned a certified teaching license.

Emergency hires do not equate to equity! Hawai'i can do better!

The school I teach at:

SpEd staffing:

SY 2017-18 *****6 SPED teachers: 4 certified, 2 emergency hires.

SY 2018-19 *****6 SPED teachers: 4 certified 2 emergency hires.

SY 2019-20 *****6 SPED teachers: 3 certified-3 emergency hires and 1 emergency hire quit after 1st quarter replaced with another uncertified teacher

SY 2020-21 *****5 Sped teachers, 5 are SPED certified

SY 2021-22 ****Data not yet available.

Our SpEd students have suffered from Distance Learning since March 2020. They have regressed. I taught ESY this summer, and I have data to support that statement.

I have confidence HIDOE will continue to lead from data gathered to help drive decisions and help Hawai'i keiki receive equity in their education with qualified staffing. I also have confidence HIDOE will use scientific data to make the right decision on when to open our schools safely, and we have a plan in place prior to the students arriving on campus. This plan needs to be explicit in what DOE will do in "What if" situations and put it in writing. HIDOE has stuck to a predetermined start date of August 4, 2020 with lack of concern to properly train teachers in case we must resort back to Distance Learning. Poor planning equates to a loss of instructional time and affects our keiki's academic performance and achievement which ultimately increases the achievement gap that educators strived to close.

Lives are threatened with the rising numbers in Covid19. You want to go back of your pledge and promise and want all teachers/students/admin to put their lives on the line? HIDOE can do better than this to protect employees' and keikis' lives in order to recognize Hawaii's exceptional public education system.

I urge the board members to reject this proposal, so Hawai'i educators and vulnerable keiki continue to benefit from pay differentials that have proven a success to gain more certified teachers and not lose them to other professions, sickness, early retirement or possibly COVID19 death. Your rejection to this proposal will demonstrate HIDOE's dedication to promoting exceptional instruction in our public schools and avoiding a bigger shortage and crisis next school year.

Respectfully submitted,

Pamela Johnson
Hau'ula Elementary School

Testimony BOE

From: Andrea Aiona <onedreality@gmail.com> on behalf of Andrea Aiona
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:11 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Please Delay the Opening of Schools

Aloha,

I have been an educator since 1997. I taught elementary school in the DOE for 10 years, then at UH Manoa as a teacher educator for 10 years, then at a DOE Public Charter School, next at Kamehameha Elementary at Kapalama, and this past year at Mokapu Elementary School as a Part-time RTI Math Teacher.

I am also a parent of three children in DOE schools, one in elementary school, one in middle school and one in high school.

Here is a scenario:

We go back to school. One child brings Covid-19 into my classroom. I get sick. I die.

What psychological affect will that have on that child? That child's family? My three children? My brothers and sisters? My parents? My grandparents (one is 90-years old, the other is 95-years old)? What will you say to the student and the students' family who brings Covid-19 into the classroom, whose teacher ends up contracting it, and dies? Who will pay for the medical bills? Who will pay for the trauma support that all parties involved will need in their futures?

In my living will, I ask my family, whoever will be left alive, to sue the state for affecting and endangering the lives of all of the people in my family, and further, all of the students, faculty and staff in the DOE.

The DOE and schools are expected make data-driven decisions. What data has been presented and what data are you using that is evidence that it is safe to go back to school?

I would like to return to teaching this year. However, all of the plans presented to me, from each of my children's schools, as well as all of the schools I've been asked to teach at, in my opinion, have inadequate plans for safety. There has also been inadequate training for administration, faculty and staff for providing effective virtual learning.

I implore you to delay the opening of schools.

- Please do not use our students and families as a social experiment without the proper data and support.
- Please have a better plan for safety and protections for all people in the school environment.
- Please provide the necessary professional development for teaching and learning in a virtual and hybrid in-face/virtual environment

Please put our children and families first, rather than money and the economy.

Pleadingly,

Andrea Aiona, PhD
1050 Kupau St., Kailua, HI 96734

(808) 551-2050

Testimony BOE

From: Kristy Alvarado <happygirl79@hotmail.com> on behalf of Kristy Alvarado
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:11 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

My name is Kristy Alvarado, parent to an elementary student at Palisades 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 helps our students by keeping our qualified teachers. I have friends and relatives who are of special needs. Throughout their schooling, it was common for them to have teachers who were not trained in special education. Qualified special education teachers are hard to come by. In my opinion, they are required to do more training and are given more responsibilities and don't receive any compensation. The differential pay was a step in the right direction. Please don't take that away from them.

As for my concerns regarding the August 4 reopening date. My elementary aged child attends Palisades Elementary School. I inquired about full distance learning last week and I'm still waiting for a response. My child's return to school will be based on the school's full distance learning offer. It's impossible to make any type of arrangements with my employer and sitter. A+ registration is due on Wednesday, July 22, and I don't know what to do. How can schools reopen when there's so many questions unanswered. Please realize that the health and safety of our children, families, and state are in your hands. Please find the answers before reopening our schools.

Thank you,
Kristy Alvarado

Testimony BOE

From: Kimberly Kameoka <kimberlykameoka@gmail.com> on behalf of Kimberly Kameoka
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:12 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: testimony

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a elementary school teacher, and a parent of a high school student at Kalani High School. I am very concerned about the schools starting so early, Aug. 4. As a Kindergarten teacher, I do not feel comfortable with the safety precautions, especially when working with such young students. Although our administration has been doing their best to make sure we have safe practices in place, the teachers will not be ready to take this on in such a short amount of time. I have been a teacher for over 20 years, but it feels a little bit like being a first year teacher, not knowing what to expect. How can it be safe to start so soon? We need more time!

I live with two elderly people and would like to make sure they are safe as well. Because of the limited time teachers and schools have time to prepare I am considering keeping my own child home, and do not feel comfortable with her learning face to face. The recent uptick in COVID cases is a huge concern. When we were surveyed that was not the case. We are all very scared for our lives.

Thank you,
Kim Kameoka

Testimony BOE

From: Danielle Bryant <bryantdaniellee@yahoo.com> on behalf of Danielle Bryant
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:09 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for July 23rd
Attachments: Letter to BOE, July 22.pdf

Please see the attached testimony for the Thursday, July 23rd meeting. If you are unable to open the PDF, please let me know, and I will send you a Word version.

Thank you,
Danielle Bryant
Kapa'a Elementary
2nd Grade

July 22, 2020

Dear Board of Education Members,

I am submitting testimony in support of delaying the opening of schools until unanswered questions and concerns that HSTA has posed, on many occasions, to the DOE/BOE as part of the original MOU agreement are addressed. As an elementary school teacher, I have not been given ANY training about safety protocols or learning programs/techniques for next year. Perhaps there will be some training next week, but if that is the case, then that means I will have training three or four days before students arrive, which means I then have to do all my planning after that. In my sixteen years of teaching, I have never felt less prepared, and this is a year I need to be more prepared than ever! More time is required to ensure that I can meet not only the academic needs of my students, but also the emotional, social, and mental needs of students. Let us not forget that our students not only went through a pandemic last year but are still living in a pandemic.

I appreciated the forward stance the schools took in closing the schools to prevent the spread of Coronavirus when only a few cases existed in March. Yet we are now willing to have teachers and students return to schools when we have double-digit cases daily. How was it unsafe in March for students to be in school, but yet now it is safe for students to be in school? What has changed? Please do not quote Dr. Park's Ohana Bubble theory. I do not know if she has ever been in a classroom, but I seriously doubt it. As someone who has spent her lifetime working with children, I am left with questions like: What about the students waiting to get on the bus when no one is around to watch them, or on the bus, or waiting in line to go into the cafeteria to eat breakfast, or walking across the campus to the classroom, or when they go to recess, or when they are in the bathroom...the list goes on and on, so I am not sure where this protected Ohana Bubble is supposed to be, but I guarantee you that there is going to be a lot of Ohana Bubble intermixing.

Lastly, I understand that students have a lower chance of both contracting the disease and becoming seriously ill, but what about the thousands of other staff and teachers who are interacting with the students? The actions of the BOE and the DOE speak volumes about how they view and value their teachers, staff, and students. Please show us that you genuinely care for us, our health, and our lives by postponing the opening of school until we can ensure a safe

opening. Teachers need time for training. We need time to get into our room to get it ready. We need time to get the PPE materials set-up. We need time! We are not saying no to school. We want to teach. In fact, if you listen to the teachers, MANY of us have openly said we would be more than happy to start the year with distant learning and move into face to face learning as it becomes safer to teach in the schools. We, too, desperately want to be in back to school with our students (when it is safe) and to be doing what we love, which is helping the next generation of community leaders learn and grow. Is it too much to ask that we get to be here to see our students become those leaders?

Thank you,
Danielle Bryant
Kapa'a Elementary, 2nd Grade

Testimony BOE

From: Christine Putzulu (via Google Docs) <h4putzulu@gmail.com> on behalf of Christine Putzulu (via Google Docs)
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:13 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

h4putzulu@gmail.com has attached the following document:



Testimony



Respectfully request consideration. Mahalo!

Snapshot of the item below:

My Testimony - Delay Return to School

In my 27 years of teaching, I have always prepared with anticipation and excitement starting the school year with a new bunch of eager learners (1st graders).

This is not the case for this SY2020 with the Covid-19. The turnaround time from when I first received the notification of school opening was too short. I need more time to prepare and plan.

I am so overwhelmed with uncertainty and anxiety because I have NO defining guidelines that will ensure SAFETY for ALL as we open the school campus for the essential purpose of educating our keiki.

While there have been numerous accounts of intense meetings between key organizations/leaders of the Hawaii State Teachers Association (HSTA), Department of Education (DoE), Department of Health (DoH), and guidance from the Center of Disease Control (CDC). There still remains UNANSWERED and UNDOCUMENTED specifications of protocol that will be put in place to ensure SAFE practices throughout the day.

As I am asked to enter an environment which may put my life and those of my students in danger of contracting the coronavirus, I feel it detrimental and irresponsible to put lives in jeopardy. Does this make sense?

Those individuals who make up the "Think Tanks" and have the "BIG IDEAS" to make the decisions and rules to mandate what teachers are expected to do have NO clue as to what the reality of teaching involves. They make the rules and just expect it to be done. The "HOW" to do it is passed off to teachers to go figure it out. I need MORE TIME.

Although there have been conversations with Administration, some ideas have been tossed around and suggestions have been made. However, nothing has been finalized and documented and it is still unclear to me what things will look like and how things are supposed to be done. Our opening day is 8 days away. Questions?

- How can I keep bathrooms safe and sanitize throughout the day? Younger children tend to overlook general hygiene and have to be constantly reminded to wash their hands.
- What are 12 - 15 first grade students in a classroom, wearing face masks, sitting 6-feet apart for a duration of 4-5 hours supposed to do in a restrictive space? I need to figure this out.
- During the course of the day, through my observation, If a child becomes sick - what do I do? Where do I send the child? Do I contact other parents to alert them of possible contamination?
- With the threat of Covid-19 are students allowed to share materials in the classroom to work on assignments OR to engage in collaborative activities?

- How will I develop a curriculum for distance learning?
- How will I effectively connect with parents?
- How am I going to provide 1:1 instruction for struggling students who need special guidance for learning? The child will need to be in close proximity to benefit from instruction. Both the child and myself will be at risk for contamination. IF either of us is a carrier of any illness or the coronavirus.
- At recess time, what are children to do? How will they enjoy physical activities when they need to keep social distance to 6 feet? How will I keep them separated?
- How often and to what extent are teachers expected to perform yard duty throughout the week?
- Where will students eat lunch? I'm told that they could possibly eat in the classroom. Who will watch my students? Where will I go to have a duty-free lunch?
- How will I keep my classroom sanitized? We lost one janitorial position in our school. The janitorial staff will be taxed and have an overwhelming workload.

These are a few questions and concerns I have with what I'm tasked to do with opening school on August 4, 2020. It's simply too EARLY and I'm not ready. I have apprehension and anxiety because I stand on uncertainty in many areas that should be addressed BEFORE we bring students on campus.

We, our entire community, should have clarity and specific directions reassuring our SAFETY is of utmost concern and will be in place before we begin our 1920-2021 school year.

Respectfully,

Christine Putzulu | 1st Grade teacher | Daniel K. Inouye Elementary

Google Docs: Create and edit documents online.

Google LLC, 1600 Amphitheatre Parkway, Mountain View, CA 94043, USA

You have received this email because h4putzulu@gmail.com shared a document with you from Google Docs.



Testimony BOE

From: allan cunanan <allanc23@yahoo.com> on behalf of allan cunanan
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:13 AM
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 UHM graduate and part time resident of Royal Kunia in Waipahu. Please reconsider the opening date for the new school year set for August 4th 2020.

Where I currently reside in California, schools are not reopening for classes for online learning until the end of August or beginning of September.

Regards,

Allan Cunanan

Testimony BOE

From: amrs1102 <amrs1102@aol.com> on behalf of amrs1102
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:14 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony BOE DO NOT OPEN SCHOOL CAN NOT EFFECTIVELY get students to social distance on the entire campus not enough staff to enforce rules

Good morning,

Please reconsider your choice to open schools this school year Fall 2020. Having worked and trained for nearly every department in the school system. I can assure we can not effectively enforce social distancing rules throughout the entire campus. We do not have enough staff to cover the entire campus. When students are not monitor, I have witnessed students will engage in risky behavior regularly. Our school administrators have repeatedly discourage us from catching chapter 19 violations on campus some of which include bullying, harassment, alcohol consumption, vaping, using opiates, and consuming and selling Pseudo Ephedrine on campus. When we request administrators to address school violations we are met with retaliation and harassment on campus. We are asked to monitor traffic On public streets rather than monitor the school population for Ch.19 violations. Our protocols look great on paper. How can we effectively monitor students in stairwells and restrooms when they are sharing vaping devices and making out behind the band Room or building. Let's not fool ourselves and put everyone's life at risk we have families that we go back to everyday and expose them to contaminants from work. When we report the number of incidences/violation to the news media it's approximately 25 incidences. when in reality we have close to over a 150 incidences and violations taking place on our campus who are we fooling. Have a good day.

Aloha,
Concern parent and staff

Testimony BOE

From: Kailee Freitas <mrskaileefreitas@gmail.com> on behalf of Kailee Freitas
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:15 AM
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 a fourth grade teacher at Makalapa Elementary School. I am extremely worried about returning back to school too soon. There are very few plans put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in our schools and NO plans in case someone were to contract the virus.

Teachers WANT to see our students, but we NEED to feel safe. We are not only teachers. We are mothers, care givers; we have lives beyond the scope of our job and it is important that we are treated fairly. This virus is deadly and so much is unknown. I don't understand how you can send teachers and STUDENTS who can't understand the severity of hygiene and social distancing into a shared space every day. Our students are so young. They will act based on what they know. And they don't know what social distancing is. They will not choose for themselves to wear a mask all day. Face coverings should be MANDATORY if and when we return to school.

I hope you hear the cries of our teachers and parents. It is too soon to return to school face to face. We want to provide the best education possible for our kids, but not at the expense of our LIFE.

The school I work at has a large military population. There are no regulations for quarantining or testing for these families that have traveled abroad.

To sum up my thoughts, I saw someone use this analogy, and if you understand being an elementary teacher, THIS explains it all. "If you and 9 friends are using glitter, how many projects have glitter?"

How will you prevent that "glitter" from being spread?

Mahalo.

Testimony BOE

From: Joni Ishikawa <maxjannareid@gmail.com> on behalf of Joni Ishikawa
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:16 AM
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 Joni Ishikawa and I teach at Wailuku Elementary School. I am respectfully asking that we push back the start up date for our schools. We were offered a few technology webinars during the summer, of which I took full advantage of.

Is this the preparation Dr. Kishimoto is speaking of? I have not yet met with my Admin to receive any solid information on specific procedures and plans on health and safety in opening up school; no time in planning on how and when to use the technology skills learned in the webinars; no time to discuss and plan for changes in delivering curriculum with colleagues; and although “ordered”, I have not received any assurance that we have or will have enough PPE for the year. Based on the DOE’s plan,

I will have 2 days of meetings/training for our typical yearly training (OSHA, FERPA, Blood Born Pathogens, etc.) and 2 days to set up my classroom before the children enter school. No extra time for new pandemic training/prep. This is not a safe way to start school in the middle of a pandemic.

My hope is that when teachers start back, we will have more planning time before the students return. I’m a 25 year veteran and want to get back to the classroom in a smart and safe way.

Mahalo 🌸

Joni Ishikawa

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Joshlyn Noga <nogajoshlyn@gmail.com> on behalf of Joshlyn Noga
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:17 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Re: Testimony

On Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 8:46 PM Joshlyn Noga <nogajoshlyn@gmail.com> wrote:

Aloha,

I Joshlyn Noga, strongly oppose the return of students on all campuses across Hawai'i until proper protocols and trainings have been completed. As a classroom teacher at King Intermediate School I am in the presence of the future everyday. As educators our responsibilities extend beyond providing the skills our students need to grow in this world. My first responsibility as my students teacher is to provide a safe space for learning. The lack of transparency from the State of Hawai'i, Board of Education, and the Department of Education is unacceptable. The burden of reopening the entire state should not fall on the shoulders of our youth, educators and their families.

Mahalo!

Testimony BOE

From: Karisa Figueira <karisafigueira@icloud.com> on behalf of Karisa Figueira
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:18 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Delay reopening of school

To Whom it May Concern,

I am an 18 year veteran of the Department of Education here in Hawaii and feel very uneasy about returning to work in a week. We have received little guidance on how to properly prepare our classrooms to safely open school. Other than being told kids need to be 6 ft apart and possibly wear masks during the day (teachers choice) we have been told NOTHING! How is that showing we are ready to return?

Teachers have yet to get in service on proper teaching for distance learning and what is expected and how to run classrooms due to this pandemic. There are so many questions still unanswered.

I personally do not feel safe returning to work with such little guidance. Unless we can do this right and plan ahead , then we should not open at all!

Mahalo for your time,
Karisa Figueira

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Ashley Olson <ms.a.olson@gmail.com> on behalf of Ashley Olson
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:18 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony, July 23, 2020 Item VI G, Differentials

Aloha esteemed members of the Hawai'i State Board of Education-

My name is Ashley Olson and I have been at Lahainaluna High School for the entirety of my career with the Hawai'i Department of Education.

I come from a family of teachers so I have known since the beginning that I would never become rich as a teacher but I never imagined that my students and I would engage in active shooter drills. I never dreamed that I would be directed to risk serious illness or even death as a condition of employment during a worldwide pandemic. I did, however, imagine that I would progress up the salary scale. I thought I would be able to purchase a home as a single woman, and retire after 30 years having earned my 'high three' for retirement at the top of that pay scale.

I was wrong.

Active shooter drills, opening school buildings during a deadly pandemic, and still three steps away from the top of the pay scale. At this rate, it will take another six years to reach it- if I am lucky.

The teacher shortage crisis has been exacerbated by the relatively low pay in Hawai'i but HSTA embarked on an ambitious plan to address the crisis. Those efforts received an excellent boost with the critical shortage area differentials. I am in a hard to staff area. My school has had a Biology line unfilled for the past two years and we had two English lines unfilled for half of this year. We have numerous emergency hires- unlicensed individuals teaching our keiki- and this is a direct result of a teacher pay relative to the cost of living. The differentials were bestowed at the semester and promised for the 2020-2021 school year. They reduced shortages in critical areas by nearly 25%.

For me, personally, the differential meant that I should be able to afford a small condo on my own. That condo is an affordable, workforce housing unit, offered to qualified (eg low income) applicants through a lottery. The idea of my own home, no longer subject to the vagaries of the rental market is huge. Two of my colleagues also qualified for this opportunity. Between the death of my second job and the end of the differential, it will be challenging to afford that condo. I can only hope that my colleagues are not similarly affected.

Teachers were recruited based on the promise- the DOE's promise- of those differentials. It bears repeating- the differentials reduced teacher shortages in critical areas by nearly 25%. To many people, those differentials are life changing. Taking them away is potentially life destroying. Second (and third) jobs are gone and too many teachers need them just to survive as a teacher in Hawai'i. The differentials, now more than ever, are going to be a determining factor in the 'should I stay or should I go' game that so many play every year. If the DOE loses even a quarter of those who are already living on the tiniest of margins, it will be catastrophic.

It may be too much to ask that the issue of salary compression be addressed but please do not go back on the promise of differentials. Pushing thousands of teachers over the edge by reneging on

the promise of differentials will push public education in Hawai'i to the brink, and perhaps over it, into the abyss.

Please do not end the critical shortage area differentials and let's not pretend that 'suspend' does not mean 'end'.

Mahalo for your time-

Ashley Olson

Testimony BOE

From: Jennifer Scelsa <jscelsa86@gmail.com> on behalf of Jennifer Scelsa
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:20 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Hello,

My name is Jennifer Hirokawa and I am a 2nd teacher at Ewa Elementary School. I am writing a testimony for [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 feel there are too many unanswered questions to be ready for kids to be back in person. These unanswered questions make a difference for me in feeling safe going back to teaching. 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 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? Also, how will schools determine that newly enrolled students, especially those from military households, followed 14 days of proper self-isolation upon arrival in Hawaii?

As for the operational side of teaching virtually there was minimal training if any. It was voluntary and sent by email, which not everyone checks during the summer. Do not put guilt on us teachers because we did not choose to do extra work on our time off. There are too many unanswered questions here as well! 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? 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 mean it is a joke that we are even needing to argue with you about teachers not feeling safe going back and you won't even meet in person. The fact that our state let out prisoners because of the worry of a COVID outbreak but will open schools without an adequate plan/training is crazy! Please consider either answering all these unanswered questions with adequate plans and information or hold off on schools opening until you do so.

Thank you,
Jennifer Hirokawa
Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Johnnetta Piper <8plentysugar@gmail.com> on behalf of Johnnetta Piper
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:21 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony - cuts to shortage differentials

Aloha BOE,

Thank you for your continuous efforts to help Hawaii children thrive.

Did you know nationally more than half of new Special Education teachers will leave our profession in five or less years?

Did you know if these teachers last more than those five years, chances are, they'll still leave in ten?

Hawaii leads the nation in teacher turnover and the most likely to have unqualified teachers in our classroom, in comparison to other states. Special education is impacted by these facts, nationally and locally.

Special education needs your help! We cannot backtrack on our Phase 1 differential payments. We are only scratching the surface in closing gaps in special education. There is much needed work, but getting special education teachers to commit is the first step. If you don't have us, then you have no solutions. Keep the incentive alive to help Hawaii special education and fulfill those promises to our special populations.

Mahalo nui loa for time and attention to my concerns.

Sincerely,
Johnnetta Piper

Testimony BOE

From: Evelyn Sasamoto <esasamoto@gmail.com> on behalf of Evelyn Sasamoto
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:21 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony: Concerns from a teacher who has been in Hawaii for just one year

I am a Japanese language teacher at Kealakehe High School. My name is Evelyn Sasamoto.

As a teacher who is relatively new to Hawaii, I am extremely concerned about the possibility of teachers losing our differentials. I have worked in Hawaii for just one year and have been shocked at the very high cost of living here and the proportionately extremely low salary for teachers. Even with the differentials, I have found it challenging to rent an apartment (with very high electric bills) that is safe and comfortable for an older woman living alone with no family in Hawaii to lean on for support/assistance if needed.

I moved here from Japan and find the cost of living as high as in Tokyo. However, the salary and benefits for teachers is not as high as I had in Tokyo. Of course, I checked on these things before deciding to teach here, but even so, I was caught off guard regarding the high amount of deductions from teachers' paychecks. With rent costing more than half of my take-home salary, I find it necessary to pinch pennies just to survive. Without the differential, I am not sure if I can continue to live here on just my teacher's salary.

Like other teachers, I also spend a fairly large amount of my own money and time for buying or creating teaching aids and supplies for my students. It's not a complaint, it's just the way we teachers try to assist our students so that they can be more engaged in learning.

I understand about the current lack of tax income from the no-tourism environment. I understand that something has to give; however, if Hawaii wants to provide a good education through its public schools, it really needs to give importance to teachers' salaries, differentials based on a variety of needs, and ways to attract and keep experienced professional teachers. The need to educate our children does not diminish or disappear just because the income from tax does.

Deciding how to cut state-wide budgets in difficult times can't be easy. But cutting the differentials that teachers truly need in order to remain and live in Hawaii without financial collapse must be considered a priority -- for the future of the state, not only to merely get through the current crisis.

Please consider the plight of teachers who depend on the differentials just to survive in Hawaii. They are already being asked to risk so much during this COVID 19 pandemic. Please don't add to that level of risk by cutting the differentials they really need to live here on a teacher's salary alone.

Sincerely,

Evelyn Sasamoto
Japanese Language Teacher
Kealakehe High School

Testimony BOE

From: sylvie bright <sylvie.bright@yahoo.com> on behalf of sylvie bright
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:22 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha all,

Although my dream is to go back to the classroom, and be with my new 6th graders, I realize we are so inadequately prepared to do so. I walked in my classroom yesterday, to find all my boxes ready to unpack, and the realization that I have no idea what is going to unfold.

We have no real plan, except to open up the school... We have no idea what is going to happen if a student, teacher, custodian, cafeteria worker, or volunteer contracts this virus. Who will be tested? Who will pay for the tests? How will we know if a student/staff member/family member has contracted the disease and is now in quarantine? How will we disinfect our classroom? after each class? At the end of the day? What happens in secondary school when teachers see in the upwards of 100 students a day,? Do we all get quarantined if we have a student in common?

We really have no plan to ensure safe social distancing in the playground, or how students will change classes, or what happens when students or adults want to use the public bathrooms. We have no plan on how in the first few days of school on how to address rules on masks, social distancing, schedules, etc and how to communicate this to our families and staff members. In other words we may have ideas but no concrete plans!

We must delay the opening of schools in order to form concrete plans that will keep our students, their families, and ALL school staff members safe, and be able to communicate the plans to our communities so that everyone has a clear view on what the expectations are. After all, this is what teachers do at the beginning of each year, lay out the expectations for our school, and for our classrooms, we go over the Chapter 19 booklet, we teach our procedure and routines, etc That is good teaching. What we are doing right now is NOT good practice.

Mahalo for your time,

Sylvie Bright
Waikoloa School
Big island

Testimony BOE

From: Alialani Yamafuji <alialani@uoregon.edu> on behalf of Alialani Yamafuji
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:22 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Alialani Yamafuji, General Business Meeting (full Board));
Department's temporary discontinuance of shortage differentials ; and
oppose

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Jamie Kunisaki <missjamiekay.58@gmail.com> on behalf of Jamie Kunisaki
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:23 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: face mask

Are clear face masks an acceptable replacement to a cloth face mask that CDC recommends as best PPE? See example of clear face mask below.

This is regarding Teachers grades Pre-K to 1st Grade - to wear during the entire school day.



Kindest Regards,

Jamie Kunisaki

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: euclido <euclido@protonmail.com> on behalf of euclido
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:23 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: School bus drivers

Aloha,

I'm a school bus driver in Hilo. I'm 64 with per-existing health issues that put me at high risk of serious illness and death if I contract Covid-19. I cannot afford to quit or retire and I'm not alone. Many of my co-workers are in the same situation. I've been driving school bus for nearly 16 years and I KNOW that my elementary age riders will not listen! At present I don't have intermediate age riders but they are impossible to control! Small children often forget to cover their faces when coughing and sneezing. They NEVER listen no matter what I say or do when it comes to sitting in their seats before we leave the school and constantly run in and out of the bus while hanging out by the door and me! How do we get them to social distance? We don't get aids in the large buses and considering the financial situation at this point, there's no way school bus companies will pay to have additional adults paid on the buses to keep kids under control during their rides! As a driver; it's extremely important that most of my awareness is kept on the road so it's difficult to keep a large bus with kids under control! Please help! Can we drivers at least have access to N95 masks? I don't want to die!

Euclid A. LoGiudice

Sent with ProtonMail Secure Email.

Testimony BOE

From: Alialani Yamafuji <ayamafuji18@punahou.edu> on behalf of Alialani Yamafuji
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:23 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Alia Yamafuji

General Business Meeting (full Board));
Department's temporary discontinuance of shortage differentials ; and
oppose

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Alialani Yamafuji <aliayamafuji@gmail.com> on behalf of Alialani Yamafuji
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:24 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

A. Yamafuji
General Business Meeting (full Board));
Department's temporary discontinuance of shortage differentials ; and
oppose

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Cathy Lott <catstenzel@yahoo.com> on behalf of Cathy Lott
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:24 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Start of school year concerns

I am a teacher here in Hawaii. I have serious concerns on the lack of the consistency and requirement regarding the students wearing masks. This is being left up to interpretation and at my school each teacher gets to decide what happens within their classroom due to the lack of direction from the board of education on the requirement of masks.

Recess is also a big concern. I work at a school where it rains basically daily. We do not have the space to hold recess without the students being together and breaking their “bubbles”. They cannot all spread out in the one covered court area we have. We have talked about indoor recess, but how to give the teachers their break during this time is also a challenge since we have lost so much funding and we do not have enough support staff to cover the breaks. This is also going to be a challenge for lunch.

Another concern that I have is about the lack of time for teachers to prepare for online education and prepare lessons for the students that will be online for half of the week. Teachers are not being given extra planning time during the week once the first two weeks of school is over. There is no direction as to what the online education will be for the blended students and that is being left up to each school to figure out on its own for each teacher to create their own lessons.

We need more time to plan to bring teachers back and give them the opportunity to learn how to be online teachers to prepare their classrooms for students to be at a distance and to prepare the support (EAs, adult supervisors and PPTs) for how to properly make sure we are all safe and spreading this virus.

The whole notion of a “bubble” is ridiculous. Once the students leave, the bubble is broken and we have no way of knowing who they have come into contact with.

Please, we need more time to plan and make sure we are safe. I am over the age of 50, I have family members who live with me that are 60. This is scary and I do not want to be the reason why my family gets the virus when we have been so careful and have been staying home most of the time these last few months. Now seeing the numbers increase and to think about going back out in the community is not the safe thing to do until we can figure out how to keep us all safe.

Thank you for your hard work and listening to my concerns.

Cathy

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

Testimony BOE

From: Joanne Acoba <joanne.acoba@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Joanne Acoba
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:26 AM
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

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 shishido <amys4@live.com> on behalf of amy shishido
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:27 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Re-opening of schools

To the Board of Education members,

I am a 7th grade Math teacher at Kawananakoa Middle School. I plan on returning to school next week. However, with each school level faculty meeting, press conference from members of the Department of Health and the Superintendent, and news report, I become more reluctant because I hear conflicting instructions. This confused messaging makes me feel uneasy about returning to school. Understandably, parents must be totally confused. I would like written guidelines prior to opening schools.

In addition, **synchronously teaching the same lesson** to students virtually while students are sitting in front of us in class? This equates to a substandard lesson for the students who physically come into school as teachers will be limited to only lessons/activities that students could do virtually. Teachers at my school were told that it had to be this way. I'm most frustrated by this decision.

Please consider postponing the start of distance learning until everyone is on the same page and clear written guidelines are available. Thank you for your time.

Amy Shishido
Kawananakoa Middle School Teacher

Testimony BOE

From: akemi nakamura <kemikehaulani@icloud.com> on behalf of akemi nakamura
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:28 AM
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 classroom teacher I am terrified of the consequences that will occur if students and teachers return to school in August.

I have not seen the DOE take into consideration and share a clear and fair plan if and when a teacher is sick. I don't think it should come out of my sick days if we are in the middle of a pandemic and I come down with Covid. You are forcing us to be exposed when we could teach online safely. This is a risk the state is taking and they should make it clear that they will take care of us. I don't believe you will. I am not making the choice to put myself at risk voluntarily. The state has made this choice to put myself, my family and my students directly at risk.

A hybrid plan will not work if we open too early. Teachers need clear guidelines and consideration for all scenarios from the top down. Teachers need time to collaborate, and plan curriculum together longer than the current time anticipated. We need clear communication to the community to enforce specific guidelines. Teachers should also be given choice for all online classes. The state went back on their word of not reopening until the outbreak had subsided. We have had an increase in covid cases recently.

Plexiglass and PPE should be present before students arrive! (\$350 per plexiglass partition just for a teacher) without these partitions, proximity is impossible! We may as well not be physically in the classroom! Students in the back will be straining to see or hear! If masks are on, we will struggle to hear each other all day. August will still be hot and humid in my classroom. We struggled to function in the heat before with out masks.

Please consider the lives of everyone! We are human beings that love our children....but we also want the basic right to a safe work environment. Please change the opening date until after there are assurances that covid has substantially subsided and we have clear and equitable resources and plans for reopening.

Mahalo,
Akemi Faria
3rd grade teacher

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Anna Aoki <annyan83@yahoo.com> on behalf of Anna Aoki
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:28 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

I am a first grade teacher on the island of Hawaii. I'm writing to testify for delaying returning of students to school. I know for a fact that my school is underprepared to reopen our school safely for students. There has not been a word about proper procedures in place for reopening. There are SO many logistics that need to be in place before opening the schools for students. Not to mention teachers needing proper trainings to effectively implement distance learning and a new model of instructions. Delaying returning of students would give extra time to schools to work on, implement, and reassess safety protocols and procedures. It would give teachers time to properly be trained on using technology and plan effective instructions.

Please hear our voices and extend preparation time for schools and delay returning of students to schools.

Mahalo,
Anna Aoki

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Kevin Huggins <cavinhuggins@gmail.com> on behalf of Kevin Huggins
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:29 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Dear Board of Education

My name is Kevin Huggins. I am a teacher at King Intermediate in Windward district on Oahu. I am submitting testimony for action Item

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

We are in difficult times and I understand the budget needs to be balanced, but don't do it on the backs of our most vulnerable children and the teachers that work with them. There is already enough uncertainty with the Governor, who is threatening to make drastic cuts to government worker salaries, including teachers. If that happens, and the pay differentials disappear, the number of teachers leaving the profession in Hawaii will be unprecedented. Now is the time to take action. Please provide enough funds for the pay differentials for teachers in special education, Hawaiian language immersion, and hard to staff positions to show that we as a state value our hardworking teachers. Our teachers are worth it as they are important for the future of our keiki.

We need your help. Mahalo.

Kevin Huggins, Windward District, Oahu

Testimony BOE

From: Lynn Clore <lynnclore@yahoo.com> on behalf of Lynn Clore
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:29 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Training

As of this date I have received no training for the opening of school. Our school has a tentative meeting scheduled prior to August 4th. I have many questions as to safety and health also changes in my contract. I'm finding it interesting how people who work in air conditioned buildings can mandate the wearing of masks and face shields in classrooms that barely have fans.

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Stacia Haban <staciaann1971@yahoo.com> on behalf of Stacia Haban
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:29 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Dear BOE Members,

I am writing as a concerned parent and teacher in regards to the opening of school. I strongly encourage you to delay the opening of school so we can prepare teachers and schools to open safely and with the proper training provided to educators to teach their students via distance learning and in person teaching. Our new normal will require some time to do things right. Your consideration on this matter is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Stacia Haban

Teacher at Pu'u Kukui and a parent of two school-age children

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Mike S <maikosilva@hotmail.com> on behalf of Mike S
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:30 AM
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 Mike Silva, I am a school counselor at Olomana school. My wife and I are both public school educators and we have 3 young kids. Please delay the reopening of Public schools until the DOE follows through on written protocol and practices regarding Covid-19 as was agreed upon in the MOU above. Our entire community, especially our elderly, are deserving of a safe and prepared plan of action with the return of students this Fall. Mahalo!

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Natalia Hussey-Burdick <nataliah@hawaii.edu> on behalf of Natalia Hussey-Burdick
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:32 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Support phased return to school

Aloha Chair and members of the board,

My name is Natalia Hussey-Burdick and I'm writing to support a phased return to school because teachers shouldn't have to write their wills and prepare to die for the sake of our economy.

We can hang on for a few more weeks until we build enough outdoor structures to bring the classrooms outside (like they one they built at Aikahi Elementary, but for ALL the schools, not just the ones in nice neighborhoods).

Please don't put our students and teachers in danger by returning before we're ready.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,
Natalia Hussey-Burdick
Kaneohe

Testimony BOE

From: Tony Carstens <tonycarstens@gmail.com> on behalf of Tony Carstens
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:32 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

My name is Tony Carstens and I am a resident of Lahaina on Maui. I am writing to the Board as a concerned citizen after having watched Dr. Kishimoto's rather vile video where teacher's concerns are forcibly countered with musts without actually having done the work of preparing.

It is patently ridiculous for her to say that schools are ready. Both Principal and Teachers are pretty vocal they are not.

It has long been disheartening how little of value our society places on teachers. This pandemic has only illuminated this. I think it's clear to many that our teachers are nothing more than cheap child care so that we can bring tourist money and tourist viruses back to the islands as quickly as possible.

If you are reading this I'd kindly ask you to look deep in yourself and ask what is the real objective of the education system? Is it to provide daycare at all costs, or is it to foster education in a safe environment?

Regards,
Tony Carstens

Testimony BOE

From: Kahana Ho <kahanakitty1@icloud.com> on behalf of Kahana Ho
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:33 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: General Board Meeting 7/23/2020 Agenda Item H: Testifying in Opposition

Kahana Ho, M.Ed.
Nu'uuanu, Hawai'i
kahanakitty@gmail.com

7/22/2020

Hawaii State Board of Education
P.O. Box 2360
Honolulu HI 96804
Phone: (808) 586-3334
Fax: (808) 586-3433
BOE.Hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov

Re: General Meeting 7/23/2020 Agenda
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](#)
Testifying in Opposition

Aloha, Members of the Hawaii State Board of Education:

As a theatre artist, who also trained in Education, whose career is, like education, built on the idea of interpersonal interaction as a foundational premise of its existence and practice, I am concerned about the plan to reopen schools in any other fashion than remote/on-line on August 4th, prior to adequate control of the CoViD-19 pandemic.
CoviD-19 is not just a threat to life, but to long-term health

I do not believe there are “acceptable losses” of lives or long-term health in the schools; schools are not battlegrounds, whether of guns, or viruses, any more than there are in theatre. In both theatre and school, the first consideration always is safety.

We do not have, as a state, nation, society, adequate community-based control of the SARS-CoV2 virus, even with masking/face shields, hand washing, and physical distancing, as evidenced by our inability to control community spread of the virus with these interventions in place. A major problem is that we do not have readily available proactive, preventative on-the-spot, immediate-result testing of asymptomatic/presymptomatic persons, who still are capable of infecting others. Another problem is that we do not have a comprehensive system of mandatory contact tracing. What we do have, is a reactive post-infection contact tracing model, which is inadequate without adequate resources and knowledge base for treatment to prevent death and long-term health impairment. As a result, in the world of theatre, radical transformations are occurring, difficult reframings of how to conduct theatre, developing new genres and modalities that are not rooted in face-to-face in-person contact with fellow artists or audience; we have undertaken this, knowing that the results are different, perhaps not ideal, but trusting that the prevention and treatment technology necessary to conquer the pandemic eventually will prevail, and we will be able to resume our traditional approaches to our craft.

Given the inadequacy of current community-based interventions, I believe that the proposed reopening of the schools with contractual modifications and conditions of work related to CoViD-19 response does not adequately address prevention of such losses. Specifically, I believe there are inadequate provisions for

- a) immediate-result testing of asymptomatic/presymptomatic individuals,
- b) continuous contact screening of all individuals

Without these interventions in place, reopening on-site/in-person education is simply trusting that the same interventions in place in the community will produce better results in the classroom, or else is establishing a threshold of “acceptable losses” of life and life-long health impairment.

I also am concerned that once an infection occurs in a school, it will multiply the effects in the community, exacerbating an already untenable situation. We cannot afford to add new disease vectors in the community.

I therefore respectfully request that the Hawaii State Board of Education delay reopening on-site/in-person educational activities, restricting educational activities to remote/on-line learning, until such time that immediate result testing of asymptomatic/presymptomatic individuals, along with a comprehensive model of mandatory contact tracing is implemented.

With deepest aloha and mahalo

Kahana Ho

Nuʻuanu, Hawaiʻi

kahanakitty@gmail.com

Testimony BOE

From: Yeseul Do <yeseul.do@campbell.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Yeseul Do
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:31 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony
Attachments: Testimony.docx

Dear Board of Education,

I've attached my testimony opposing the July 23 BOE General Board Meeting agenda item G Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Yeseul Do

--

Yeseul Ashley Do
James Campbell High School
9th Grade English SpEd
D-105 || (808) 305-3769

July 21, 2020

Dear Board of Education,

My name is Yeseul Do and I am a Special Education teacher at James Campbell High School. I am writing in regards to the July 23 BOE General Board Meeting agenda item G Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year. I am writing to oppose the motion to temporarily discontinue these pay differentials in the interest of our students, teachers, and the community at large.

The first and most important reason is that our keiki are hard to fill schools and special education deserve the best teachers and these differentials have been proven to be successful in retaining and attracting qualified teachers. I myself began last year without special education credentials or even a teaching license but was expected to develop and implement individualized education plans for sixteen students last school year without much formalized training prior. Working as a special education teacher is difficult, thankless work. During the distance learning period in last quarter, I spent up to 100 hours working to individually conference with my special needs students, calling parents on a weekly basis to make sure the parents felt supported, and this was on top of the dozens of special education documentation I had to keep up with till the end of the school year. While I love working with students and their families to provide them the best education possible, the pay is low and it is extremely difficult given Hawaii's high cost of living.

One of the things that gave me hope and encouragement during my first year teaching was when the financial incentive for special educators was introduced in the beginning of 2020. I felt that my efforts were being noticed from the department of education and that the people higher up in the system understood the challenges of being a special education teacher. I knew that I would be compensated extra for my special education license in the following school year and even decided against leaving the special education department when asked. This is an injustice to our most vulnerable keiki and one that will continue if these differentials are not continued.

Now is the time we should be most willing to compensate our teachers and those on the frontline of the coronavirus. Teachers are being asked to put themselves and their families at risk in going back to teach in the fall. This temporary suspension amounts to a paycut and a slap in the face to those risking their lives to support our keiki. If the differential is discontinued, I feel that it would be immensely difficult for myself and other SpEd teachers to continue this job especially during the pandemic. I have been the only family member working full time since March and the livelihood of my family depends on my work.

I implore you to do the right thing and maintain these differentials for our students, teachers, and their families at stake.

Sincerely,

Yeseul Do

Testimony BOE

From: Kristi Okura <kristiokura@gmail.com> on behalf of Kristi Okura
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:35 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Delay in students starting school

Aloha, my name is Kristi Okura, a Kindergarten teacher in the Central District and a mother to 1 school age & 2 middle school children. I strongly believe that opening school on Tuesday August 4, 2020 is too soon.

As I go into my classroom to prepare for the children to come in for our Kindergarten testing days, my classroom isn't ready for the children to come in. There are many procedures and protocols that need to be worked out prior to welcoming everyone back to include new children & their families.

I have heard many family members and close friends talk about not wanting to send their child back to school because they don't feel safe and there's no set plan on what will be done in the event of a child or adult contracting the virus.

Providing teachers the time to better prepare along with their administration on how things should be handled will allow teachers and parents feel safer returning to school. I strongly believe that we all need to be on the same page and work together as one team in order for a successful school opening and school year. The children have lost too much instructional time that I believe as a teacher, I need to be fully equipped to provide instruction and know the various protocols/procedures to relay to the children in my class & their families.

1. What protocols in place when a child or adult tests positive for COVID19?
2. How is the state providing services to families who do not have the medical coverage for testing?
3. What services are there for parents who need to work & provide and do not have child care?

Please take into consideration the needs and safety of the children and their families by allowing teachers and administration to gather the necessary information, time to address the various questions & issues, and to have curriculum in place (for both the distant and in person learning) to effectively start bringing children back on campus.

Thank you for your time.
Sincerely,
Kristi Okura

Testimony BOE

From: tracy deshield <rainbow61@hawaii.rr.com> on behalf of tracy deshield
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:36 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha BOE members,

I'm emailing you to let you know that 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. 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. 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.

I for one with a number of my colleagues weren't even aware of such trainings. There are numerous teachers who aren't prepared and need training on how to switch to distance learning and are extremely nervous because they aren't.

Personally, I feel that I will be doing my students an injustice because I'm not able to deliver a good distance learning program. It's not fair to the teachers or students who count us to provide a good curriculum either in person or through distance learning.

A few of my colleagues have said numerous times that they would've retired if they'd had know that they weren't going to get the proper training for distance learning.

They are now left with the fact that they won't be prepared for their students. This is causing more stress in their lives and is making them physically sick.

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.

I personally would rather be face to face with my students if I were 100% guaranteed that all the necessary safety precautions were in place but that's not the case.

We aren't even prepared for distance learning in all of our schools.

Please postpone opening our schools until the necessary tools are all put into place. I would love to receive the proper training so that I could incorporate distance learning for my students.

Mahalo,
Tracy

Testimony BOE

From: Kahana Ho <kahanakitty@gmail.com> on behalf of Kahana Ho
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:38 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: General Board Meeting 7/23/2020 Agenda Item H: Testifying in Opposition

Kahana Ho, M.Ed.
Nu'uuanu, Hawai'i
kahanakitty@gmail.com

7/22/2020

Hawaii State Board of Education
P.O. Box 2360
Honolulu HI 96804
Phone: (808) 586-3334
Fax: (808) 586-3433
BOE.Hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov

Re: General Meeting 7/23/2020 Agenda
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](#)
Testifying in Opposition
(re-sending testimony; original was sent from wrong e-mail address)

Aloha, Members of the Hawaii State Board of Education:

As a theatre artist, who also trained in Education, whose career is, like education, built on the idea of interpersonal interaction as a foundational premise of its existence and practice, I am concerned about the plan to reopen schools in any other fashion than remote/on-line on August 4th, prior to adequate control of the CoViD-19 pandemic.
CoviD-19 is not just a threat to life, but to long-term health

I do not believe there are "acceptable losses" of lives or long-term health in the schools; schools are not battlegrounds, whether of guns, or viruses, any more than there are in theatre. In both theatre and school, the first consideration always is safety.

We do not have, as a state, nation, society, adequate community-based control of the SARS-CoV2 virus, even with masking/face shields, hand washing, and physical distancing, as evidenced by our inability to control community spread of the virus with these interventions in place. A major problem is that we do not have readily available proactive, preventative on-the-spot, immediate-result testing of asymptomatic/presymptomatic persons, who still are capable of infecting others. Another problem is that we do not have a comprehensive system of mandatory contact tracing. What we do have, is a reactive post-infection contact tracing model, which is inadequate without adequate resources and knowledge base for treatment to prevent death and long-term health impairment. As a result, in the world of theatre, radical transformations are occurring, difficult reframings of how to conduct theatre, developing new genres and modalities that are not rooted in face-to-face in-person contact with fellow artists or audience; we have undertaken this, knowing that the results are different, perhaps not ideal, but trusting that the prevention and treatment technology necessary to conquer the pandemic eventually will prevail, and we will be able to resume our traditional approaches to our craft.

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- a) immediate-result testing of asymptomatic/presymptomatic individuals,
- b) continuous contact screening of all individuals

Without these interventions in place, reopening on-site/in-person education is simply trusting that the same interventions in place in the community will produce better results in the classroom, or else is establishing a threshold of “acceptable losses” of life and life-long health impairment.

I also am concerned that once an infection occurs in a school, it will multiply the effects in the community, exacerbating an already untenable situation. We cannot afford to add new disease vectors in the community.

I therefore respectfully request that the Hawaii State Board of Education delay reopening on-site/in-person educational activities, restricting educational activities to remote/on-line learning, until such time that immediate result testing of asymptomatic/presymptomatic individuals, along with a comprehensive model of mandatory contact tracing is implemented.

With deepest aloha and mahalo

Kahana Ho

Nuʻuanu, Hawaiʻi

kahanakitty@gmail.com

Testimony BOE

From: Ray Taguchi <ray.taguchi@gmail.com> on behalf of Ray Taguchi
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:38 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Delay school reopening please

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Ray Taguchi and I am an educator for the state of Hawaii. I am imploring you to delay reopening schools as is currently proposed. There are several reasons for my plea.

1. First and foremost, there are far too many questions that have no answers. For example, what happens to our students who have no mask, let alone supplies, etc..? We have students who come to school with literally nothing every day. So we were told, well, the school will give that student a mask. Alright, are we going to give the student a mask every day?
2. What happens if a student is sick and then tests positive for COVID? Do we quarantine the class? The floor of the building the student's classroom is located? The whole building? Considering the students will be eating in the cafeteria, all those including the cafeteria staff who were in the cafeteria when the infected student ate? All the kids on the playing field, bus, etc...the students was on? So on and so forth?
3. If a teacher has an infected student in their class, does that teacher along with their family now have to quarantine as well? That will have a major impact on a family financially, psychologically, and possibly physically.
4. If a teacher has a student test positive for COVID and they and their class has to go into quarantine, does that 14 day quarantine come out of their sick leave? If so, what if the teacher has multiple kids become infected at different times throughout the year? Does that teacher then constantly have to use sick days? How fair is that to the teacher to lose their sick days? What about new teachers who don't even have sick days accumulated?
5. How do our complex, district, and state resource teachers operate? Considering that they go in to every single school in a complex, district, and state, if a student in a class they support tests positive, do they have to quarantine? If they do, those same resource teachers come and go throughout the day from various schools and their office. So technically, they could be super spreaders and then the entire office, each class, school they visit will have to quarantine?
6. If a teacher is in quarantine and has to use their sick days, do they still have to provide work remotely? How fair is that?
7. We know students will be kids, what happens when students don't wear their masks appropriately, play with their masks, or play with someone else's masks (i.e. jokingly pull someone else's mask off)? I've seen teachers pull their masks down to speak and we know that defeats the entire purpose of a mask. So how do we expect our kids to do so?
8. What happens if a student's parents refuse to have their child wear a mask?
9. Some schools don't have enough hand sanitizer and other disinfectant supplies, so how do the students and staff of those schools ensure safety for everyone?
10. Finally, infections are higher than they were when our entire state shut down. Why, would thousands of students and teachers not be susceptible to those rising infections? Makes no sense to go back when numbers are higher than before. How safe is it to everyone?

As can be seen, there are so many questions that have not been answered or if they have been addressed, it's been a very vague, poorly planned/thought out response. To say infections in schools will not occur is

preposterous. Therefore, we need time to plan, address, and better prepare all stakeholders for reopening. Thank you for your time, take care, and be safe.

Sincerely,
Ray Taguchi

Testimony BOE

From: Grace Mary Watanabe-romias <grace_mary.watanabe-romias@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Grace Mary Watanabe-romias
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:39 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: testimony

Aloha Board of Education Members,

I am asking that you reconsider opening schools on August 4. Schools are not ready to be opened at this time. There is too much uncertainty to safely open up schools to students, teachers, staff and administrators. Schools are not receiving enough support and guidance from the state on how to prepare in both the areas of safety and education. Teachers have not received the training needed to plan for the blending of in-person and on-line learning. We have not received adequate PPE for everyone in our school. We are having to order from CHINA because of the lack of funding.

To keep with the 6 ft social distancing we are having difficulty planning how to safely receive students in the morning and then release them to parents in the afternoon. We are short on both space and supervision. Until the state provides our schools with a more detailed plan for reopening, I have to say that we are not ready to reopen.

Please reconsider opening our schools on August 4.

Thank you for taking the time to accept and read all of the testimonies from Hawaii DOE teachers and administrators.

-- Sincerely,
Grace Romias
Vice Principal
Pu'u Kukui Elementary School
727-3021



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Testimony BOE

From: Pauline Stamsos-Correa <pkstamsos@gmail.com> on behalf of Pauline Stamsos-Correa
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:40 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Delay School Openings

We need to get this right!!! ...for our students and school community. I'm a teacher and a parent. Safety needs to be first. We need the time to work together to figure out how to protect everyone. We love our students and want them back when we can provide and protect them. I urge you to delay opening so we can be successful.

Mahalo

Pauline Stamsos-Correa

Keaau Middle School

Testimony BOE

From: Sutton Healy <sutton.healy@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Sutton Healy
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:40 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: re-opening Hawaii schools

Aloha,

7/22/20

I am a Maui public school teacher. I teach Sped 1-3. My school is small so we chose the model B to accommodate our students and the CDC guidelines. After choosing the model we were expecting to receive additional information about opening guidelines, such as what happens when...guidelines, just to make sense of how we are moving forward and planning for the next school year. This information has not come, leaving us teachers wondering sooooo many things. HSTA has worked tirelessly to share our valid concerns with the department suggesting to push back first day with students to allow time for additional training with teachers.

I received a pay differential in January which was the reason why I committed to another year of teaching, and I hear is possibly not going to continue. My children are not going to be at their schools because of the hybrid models they are home doing virtual learning for more than 50% of their week. Without a pay differential I can't pay for my 9-year-old to go to a child care location (if there are any available), where he can be monitored while doing school work. I need time to figure out what my children are doing while I am at work.

Additional concerns I have are not about safety because unlike most of my colleagues I am not afraid of getting sick, and I believe in my immune system. My concerns lay with the climate of fear across campus's and how we as adults treat in each other, and our keiki over masks, playing with friends, 6 foot distancing, ect...I have witnessed mask bully's and people freaking out on others in a way that is so hurtful and disheartening. Do I want to witness children bullied by fearful adults and other children, do I want my child exposed to this energy, do I want to police children when they aren't wearing their masks properly, or want to give a friend a hug? The answer to all of this is NOOOOOO!!!!

If my principal is unable to allow me to work from home at least on the days my youngest child is at home (3 days a week) I will likely access EFMLEA until these fundamental issues are resolved. I know this is a monumental task for the DOE now, I pray no one loses their minds due to the pressure of this situation.

Sincerely,
Sutton Healy
Haiku El.--
Sutton Healy
Special Education
Haiku Elementary School
(808) 727-3700

Haiku School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies: Tami Marie Haili - Haiku School Principal. 105 Pauwela Rd. Haiku, HI tami.haili@k12.hi.us Ph# 808-575-3000.

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Testimony BOE

From: Jamie K <jamie96740@gmail.com> on behalf of Jamie K
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:40 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

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

As a secondary special education teacher at Kealakehe High on the Island of Hawaii, I can tell you firsthand how important the differential pay has been in bringing teachers into the field of Special Education, keeping SpEd teachers who were considering leaving, and ultimately providing more support to students who are most vulnerable in the public school system. I urge the Board not to lose sight of why the differential pay was approved in the first place. In a state with severe teacher shortages, hard-to-staff schools, Special Education, and Hawaiian language immersion programs have long suffered in ways that are nothing short of debilitating.

There is already an immense need for Special Education teachers to complete unprecedented amounts of tasks as we prepare to reopen our schools since the COVID-19 closure. Losing differential pay on top of that sends the message that the efforts of current recipients are not valued. This is not the time to decrease teacher incentive, nor is it the time to increase the hardship of teachers in hard-to-fill positions. Many of my colleagues have had to maintain weekend jobs to make ends meet in Hawaii. It was wonderful when the differential pay allowed my peers to finally focus on teaching and supporting students with disabilities.

When Governor Ige and the Board of Education first announced the plan to provide differential pay, it was invigorating to know that our leadership was serious about making changes to improve our state's public education system. There have been multiple attempts to address teacher retention and boosting morale through social emotional support, but bottom line, we cannot get by on "thoughts and feelings". We simply cannot fix the teacher shortage problem without offering monetary solutions.

The COVID-19 outbreak has taught us just how important public schools are to the vitality of our entire nation. In this post-COVID world, our public schools are in need of major funding in order to function safely and effectively. We all understand this. Removing incentive from hard-to-staff positions is simply not the right thing to do. It neither makes our schools safer nor more effective. In fact, it would likely drive more teachers out of our field, schools, or profession, placing an unfair burden on those who remain. I sincerely urge the Board to refrain from sacrificing what has been an extremely successful program in just a short amount of time.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Fumi Koizumi-Droge
Special Education Teacher
Kealakehe High

Testimony BOE

From: Gayle Fujita Ramsey <gayle.fujita_ramsey@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Gayle Fujita Ramsey
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:40 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony Action Item G

RE: 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 am writing to ask you to reject the pay proposal to drop pay for Special Education Educators. I have yet to receive it since I only recently graduated from my Master's program and obtained certification in Special Education.

However, do not let this fool you. I am not your traditional educator. I decided to pursue a second career in education focusing on Special Education. With over 25 years in the private sector as an employee, manager, and business owner, with a focus on finance and human resources.

What you are proposing is only going to reduce morale amongst educators and send the message that those who choose to go into Special Education are not valued. While in my Master's program I worked full time as a resource teacher in the Social Studies Department. What this entailed was teaching ALL subjects: each period was a different subject and oftentimes each quarter a different subject. 9 subjects with one period of prep time that needed to be split between the inclusion class I went to 2 to 3 times a week and working my caseload. Remember now, I was also attending classes myself at UH towards a Masters Degree with two areas of certification. Did I mention IEP writing and meetings?

Special Education Educators take on so much for responsibility. The time involved is insane. Caseloads appear to be increasing with no reduction in other responsibilities. First year I had 9 cases. Second year I had 13. This year I will start off with 15. We are not only expected to teach our students, we are also expected to monitor and provide assistance to General Educators to help them provide services to our kiddos.

We have a shortage of Special Education Educators and providing a small bump in pay was a great idea. It sent the message that we recognize how much more we ask of you. We value what you provide our keiki, parents, and school.

As a business owner reducing someone's pay just at the first sign of financial difficulty would only lead to loss of employees because they will look elsewhere for work, morale dropping so customer service will go down, and most importantly sending a message that you are not valued. There is so much waste and misuse of funds in government it is crazy. If a private sector company ran themselves like our government we would have been bankrupt long ago. Why not look at ways to save money? Why not look at how to streamline work using the technology we have? Why not make sure we are utilizing what we have and eliminating waste across the board before cutting pay for anyone?

The answer is because it is easier to cut pay. Don't take the easy way out. Figure out how to work smarter. Figure out where the waste is and stop it.

Do not vote to drop pay. If you do, the consequences will be dire. This is not a threat, it is reality. For the first time, Special Education Educators felt valued. Those that left the SPED department decided to move back into it because they felt valued again.

I have three years to work in Special Education to ensure that I fulfill my obligation to my financial aid I received. Will I stay on after the obligation is fulfilled? I don't know. It will all come down to is it worth doing? Do I feel valued?

Please vote NO.

Gayle T. Fujita Ramsey

808.439.7442

--



Ms. Gayle Fujita Ramsey

808.266.7900 ext. 2252

Resource Social Studies/Care Coordinator

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Testimony BOE

From: RoadRunner <bruce002@hawaii.rr.com> on behalf of RoadRunner
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:41 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Opening schools

BOE. Please Do Not start school Aug 4 for the students because the teachers have not been trained for distance learning. We need time to be trained and then prepare lesson plans for the future. I am a teacher & I have not been trained distance learning. I am fearful that when there is a Covid case in school teachers will not be adequately prepared to teach their students. Give us a few weeks to prepare & Only then if the Covid cases are not spiking, bring the students back. We teachers are afraid to go on the front line but will do so when we are adequately trained with lesson plans prepared for the future. Thank you!

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Sarah Miranda <snbm95340@yahoo.com> on behalf of Sarah Miranda
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:41 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Schools not ready to safely reopen

Good morning. I am a teacher at Mililani High School. And while I agree that students need to be in school, I don't believe that need outweighs the risk of Covid exposure that we will have if we go back without protocol in place to protect us all. I am going to have at least 3 classes of students cycle through my classroom each day. I am not being provided with sanitizing cleaner that can be used on the desks between classes. There is concern that due to supply shortages, there may not be enough hand sanitizer for my students and I to be able to use every day. And most importantly, what protocol is in place to handle when a student tests positive for covid? Our students change classes, which means they can potentially expose dozens of students and a handful of teachers in one day. Will we isolate those exposed, will we quarantine those classes? If we don't have answers to these questions, and the ability to provide sanitizing cleaner consistently in each classroom, then we are Not Ready to return to school safely.

Sincerely,

Sarah Miranda
Mililani High School
Math teacher

Testimony BOE

From: Lara Mangieri <lamangieri@gmail.com> on behalf of Lara Mangieri
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:42 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Differentials

The differential I receive from working in a hard to staff school is important to my family. We depend on this money to get its through the month. Please know that working in a hard to staff school is stressful in that not all teachers are qualified therefore requiring others to pick up the slack and take the time to train them. In addition, there could not be a worse time to take these away when you are asking us to come back into the classroom and risk our lives and the lives of our families. Taking away our differentials is a slap in the face.

Lara Mangieri

Testimony BOE

From: Briley Weaver <brileyweaver@yahoo.com> on behalf of Briley Weaver
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:42 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

My name is Briley Hanohano, and my daughter Madisyn will be starting preschool this upcoming school year. This will be her first year attending school though we have participated in Keiki o Ka Aina for the past 2 years. As a mother, I am extremely anxious for her to begin school seeing as the number of COVID-19 cases continue to rise. I also have a 9 month old son, so we rarely leave the house for fear of contracting the disease.

During our time with the Keiki o Ka Aina program, the staff maintained a clean environment for the Keiki, always sanitizing and cleaning toys. Yet, the facility still needed to be shut down twice due to a minor hand mouth foot outbreak. My daughter did contract the HMF virus and to see her in that much pain was heart breaking. She would fall asleep crying because of the pain from the blisters and I would just hold her and cry because I was helpless. As a parent, that is the hardest thing to do, wishing you could just take the pain away from your child.

The fear of her contracting COVID-19 is gut wrenching.

Most preschoolers are curious. They touch EVERYTHING. Put things in their mouth. Often are forgetful of how to properly wash their hands. It is extremely likely, no matter the precautions that are taken, it is inevitable that younger children Will contract the virus.

Though we are excited to begin the new school year, I feel it should be done virtually or even postponed. Hawai'i is not ready, we are not ready.

Mahalo

Testimony BOE

From: Jessica Tennison <tennison@hawaii.edu> on behalf of Jessica Tennison
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:43 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY SPED DIFFERENTIALS

I am writing today to testify on **Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.** I am Jessica Huggins from James B. Castle High School, Special Education Teacher.

Now more than ever, special education teachers are working twice as hard to educate our students with special needs online, providing in person ESY, individualizing virtual assignments, creating individualized take home packets, etc. We have spent countless hours working from home to prepare and provide our students education to maintain learned skills. Special education teachers deserve for our promise of the pay differentials to be followed through and kept. The most vulnerable students, will hurt the most if you do not keep your pledge to fund the pay differentials for special education, hard to staff and Hawaiian language immersion programs.

Jessica Huggins
Special Education Teacher

Testimony BOE

From: Michael Haring <mcharing1@gmail.com> on behalf of Michael Haring
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:44 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am respectfully submitting testimony about the planned re-opening of public schools in Hawaii, specifically on 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 following is my testimony..

We will not be excluding vectors of transmission with this re-opening plan.

In fact, despite the shortened days, spread out desks, and modified schedules, ours is a plan that **enables** community transmission. The school buses, the lack of a clear mask mandate from districts, and the fallacy of a “classroom bubble” enable this transmission of the pathogen in our schools.

Compound this situation with a lack of frequent testing and tracing, and our entire school day is an aid to the community spread and transmission of the COVID-19 pathogenic disease.

We have yet to take this virus seriously when it comes to public school learning environments, and I do not have any confidence in the plan to re-open public schools as put forth by the Board of Education for the State of Hawaii.

I urge Schools, the Board of Education, and the State of Hawai'i to reconsider this plan as it has been submitted and promoted.

Sincerely,

Michael Haring
Teacher
Hawaii Department of Education

Testimony BOE

From: Nicole Sinnott <nicolesinnott2@gmail.com> on behalf of Nicole Sinnott
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:44 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

My name is Nicole Tarala Sinnott and I am a K-5 Special Education Teacher at Hawaii Technology Academy. I proudly serve and support my students and their ohanas with special education services for seven years in Hawaii. It is not a position I take lightly and truly could not imagine myself working in another field. Over half of those years, my special education classroom had more students with IEP than general education classrooms. The paperwork and its legalities that follow were enough to make someones head spin. Yet my relationship with my students and parents grew, as did my relationship with my principal. We unified to work on a schedule that shifted in student needs, moved support staff around to best support students in the special education and general education classes - all while I was having countless difficult conversations with parents supporting their concerns that they were promised a smaller class size with SPED supports, yet here their child was in an in fact larger classroom size. I shared student progress with parents, both inside the classroom settings, recess fields, and special classes like their Childs' dreaded Drama class. I invited parents and district in to show how our crazy-looking, organized circus was in fact supporting student needs. Without TRUST, my principal would not have been willing to support my crazy ideas of how to make those numbers work to better my students with disabilities. Without TRUST, my parents would not go forward with the promise of a best supporting their child in a special education classroom size much larger than their former general education classroom. Without TRUST, I would not have built relationships with the ever-doubting and scrutinizing General Education Teachers to build a healthy relationship with a student with a disability; rather than ask them to be removed like Special Education Teachers shared the title of school janitor. Without TRUST, I would not have my students with IEPs boasting to their general education peers that they go to a magical place where they are told they can be anything they want to be and do anything they set their mind to. Without TRUST, I would not have had general education students begging support staff and I to please take them with us upon pick up to our special education class, lining up before and after school asking how they can start coming to our classroom, overstuffed with love, optimism, and creativity.

I have never used words in all caps before before the word TRUST is the theme of my letter. All of the adversities above were overcome with that magical word, TRUST. It gets me out of bed each day to continue to fight for my students and their families. It got me through ulcers and incessant jaw clenching when Quarter 3 comes along and my class size doubles.

TRUST. It is what the Special Education Teachers of Hawaii need most from our leaders who promised to help us continue to see the light. We teach our keiki to say what you are going to do and do what you are going to say. The Special Education Teachers of Hawaii who continue to get beaten down by the system, continue to show up and give 110% to our students with disabilities with (an albeit crazy at times) a great big smile on our face, and give the greatest hugs possible to the children that many of our General Education Teachers could not get away from fast enough. We are there. We were told those differentials were ours. We were told our DOE had our best interests as Teachers. I understand the times are beyond difficult and cuts need to be made. I truly do. But the Special Education Teacher differentials are just not the area to make those cuts. Not after what we put into our keiki and their ohanas.

Can we TRUST you to keep your promise?

When cases of COVID-19

started to instill concern amongst the nation and within Hawaii in the 3rd quarter of this past school year, I had discussions with students and families like I have never had before. As a special education educator, I feel on top of having difficult discussions with parents and their children because we have built a trusting relationship. The pandemic and the questions attached to

our students were completely unlike anything I had experienced. I had students chronically worrying about themselves and their peers about any sign of illness. Parents calling that they had heard someone, even a Teacher once, was ill and wanted to better understand if it were COVID-19 symptoms. Once I even had a symptomatic student refuse to go to the health room because "that was where all the people with the virus go!" This was all before March break!

Virtual class and 4th quarter were not easy. I am not pretending it was a bed of plumeria. While I had excellent quality time with students to catch up on targeted intervention on lagging academic skills and better rapport with parents than ever, the conversations about fear and worry remained constant. As an educator who believes wholeheartedly in SEL, I found a need for routine SEL group lunches where students and their siblings could speak freely about their concerns - again to build trust in one another in a safe space in the safety of their own homes.

We must move forward. For the sake of our keiki and our ohanas, we must return to a new normal. With the cases as high as ever before and states slowly shutting things back down, now is just simply not the time to dabble with face to face instruction with loose parameters. Education is not a business. I understand it employs the masses but returning to school puts us all at risk. Educators get hit harder taking in all of the love, and germs, from our students. It is difficult as is to keep students at 6 feet, even adults at 6 feet. I worry that cases will continue to rise and we will all be back in quarantine if this return is not carefully planned out with the most distance allotted. Anyone going face to face is risking their lives. Even on the split schedules, even on the "only students with special education services" days, our Teachers get pummeled with deadly germs. Discrimination much? America's Teachers are in a trap, waving our hands that there are better options without having to risk lives. Admin, Superintendent, Governor, Senate - those folks aren't risking their lives coming into contact with deadly germs - Teachers are. Talk about feeling disposable? I cannot imagine folks are lining up to become Educators after seeing the precedent that is being placed on us during this pandemic.

What long term effects is the return with masks, temp checks, careful and sanitized use of materials, and social distancing going to leave on our students? Is socialization really more important than their precious lives? What happens when a classroom member falls ill with COVID - we know physically, but mentally? What emotionally happens to a child when their Teacher falls ill with COVID? Teachers want nothing more than to see our precious students. With the continual rise in COVID cases, why take the risk of life and death when virtual learning is right there! Remote Learning for all!

We are literally talking about life and death. Our students and Teachers deserve better. We TRUST you can do better.

I thank you and truly appreciate your time and consideration of the viewpoints of the school community.

With aloha,
Nicole

--

Testimony BOE

From: Nate Pontious <nate.pontious@gmail.com> on behalf of Nate Pontious
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:45 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: testimony for delaying school reopening

Hawaii Public schools need more time before opening. There is not a good reason to rush this. It is not a question of wanting to reopen schools; everyone wants to reopen schools.

Doing so now, when there are more cases than last March is not wise. It is true that Hawaii has been strategic and fortunate in its response to COVID-19. The state needs to remain cautious and allow more time for schools to develop safety protocols, administer training, and---not to lose the purpose---readjust their lessons and teaching methods.

There are myriad "What if.." questions that my principal cannot answer, because the state has not answered. In answer to questions of proximity risk and special circumstances, the answer is that "it is the teacher's personal choice." I disagree with this--it is your choice.

The state is choosing to reopen the schools before they are ready, putting administrators, teachers, and staff in the awful matrix of potential personal choices where one option is risk of disease for which there is yet no vaccine.

Many of us aren't sleeping. Some questions that keep me awake: Which island will have the first school closure? Which student will be infected first? What is that student doing right now?

Sincerely,

Nate Pontious
Kauai High School

Testimony BOE

From: Michael Haring <mcharing1@gmail.com> on behalf of Michael Haring
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:45 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am respectfully submitting testimony about the planned re-opening of public schools in Hawaii, specifically on 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 following is my testimony..

We will not be excluding vectors of transmission with this re-opening plan.

In fact, despite the shortened days, spread out desks, and modified schedules, ours is a plan that **enables** community transmission. The school buses, the lack of a clear mask mandate from districts, and the fallacy of a "classroom bubble" enable this transmission of the pathogen in our schools.

Compound this situation with a lack of frequent testing and tracing, and our entire school day is an aid to the community spread and transmission of the COVID-19 pathogenic disease.

We have yet to take this virus seriously when it comes to public school learning environments, and I do not have any confidence in the plan to re-open public schools as put forth by the Board of Education for the State of Hawaii.

I urge Schools, the Board of Education, and the State of Hawai'i to reconsider this plan as it has been submitted and promoted.

Sincerely,

Michael Haring
Teacher
Hawaii Department of Education

Testimony BOE

From: Ashley Malama <ashleymalama@gmail.com> on behalf of Ashley Malama
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:46 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Do Not Open Schools

Aloha,

I am strongly against the reopening of schools on Aug. 4th. I am a high risk adult with 2 high risk children at home, one of which is a newborn baby. By allowing schools to reopen without proper protocols in place to ensure the safety of teachers, like myself, and the hundreds of children we serve we could see a dramatic increase in cases. The school I currently work for has not had proper training in cleaning and maintaining safe environments for our students and staff and distance learning training has been minimal for almost our entire teaching staff. I think we need to rethink our action plan and make sure we have the proper safety measures in place before reopening schools. AUGUST 4th IS TOO EARLY TO OPEN!!!!

Mahalo,
Ashley Malama-Poplardo
4th Grade Teacher
Na Wai Ola Public Charter School

Testimony BOE

From: Dellowyn Schultz <sdellowyn@yahoo.com> on behalf of Dellowyn Schultz
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:47 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: School reopening

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Lila Lelepali <kuupuni001@yahoo.com> on behalf of Lila Lelepali
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:47 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha BOE members,

My name is Lila Lelepali and I am a Hawaiian Language Immersion teacher at Kahuku High and Intermediate schools. I am testifying on action item **H**.

Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding Between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 Contractual Modifications and Conditions of Work Related to COVID-19 Response for Bargaining Unit 5 Employees.

I firmly support HSTA in asking the state of Hawai'i and Board of Education to delay opening the schools for students to begin the school year 2020-2021. As a teacher, I feel we are being rushed into opening the school year without receiving proper preparations for health strategies and instructional services. I feel that Administration's priority is reopening school and preparing for a safe school environment, expecting teachers to provide safety for all in and out of the classrooms. This sets a precedence in the school since the Covid-19 cases are still increasing every day in Hawai'i; the focus is on safety rather than learning because we are rushing to reopen our schools. I was not one of few teachers that received training for distance learning in the summer. I believe teachers should be better prepared with the health strategies and the instructional services that we were promised but not kept. Please vote to delay the reopening of schools and HELP prepare us to be effective rather than inefficient schools for our keiki.

Lila Lelepali ph: 780-2391 kuupuni001@yahoo.com Kahuku High School work: 293-8950 ext.255
lila_lelepali@notes.k12.hi.us "He ali'i ka 'aina, he kauwa ke kanaka"

Testimony BOE

From: Chris - <alantopher@yahoo.com> on behalf of Chris -
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:48 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Reopening of schools

Please consider delaying the physical reopening of our schools! My name is Christopher Hale. My family lives in Kona Hawai'i. My child is in 11th grade at Kealakehe High School and my wife is a teacher at Holualoa Elementary School. Our family helps to support my elderly parents. I am scared that opening schools at this point, especially with the woeful lack of support and preparedness offered by the DOE, will mean the sickness and death of my family members.

Schools have NOT been provided with the necessary materials, support, or training to open safely. While the Superintendent says training has been provided during the summer- this doesn't apply to the majority of teachers. No extra support staff have been put into place for doing the necessary cleaning that the DOE says will take place. No physical structures such as plexiglass dividers have been installers in school classrooms to help provide for a safe environment. No plans have been created for how to deal with the eventual outbreak- simply stating that the DOE will work with the DOH does not constitute a plan. No allowance for teachers to opt for distance-learning has been even allowed as a topic of meaningful discussion. Nothing has been provided or communicated to me as to how my child will be learning in a 100% distance learning environment. The bubble or cohort concept sounds good in a news briefing, but the reality is that those bubbles or cohorts are not tenable as children are not confined to those groupings even while at school.

The simple truth is that opening schools now will undoubtedly spread the virus and result in illness and death. Please prevent this from happening by delaying the physical opening of schools and work with the DOE to properly prepare for reopening campuses as well as create safe distance learning options for students and teachers.

Mahalo,

Christopher Hale
P.O. Box 390859
Keauhou HI. 96739

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

Testimony BOE

From: buffywhiteman@gmail.com
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:48 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Teacher training and delay of school start date

Dear BOR

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Kazzandra Pokini <punakea7@yahoo.com> on behalf of Kazzandra Pokini
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:49 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: YES to delaying student start date !!!

Aloha BOE ...

5th grade teacher at kula elementary and I say YES to delaying student start date!!! If you really want to provide kids with explicit learning opportunities then schools need the \$\$ for new tech support and time to PD teachers and coordinate the infrastructure for Distance Learning plus the TIME would allow teachers to help prepare a safe learning environment and plan creative ways of teaching in this new system ... we are not ready for the kids please give us time and support ♥ Māhala nui 🙏

K. Pokini
44 Ualaheke Akua Place
Kula 96790

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Debbie Matthews <debbiejomatthews@yahoo.com> on behalf of Debbie Matthews
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:49 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am providing my written testimony concerning [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 an elementary school setting in a key position to implement and monitor services for children. I am in contact daily with an extensive number of children and adults, both assigned to our campus and the general public. My concerns are that facilities are not sufficient and protocols are not clear enough to provide even an intermediate level of protection to me and the people I contact.

It has been stated that young people are more resilient to the disease than adults. I have no evidence that this resiliency exists for keiki who live in poverty. Some of our children do not have access to water or electricity or sufficient food on a regular basis. We know that these deficits impact ability to combat disease, but are not being considered.

We are told that they are in the "bubble" at school. It is avoided that the "bubble" contains all of the outside influences brought to school by every single person.

Finally, in a notation that, apparently would be considered self-serving given the attitude toward teacher safety, I am a senior with a health condition who is the sole support for three adults with multiple existing health conditions. If I contract or transmit the disease, I am endangering myself and ALL persons who depend upon me, both at home and at school. I am asking for the agreements to be adhered to because I am worth it.

Testimony BOE

From: Jonelle Romualdo <jonellevr@gmail.com> on behalf of Jonelle Romualdo
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:50 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am wondering:

What is the plan if an employee or student tests positive for Covid-19 at a school?

What happens if the Health aide is out and we don't have a substitute?

Are the Health Aides getting trained?

As an office assistant is it within my duties to screen people ie take temperatures?

What should be expected of me as an office assistant during this pandemic?

Will we receive proper training before school opens?

How will we receive proper training if we have to be in the office every day?

We have been working through this pandemic taking on more roles than usual with more work thrown at us on a daily basis. What more is expected of us?

Jonelle Romualdo

Testimony BOE

From: Gayle Oura <gayle.oura@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Gayle Oura
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:50 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Thank you for allowing us to share on this matter. Delaying the students return to campus will allow for school to learn the health and safety protocols as well as plan for remote learning for students. Our school had 2 sessions on Google Classroom in May. However, that was just a snippet of what will be required to conduct lessons remotely on a daily basis. Please give the schools time to prepare adequately, learn the safety protocols and also train for remote learning. 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: Ilissa Brown <ilissabrown@yahoo.com> on behalf of Ilissa Brown
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:50 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To whom this may concern,

Hello my name is Ilissa Brown. I am a special education teacher at Wilcox Elementary on Kauai. I'd like to express my concerns 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](#). From experience of teaching PRE-K ESY this summer, it is impossible to keep 6 feet from special education students and keep them safe. Some severely disabled children are not able to wear mask and they require physical help to function in a school environment. My concern is that there are no safety measures in place that keep me and my students safe from COVID and keep them safe in a learning environment. I have severe asthma and if I contracted COVID I would probably die. Therefore, it seems unreasonable to die, when there are other options such as teaching online at this time. Why do I have to choose between my job and my life? Please do not reopen schools until more safety measures are in place. It's impossible to social distance with special needs 3-4 year olds and there are no safety measures in place for that.

Thank you,
Ilissa Brown

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Derrick Rees <derrick73159@aol.com> on behalf of Derrick Rees
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:51 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Differential Pay

Hello: My name is Derrick Rees. I am a special education teacher at Kealakehe High School. I am not a teacher because of the money. However, when special education teachers were given a pay differential last school year I was grateful and excited. With IEP's, caseloads, planning lessons, parent / guardian interactions, and teaching; the work week for a special education teacher can feel demanding. Teaching is the hardest job I have had in my life but also the most rewarding.

I sincerely appreciate the pay differentials last school year. The cost of living here in Hawaii is challenging. That extra pay increase really helped. I am single but can only imagine if I had to support a family on a teachers salary in Hawaii would be tough. Most likely, if I were supporting others besides myself on a teachers wages, I would probably seek employment as a teacher on the mainland. I am hopeful the pay differentials will continue. I believe all teachers should make a higher salary but I realize teaching is a calling and passion.

Thank you, Derrick Rees.

Testimony BOE

From: elizabeth sharrock <elizrocks@yahoo.com> on behalf of elizabeth sharrock
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:51 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony!

Aloha Board of Education,

Well, it's time to do your job. Your very difficult job of protecting our keiki. Your item H. to discuss on Thursday can mean the life or death of so many. We are calling upon you to see that a rush to open serves only to endanger us all. There are quite simply too many unknowns to be opening on August 4th. I implore you to listen to teachers when we say WE NEED MORE TIME.

We need to figure out who we need to hire for one thing, because at my school, (I'm a 7th grade teacher at Kea'au Middle) I've heard of 4 so far that won't even return under current circumstances. Moreover, we need to discuss what we're teaching because many of us feel that if school reopens, we'll be shutting down 100% in a couple months anyway due to breakouts. If this be the case, we all need to be doing the smart thing and making sure teachers are digitizing lessons in preparation for 100% online learning. While an online forum is easy for some, it will be a nightmare for others, and there needs to be time to train. In addition, questions about who to quarantine when the cases come need to be answered.

Many of us see that it's not a matter of If, but when. Be that the case, I will also be advocating for training on how to write a will because I feel as if I am going to put my life at risk by deciding to return. I am a mother as well, and care for two elders and I am looking at this reopening in terms of my family too. Let's face it... Ohana bubbles are many, not one. They are so many, in fact, that they really don't even exist as the DOH thinks they do. To expose my family to 150 more bubbles is horrible to think about. Can we please have some time to digest this poisonous meal we are about to be served!? Thank you for considering my words and passion and thinking about the part you play in so many lives. Listen to HSTA now more than ever. It is the humane thing to do. Period.

Sincerely
Elizabeth Sharrock

Testimony BOE

From: Briley Weaver <brileyweaver@yahoo.com> on behalf of Briley Weaver
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:52 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

My name is Briley Hanohano, and my daughter Madisyn will be starting preschool this upcoming school year.

I am testifying on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of understanding between state of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawai'i State Teachers Association (SY2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

This will be her first year attending school though we have participated in Keiki o Ka Aina for the past 2 years. As a mother, I am extremely anxious for her to begin school seeing as the number of COVID-19 cases continue to rise. I also have a 9 month old son, so we rarely leave the house for fear of contracting the disease.

During our time with the Keiki o Ka Aina program, the staff maintained a clean environment for the Keiki, always sanitizing and cleaning toys. Yet, the facility still needed to be shut down twice due to a minor hand mouth foot outbreak. My daughter did contract the HMF virus and to see her in that much pain was heart breaking. She would fall asleep crying because of the pain from the blisters and I would just hold her and cry because I was helpless. As a parent, that is the hardest thing to do, wishing you could just take the pain away from your child.

The fear of her contracting COVID-19 is gut wrenching.

Most preschoolers are curious. They touch EVERYTHING. Put things in their mouth. Often are forgetful of how to properly wash their hands. It is extremely likely, no matter the precautions that are taken, it is inevitable that younger children Will contract the virus.

Though we are excited to begin the new school year, I feel it should be done virtually or even postponed. Hawai'i is not ready, we are not ready.

Mahalo

Testimony BOE

From: sonia avasthi <soniaavasthi@hotmail.com> on behalf of sonia avasthi
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:52 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Dear Board of Education,

This is Sonia Avasthi from Iao Intermediate School on Maui. I am writing as a 7th year highly qualified (IN ALL SUBJECTS) and tenured Middle School Special Education Teacher to urge board members to reject this proposal.

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 SPED differential has helped me to remain teaching in my position, because I can now pay my rent and put food on the table for my self in an ever increasing time of housing crisis and exorbitant rent on Maui. Previously I lived with friends who were generously housing me.

I want the Board of Education to know that when you retract on the compensation for SPED teachers that you will negatively impact me and my students.

If you discontinue the extra compensation for SPED teachers I will need to find a second job when I would rather dedicate the time to planning creative curriculum for my students and giving them my total and complete best self.

I know that I do a better job when I am paid fairly and a just wage. When you cut my pay you send me the direct message, "teachers don't matter!" So, why should I stay here? If I cannot afford to live here?

Please do the right thing.

Sincerely,

Sonia Avasthi

Testimony BOE

From: koko <koko@hawaii.rr.com> on behalf of koko
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:53 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am in agreement with our union's stance that the terms of our MOU have not been met. I believe that the plan to reopen on 8/4 is 1) not well thought out 2) done for political reasons 3) will have the schools open just to meet the 8/4 deadline, receive Federal funding and then foreclose the schools because of another virus surge. I am of the "high" risk category, so I worry for both my students and myself. Delay school opening.

Sent from my T-Mobile 4G LTE Device

Testimony BOE

From: Jasmine Cachola <jasmine.cachola@yahoo.com> on behalf of Jasmine Cachola
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:53 AM
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'm a concerned parent to a 1st grader at Kapālama Elementary. I'm not comfortable with sending my child to school & opening schools on August 4. I feel for our teachers, education administrators, parents & children who will be affected by this.

Jasmine Cachola

Testimony BOE

From: Chris - <alantopher@yahoo.com> on behalf of Chris -
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:54 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

My testimony relates to the following: [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 consider delaying the physical reopening of our schools! My name is Christopher Hale. My family lives in Kona Hawai'i. My child is in 11th grade at Kealahou High School and my wife is a teacher at Holualoa Elementary School. Our family helps to support my elderly parents. I am scared that opening schools at this point, especially with the woeful lack of support and preparedness offered by the DOE, will mean the sickness and death of my family members.

Schools have NOT been provided with the necessary materials, support, or training to open safely. While the Superintendent says training has been provided during the summer- this doesn't apply to the majority of teachers. No extra support staff have been put into place for doing the necessary cleaning that the DOE says will take place. No physical structures such as plexiglass dividers have been installers in school classrooms to help provide for a safe environment. No plans have been created for how to deal with the eventual outbreak- simply stating that the DOE will work with the DOH does not constitute a plan. No allowance for teachers to opt for distance-learning has been even allowed as a topic of meaningful discussion. Nothing has been provided or communicated to me as to how my child will be learning in a 100% distance learning environment. The bubble or cohort concept sounds good in a news briefing, but the reality is that those bubbles or cohorts are not tenable as children are not confined to those groupings even while at school.

The simple truth is that opening schools now will undoubtedly spread the virus and result in illness and death. Please prevent this from happening by delaying the physical opening of schools and work with the DOE to properly prepare for reopening campuses as well as create safe distance learning options for students and teachers.

Mahalo,

Christopher Hale
[P.O. Box 390859](#)
[Keauhou HI. 96739](#)

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

Testimony BOE

From: Adreanna Clark <adreannapankow@gmail.com> on behalf of Adreanna Clark
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:55 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

My name is Adreanna Clark. I am a 4th grade teacher at Kekaha Elementary in Kekaha, Kaua'i. I am testifying on action item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teacher's 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.

There are several very important issues that still need to be addressed in order for us to safely and effectively open our school to our students.

- 1) There are no guidelines set for what happens when someone in the school community gets COVID 19. Who will be tested, when, what happens to the class, the school? There is also no plan for substitutes. We will need substitutes as we always have, yet we know they will be even less available. What is the plan?
- 2) We are supposed to supply parents with the option to school their kids 100% online. We sent out surveys to parents about this option without knowing HOW that option would run. We are a very small elementary school. Are we going to need to designate a few teachers to be the 100% distance learning teachers? How does that work when need those teachers for their own classes? Also, when were these distance learning teachers supposed to be trained? They have not been trained yet. None of us have received training aside from a 1 day training 3 of our teachers attended for the Kauai pilot program.
- 3) Teachers need time UPFRONT to get training. While I very much appreciate the first 9 days designated as half days to assist with assessment and training time, how can we have students come in and expect to train them on how to utilize all of the new programs and procedures if we ourselves do not yet know them? Why are we rushing? What if we get an infection in the first few days and have to do full distance learning, without having the time to train ourselves or our students on how to do so properly?

There is a better way to do this, and Hawaii DOE always listens and takes into account the expertise of the teachers, and the needs of the communities. I ask you to do so now. Mahalo for all you do.

Adreanna Clark
4th Grade Teacher
Kekaha Elementary

--

As ye have faith so shall your powers and blessings be. This is the balance -- this is the balance -- this is the balance.

Testimony BOE

From: Myles Ibara <thstore29@gmail.com> on behalf of Myles Ibara
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:55 AM
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 proud Elementary School SSC, I am all for opening schools--as long as we can minimize the health risks to our teachers, students and families. It is difficult to explain to parents that there is inherent risk in any plan that brings our kids back to school. How do we ask parents to trust our plans for reopening when we remain unsure of so many critical protocols. The questions posed by HSTA are my questions too.

- 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?

We need written protocols in place and enough time for planning and implementation. It will not be easy to measure the guilt any of us will feel when our first student, teacher or family member contracts this virus. I say when, not if. Please give us the guidance, resources, and time that we need to live up to the expectations of our community.

Sincerely,
Myles Ibara
Student Services Coordinator

Testimony BOE

From: Marta Pe'a <marta.pe'a@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Marta Pe'a
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:56 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

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.

I'm a Special Education Teacher, currently teaching a self-contained classroom. I have NOT received any training in regards to how to safely teach my medically students and also remain safe.

I will not be able to teach within 6, 5, 4, or even 3 feet apart from my students. I will not have the appropriate PPE to use in the classroom, my students require hands over hands method of teaching, how can I provide that?

I will not have the first 9 days of instruction modified schedule in order to have the training because my students require Sped minutes to be met.

I will teach face to face normally like how we did last year- prior to COVID19.

I'm very worry- I don't want to go back to work in this situation. I don't think this is fair to anyone.

I'm valuable too- I need the DOE to have a safe plan for everyone to return, including us teachers.

I won't have any substitute teacher willing to take my class as it is if I get sick.

Please. Help me

Marta

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Testimony BOE

From: Kahana Ho <kahanakitty@gmail.com> on behalf of Kahana Ho
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:56 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: General Board Meeting 7/23/2020 Agenda Item G: Testifying in Opposition

Kahana Ho, M.Ed.
Nu'uano, Hawai'i
kahanakitty@gmail.com

7/22/2020

Hawaii State Board of Education
P.O. Box 2360
Honolulu HI 96804
Phone: (808) 586-3334
Fax: (808) 586-3433
BOE.Hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov

Re: General Meeting 7/23/2020 Agenda
Item G. [Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year](#)
Testifying in Opposition

Aloha, Members of the Hawaii State Board of Education:

I am writing to request that you maintain current levels of funding and staffing for SpEd, HTS, and Hawaiian Language Immersion Program educators.

I have two concerns with the proposed temporary withdrawal of the pay differentials:

- a) The differential seems to have a positive correlation to teacher retention and transfer into high-need specializations, that otherwise are significantly understaffed; while it cannot be proven that it is causative, or that its effects will continue in its absence, the risk from suspending the differential of losing the hard-gained staffing levels is simply too great. Should teachers out-migrate from the DOE, our educational system will revert to the unsustainable losses that have crippled it for years;
- b) The current metrics being used to guide decision making do not include student learning outcomes; rather, they focus on the operational objectives; at the end of the day, we, the public, rely on well-educated graduates. We cannot afford to have such a critical decision, especially at such a critical time as the CoViD pandemic, made that might adversely affect student outcomes which could be prevented by maintaining and improving staffing levels to targets.

I therefore respectfully request that you maintain the differential pay for SpEd, HTS, and Hawaiian Language Immersion Program teachers, at least until such time as we can guarantee that the pool of qualified teachers seeking employment exceeds the anticipated needs.

With aloha and mahalo
Kahana Ho
Nu'uano, Hawai'i
kahanakitty@gmail.com

Testimony BOE

From: Diane Racine <dianer85@gmail.com> on behalf of Diane Racine
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:56 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Training and safety

I have been in school with my special needs student since June 5th. I have received no trading. We have very limited supplies to sanitize and clean. The staff in our class rooms have personally had to move furniture and set up as best we can by ourselves. I want kids back in school and there are a multitude of reasons. Their education, socialization, nutrition and emotional welfare to name a few. I'm worried we can keep them safe the way things are now. Cleaning supplies would be a start. We should not have to buy them all out of our own pockets. Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Testimony BOE

From: Lori Okada <lori.okada@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Lori Okada
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:57 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: my testimony

To whom it may concern,

My name is Lori Okada and I am a second grade teacher at Iliahi Elementary School. I decided last week to retire after only 30 years of teaching. Up until last week I was planning on teaching this upcoming school year. Once or twice a week I was cleaning my classroom and attending optional PD mini workshops in school to prepare for the upcoming year. I assumed the DOE would have everyone return to school with the **highest priority** of keeping teachers and students safe and healthy, but they're NOT! Throughout the summer I found myself advocating for safer measures upon the reopening of schools. I even bought my own forehead temperature scanner since the DOE is not mandating daily temperature checks. Now I find out I might have to be trained to take a no touch temperature????

I am the primary care provider for my 94 year old father and 89 year old mother. I take extra safety precautions best I can to not expose my parents to the covid virus.

Last week Friday our school finalized the 6 ft apart blended schedule. Yesterday letters went out to the parents. There is so much curriculum planning for those in class, as well as those doing the blended distance learning, and those doing total distance learning!!! There is not only curriculum planning, but figuring out daily classroom routines and safety practices like something as simple as borrowing two books daily and sharpening a pencil. **I ask for the reopening of public schools to be delayed to give teachers time to prepare for the many challenges faced in the upcoming school year. Health and safety should come first!**

Sincerely,
Lori Okada
Iliahi Elementary School
Grade. 2 teacher

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Testimony BOE

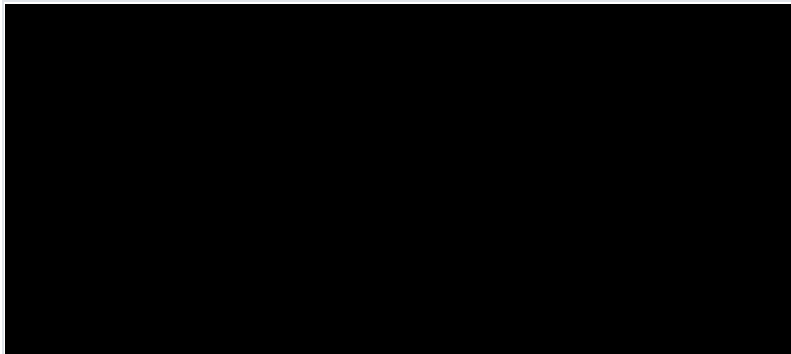
From: B Kuroiwa <bckuro@yahoo.com> on behalf of B Kuroiwa
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:57 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Reopening of School - Please Delay

Dear BOE Members,

I am a teacher at Nimitz Elementary School. I've been teaching for 33 years. I'm in the "at risk" category...57 years old. Yes, I understand the need for younger students to be back in school, but at the risk of my LIFE? We ended school with way less COVID-19 outbreaks than we have today. It's not SAFE!!!!

We need to have a comprehensive PLAN which we don't have.

Please push back the opening of school. There's a [SCIENCE to reopening schools](#). There's a study that has been done, Pam Belluck, a science and health writer for the NYT did a podcast. The podcast has been done with The Daily in New York. Based on her research she says there's data, most coming from the US. They looked at our Day Care Centers that have been open for essential workers. They looked at successful countries and UNsuccessful countries.



The Daily - The Science of School Reopenings

Around the world, safely reopening schools remains one of the most daunting challenges to restarting national ec...

Denmark and Norway had SUCCESSFUL reopening. Their countries had no MASSIVE outbreaks, it MUST be under control in the communities before you reopen schools.

This is what worked only younger students came back. 1 teacher to 12 students, 6 feet apart at all times, masks mandated, limited the exposure, contact tracing easy, they did NOT interact with others outside of their "pod". Constant cleaning and sanitizing occurred. Then they slowly brought back the older students in PHASES (middle school, then high school). The class size restrictions made them successful.

In Israel, they started in "Capsules" but opened up too soon, so outbreaks began.

Sweden never closed - they had teachers and staff die. Not much data from them, due to limited testing.

Therefore, I'm begging you to extend the start of school. Give the teachers ample time to plan it out. Do it in phases. Keep groups small throughout the entire day. Mandate masks to be worn at all times. Make sure schools are supplied with the proper equipment, etc.

Thank you.

Cheryl Kuroiwa
Teacher
C.W. Nimitz Elementary School

Testimony BOE

From: Dodi Pritchett <dodipritchett@me.com> on behalf of Dodi Pritchett
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:58 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Differential Testimony
Attachments: Pritchett Differential Testimony.docx

Please see the attached testimony. Thank you for your work on this issue.

Mahalo,
Dodi Pritchett
<https://about.me/dodipritchett>

I am writing a testimony for the first time in my 7 year teaching career in Hawai'i because this topic is of the utmost importance to me, especially now. I could literally write chapters in a novel as to why taking away teacher differentials for the 20-21 school year is the worst idea, but I'll try to start with a recent narrative.

Primarily, I have a family. Because education should be an occupation that is conducive to raising a family. Since I serve the state of Hawai'i as a public educator, my husband stays home with our young children and takes care of our home while I work. We have four children, six family members in total on my teacher salary--you know how much that is. My paycheck covers our rent, which recently increased by \$600. I don't usually have enough left over from my paycheck to buy groceries, so I use my Costco credit card and put the groceries on that. We have accumulated over \$13,000 debt on that credit card, primarily on groceries and Costco items needed for our household. To try to make enough to pay down our debt, I usually work 2-3 other jobs. Needless to say, we're still behind. I forgot to mention the \$40,000 in student loans I have in order to get the specialized degree needed to work in special education to begin with.

We recently moved to Hawai'i Island from Maui to fill a SPED position at a geographically isolated school. We accepted this position because we felt it was the right move for our family and we understood that I would be paid as promised, with the SPED differential and now, geographically isolated bonus. We paid several thousand dollars out of pocket to move our family, the DOE did not provide one dime. We took an increase of \$600 in rent because we knew I would be compensated, as promised, with the differential. So to hear that the differential might be taken away is devastating to our family, to say the least.

I know that many people across our state are suffering more than I could ever imagine. I do not pretend to compare my disadvantages to others' suffering. However, what we are requesting is not out of greed, but as a matter of survival...especially now during these times where the nature of our work is so risky. To compensate us for all the extra hours we put into our work as promised, is the least the state could do. We need to be supporting as many families as possible right now.

In addition to all of this, I am also credentialed to teach science and social studies and would gladly take the vacant science teacher position at my school if I am not to receive the special education differential as promised. I know from experience, since I transitioned from the general education classroom to the special education classroom, that special educators are putting in more time and have higher stakes involved than many of the general education teachers (not to mention the increase in intensity and accountability due to changes related to Covid-19). I'll gladly trade the hours of IEP meetings, phone calls, family communications, and late nights drafting legal documents for the fun classroom projects I was able to facilitate in my old science classroom! And I was able to do all that without the constant threat of litigation. Heck, I've done the math and it actually makes more financial sense for me to just resign from HIDOE and teach and tutor privately. For my skill set, I could probably earn closer to \$100,000 annually, yet I remain here out of desire to serve the children of Hawai'i and their families. **My**

heart is in Hawai'i. If yours is, you'll protect the differential pay that our teachers deserve and allow us to continue to serve our state to the best of our abilities during one of the most challenging times in history.

Thank you,
Dodi Pritchett

Testimony BOE

From: Jessica Tennison <tennison@hawaii.edu> on behalf of Jessica Tennison
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:58 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY -REOPENING SCHHOLS

I am writing today to submit 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 Jessica Huggins, Special Education Teacher at James B. Castle High school.

I stand with HSTA and agree that the Department of Education is not prepared to bring students back August 4th. As a special education teacher, many of our students are immunocompromised, we have multiple adults in the classroom to provide direct services. Additionally, many students with special needs can not tolerate wearing a mask, and/or can wash their hands independently. Programs for students with special needs are not effective 6ft apart from their 1:1/special educators /paraprofessionals. I ask we delay the reopening of schools.

Jessica Huggins
Special Education Teacher

Testimony BOE

From: Malika Nahina <malika.nahina@gmail.com> on behalf of Malika Nahina
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:58 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha. I am a teacher at Mililani 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 support 100% distance learning for our students as we open the school year. We have seen the increase in cases in our community as we have begun to open back up, and I believe that the opening of school will only exacerbate the problem. Distance learning will allow us to stay in true “Ohana bubbles” thus protecting the health of our students, teachers, staff and all of our ohana at home.

If our health and safety is truly a priority, then all measures of protecting us should be in place before we return to the classroom.

One specific measure is temperature screening. Travelers are being temperature checked by the National Guard at our airports and a KHON2 headline this week read: “National Guard conducts temperature checks at state courthouses.” In both cases you are not allowed to proceed past the checkpoint if you have a fever of 100.4 degrees. This screening will not be occurring at our public schools.

Why are students, teachers and the school community not being provided the same level of care? We have been told that there are not enough resources.

We must recognize that our children are our most valuable resources. Additionally, teachers are also a resource, and data has shown that supply is limited in Hawaii. Let’s not exacerbate this problem.

Let’s protect us all and postpone the re-opening of our campuses to students.

Aloha,
Malika Nahina

Testimony BOE

From: Leah Rampolla <leahrampolla@gmail.com> on behalf of Leah Rampolla
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:59 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: testimony

Dear Sir or Madame:

I am testifying in regard 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.

My name is Leah Rampolla, and I am a full time licensed English teacher at James Castle high school. I have significant concerns regarding the August 4th start date for students. Currently, there seem to be too many unresolved issues that are detrimental to the health,safety, and learning of the school population and the community as a whole. Opening schools prematurely, without adequate implementation of health and distance education protocols, can exacerbate already existing critical issues in our state. I am respectfully requesting the BOE allow more time to address these issues, in the interest of protecting our ohana. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Leah Rampolla, M.A.

Testimony BOE

From: Marta Pe'a <marta.pe'a@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Marta Pe'a
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:59 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

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)

Please continue with the differential for Sped Teachers. It was promised for this school year. Without this, I won't be able to continue in this field. I will have to resign my position only one week before school starts. DOE promised to pay, please help us.

Thank you

Marta

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Testimony BOE

From: Lori Misaka <lorimisaka@gmail.com> on behalf of Lori Misaka
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 7:59 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony regarding delaying students' return to classrooms

Aloha Members of the Board of Education:

I am emailing my testimony regarding Action Item [H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association \(SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response\): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.](#)

I am a teacher at Waipahu High School, and my sons will attend Mililani 'Ike Elementary School, Mililani Middle School, and Mililani High School. As a teacher and parent, I am asking you to delay the return of students to campuses in order to ensure that teachers and administrators have an appropriate amount of time to prepare for distance and/or hybrid learning, which takes much longer to train, prepare and plan for than a usual return to traditional school. I taught in a Hybrid Learning Hub for 4 weeks this summer at Waipahu High School, and the hours of preparation and learning on my part were extraordinary. That experience was for only one month, compared to the possibility of many months or a whole school year looming ahead. Providing quality teaching with attention divided between students who are learning from home and those who are in person in the classroom with the teacher is, at its best, challenging. Setting up Google Classroom, posting assignments, preparing engaging and clear resources for students to utilize for support when they are learning asynchronously, planning for classroom management for a blended model...the list goes on and on of all the factors and scenarios teachers must be ready for this year. We are hurtling toward the August 4 start date without the necessary time it will take to have solid, realistic and distance/hybrid/classroom-ready plans in place.

In addition to the time needed to be well-prepared for instruction is the huge matter of health and safety protocols. Lieutenant Governor Josh Green himself has expressed his concerns over returning keiki to schools. "We owe our teachers a comprehensive healthcare plan, in writing, before they open themselves up to added risk," said Lt. Gov. Josh Green, who is an emergency room physician. He goes on to say "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." Lt. Governor Green also has doubts about claims by state health and education officials that students will remain in so-called ohana bubbles, minimizing any potential spread of the disease. "Bubbles burst. I'm concerned," Green said. "Young children can't adhere to social distancing or staying in a bubble and teens will socialize and be difficult to manage."

While schools may have some plans in place for checking symptoms (mostly reliant on parents) or guidelines for sanitizing, there is still no clear plan about when classes or schools may have to shut down because of coronavirus cases -- how many cases until students, faculty and the families of those affected individuals need to isolate? Also, my firsthand experience teaching in a hybrid classroom over the summer was that it was extremely difficult to keep students wearing masks and socially distancing for the entire time we were on campus. Teachers will try their best to monitor this, but when we are also being asked to monitor learning, teach, manage the classroom, respond to questions, check our tech equipment, and the multitude of other things requiring our attention throughout any given school day, it is not humanly possible for us to also be "health police officers."

Please, for the health and safety of our keiki and teachers and our families, delay the return of students to schools. We only have one chance to do this safely and correctly. Not one teacher or student death is acceptable, when the simple decision to give more time for schools to prepare could prevent illness and death.

With aloha and respect,
Lori Misaka

Testimony BOE

From: Paulo Paulo <taufasau.paulo@gmail.com> on behalf of Paulo Paulo
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:00 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Bullying: A Child's sneeze

A child sneezes more than once, What protocol will be followed to assure protection from other children as well as the child who sneezes being bullied from others.

What security measures will be implemented to protect the classroom/building/students from droplets floating in the air? Is there a cleaning protocol? Will cleaning supplies be provided? And will cleaning supplies be readily available throughout the course of the school year?

What happens when more than one classroom has a child that sneezes, where is the manpower to assess and provide safe movement of all children?

We all know how children behave, being bullied for sneezing is amongst the many concerns I have opposing the opening of the school 04Aug.

Again, until all measures are taken, I oppose the opening of the school year.

Testimony BOE

From: Adelina Ka-ipo <kauaalohalani@aol.com> on behalf of Adelina Ka-ipo
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:00 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Extending the summer break for more training and preparation before schools are re opened.

My name is Adelina Wise. I am a member of Unit 13. I work at a middle school on the big island. I have great concerns about the safety and well-being of myself and my school community and my family. I am also a mom of 4 and a wife. I also have my parents and mother in law, who are Kupuna. I am writing this to express my need for more time to receive training and preparation before receiving my students when they return. Please consider delaying the reopening of schools to give students and parents more time to prepare. Once we're all infected, it's too late. Please act now.

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: criss poteat <crisspoteat@gmail.com> on behalf of criss poteat
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:01 AM
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.](#)

I am a 5th year classroom teacher. I love my students, and my job. I am gaining valuable experience and expertise every year. I hope to continue serving my community for many years to come, however, I cannot risk my own safety and that of my family.

We are NOT READY to safely reopen schools!

As promised in the MOU, make options available for 100% distance learning!

My 1st grade class had 100% participation in 4th quarter enrichment. I adapted my curriculum, and designed a

system that works. That system is ready to be implemented until students and teachers can SAFELY return to school.

These are the questions that still need to be addressed BEFORE school can safely reopen.

- 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?

Sincerely,

Criss Poteat

2nd grade teacher

Hawaii Academy of Arts and Science Public Charter School,
Pahoa

Testimony BOE

From: Dellowyn Schultz <sdellowyn@yahoo.com> on behalf of Dellowyn Schultz
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:02 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: School Reopening

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Valerie Simmons <waifongsimmons@gmail.com> on behalf of Valerie Simmons
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:03 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: continued funding for teacher differentials

As we will return to school, we are also essential workers, who do not have complete assurance of safety, and are putting ourselves "on the line" as well, with face-to-face instruction. We also have family members and kupuna to care for. Who will we call and how will we fund this care if we are exposed? Therefore, teacher differentials should be continued. You have asked us to take care of your children, and in some rooms, to the max number of children that the room can accommodate, the least you can do is to take care of us. We do not believe we should be penalized because of the situation, especially if we are returning to work.

Testimony BOE

From: Erica DeWitt <ericadewitt@outlook.com> on behalf of Erica DeWitt
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:03 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha Chair Catherine Payne and Members of the Board,

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 Erica DeWitt and I'm writing to support a Phased Return to school because I feel that teachers, staff, parents, and students' health and safety are at risk. I am a teacher and a parent. Without a clear plan (and many unanswered questions) I feel it is unsafe for my child to return to school (physically) and for me to enter back into a face-to-face classroom environment. I feel the plans set are rushed and not thought-through. I am deeply concerned that many questions are ignored. Please take the time to consider my concerns. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

Mahalo,
Erica DeWitt
9th Grade Special Education Teacher
Oahu Schools

Testimony BOE

From: David Negaard <draagen@gmail.com> on behalf of David Negaard
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:03 AM
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 Board Members,

I am David Negaard, a teacher at Henry Perrine Baldwin High School in Wailuku on Maui. I urge you to reject the proposal to discontinue for any term whatsoever of the differentials for special education teachers, Hawaiian language immersion educators, and educators at hard-to-staff schools.

I am not a recipient of any of these differentials, but believe that to discontinue them would be another instance of the Department of Education failing to follow through on its commitments, as they recently have demonstrated in their unwillingness to abide by either the letter or spirit of the Memorandum of Understanding with the Hawai'i State Teachers Association. Teachers were just beginning to trust the DoE after years of justified mistrust, and recent actions have eroded the tenuous threads of trust recently established.

These differentials were effective. Teachers changed assignments in order to qualify for these differentials. Those teachers are now feeling betrayed because if this were going to happen, they might rather have stayed where they were. SpEd is a far more demanding assignment than general education, and they deserve additional pay for the additional work. Hawaiian language immersion educators are in critically short supply, yet their work is crucial to effective place-based education. And hard-to-staff schools are hard to staff for a variety of reasons, but a little extra money can sweeten the deal enough to make it worth a teacher's while to work there.

Those teachers legitimately feel like they are the victims of a bait and switch scam. They were promised these differentials, and now they aren't going to get them. Broken promises create additional strain between employer and employee. There is already plenty of strain. And we are rushing headlong into a year which WILL be critically understaffed—many teachers are retiring or leaving the profession because they don't trust the DoE to take good care of them or their students in this hasty reopening—and which will additionally have a critical substitute shortage—subs who are at increased risk (retired teachers, for example) or who again don't trust the DoE to have their well-being as any kind of a priority.

Without these differentials, we may have additional attrition as teachers who were looking forward to FINALLY be able to live a modestly comfortable life in Hawai'i WITHOUT supplemental sources of income (side jobs, hustles) are thrust back at a time when jobs are in short supply. Hawai'i is already priced beyond the ready means of schoolteachers, and many are always on the verge of looking elsewhere.

Do not pull this support out from under teachers meeting critical needs. Do not further sabotage an already fragile and tenuous workforce. Do not approve the discontinuance of these differentials.

Mahalo,

--

David Negaard

“Man is most nearly himself when he achieves the seriousness of a child at play.” -Heraclitus

Testimony BOE

From: Gayle Bruce <gpbruce5@gmail.com> on behalf of Gayle Bruce
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:05 AM
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 (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 requesting a delay in the date students return to school. I am a grade five teacher at Pahoa Elementary and the current amount of days to prepare for the start of classes is insufficient. I have not received training in digital distance learning, nor training in the preparation of COVID safety measures in the classroom. Thank you for your consideration into this pressing matter.

Sincerely,
Gayle Bruce
Teacher

Testimony BOE

From: Sarah Tiffin <sarahtiffin26@gmail.com> on behalf of Sarah Tiffin
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:06 AM
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 Sarah Tiffin and I am a special education teacher at Kalihi Kai elementary school. I was very disappointed and surprised to hear that the BOE was discussing discontinuing the differentials for special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations and Hawaiian language teachers. I am even more disappointed in the lack of openness and clarity over this issue. All teachers work incredibly hard. They give up time with their families and friends because teaching is their passion. All teachers deserve a raise. The teachers who receive the differential are the teachers in the most hard to staff positions. You promised us these incentives so that all of our keiki would have the opportunity to learn from a qualified teacher. You gave teachers an incentive to move to a hard-to-staff position or location but now you are going to take that away from them? It is ridiculous.

SPED teachers often do not get the respect they deserve at schools and you are not helping. We spend our own money on supplies for our students with special needs because we are often overlooked at schools. We spend after school hours in staffing meetings, IEP meetings and eligibility meetings. We are expected to write IEPs and progress reports on our own time.

Special education teachers had a unique challenge during distance learning in quarter four. The BOE told parents that distance learning was optional but we were then told weeks later that it was not optional for students with special needs. Special education teachers were still responsible to service their students. Little to no guidance was given to us. I had 17 students on my caseload last year. Each student has about 15-20 individualized goals and objectives that I was legally responsible for. That means I was responsible for teaching over 250 individualized objectives over distance learning.

When special education teachers go back to school this year we are faced with another daunting task. We will have to reopen every IEP and determine if compensatory services are owed. As of today, we have received zero training on how to do this. We have received zero guidance. I have been told that I will be given 3 hours prep time per student to work on their IEP case. This prep time will be provided in sub days. As I said before, I had 17 students on my caseload. That means I will need 51 hours of prep time. I do not want 7 or 8 sub days to plan for my compensatory meetings. I need to be in the classroom supporting my students to adjust to all the new health procedures. Many of my special education coworkers do not want to take sub days. We want to be in the classroom with our students. Many of us will voluntarily give up our personal time to prepare for these meetings. We do it because we love our students.

Please reconsider your decision to discontinue the differentials. You are going to force many good teachers to leave the profession. You are ultimately taking from our keiki.

Sincerely,

Sarah Tiffin

Testimony BOE

From: elizabeth sharrock <elizrocks@yahoo.com> on behalf of elizabeth sharrock
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:07 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony!

Aloha BOE,

Thank you for making the very important decisions that affect thousands of lives in our state! I write to you today to speak about Item G - taking back differential money from the teachers. HSTA says they have data that this money helped retain teachers last year - have you listened to them about this evidence? Do you realize how many people are leaving the profession for this coming year? Do you really want to give us one more reason to leave? Taking away the small crumbs being thrown to us is going to send teachers over the edge. I know I'm considering leaving this career. Doing the right thing all day every day when in return, you get your life threatened and your crumbs taken away is, well... A DOWNER. Life's too short to spend it being spit on.

Please realize that getting our state's money by stealing from the poor, hard working, kind hearted population of teachers is NOT THE WAY TO GO. See the big picture and shoot down this suggestion before the state takes it any further! What a horrid place this state will be flung into if the teacher shortage gets any worse. Do you know what happens when there aren't enough good teachers to care for the keiki? They don't get educated! They don't develop positive behavior! So not only do these decisions about educators affect the educators and the students... down the road, your decisions are going to affect our criminal rates, our state's rise to poverty and ignorance. We go from being the state to look up to, to a state who graduates high schoolers that don't know how to read and write.

People may think cutting this differential is a small sacrifice to for teachers to pay. I say it's more than that because we're looking at the PRINCIPLE. Do not send this state down a road that leads to the destruction of our society. Stick up for teachers. Listen to our union's demands. Do not take away our crumbs!

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Sharrock
7th grade ELA teacher
Kea'au Middle School

Testimony BOE

From: Nikki Morishige <nikki.morishige@gmail.com> on behalf of Nikki Morishige
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:07 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

My name is Nikki Morishige. I am a teacher at Waiahole 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 strongly urge the BOE to delay the start of the school year for students. I am concerned about the lack of clarity around certain safety measures for school campuses, as well as the constantly changing information which impacts our ability to have solid plans, procedures, and guidelines on campus. It would be beneficial and prudent to wait until the department of health has statewide guidelines in place for school buildings so that our school plan can be based off of the expertise of medical persons.

In speaking with my principal, whose family members are in the medical field, there are many routines and procedures that need to be in place in order to ensure the highest levels of safety. There are even ways that we should touch our masks in order to reduce germs from spreading from our hands. I'm lucky that our principal is working to have a medical professional on one of our 4 administrative days to talk with the teachers about safety and to answer any questions. However, this isn't something that only our school should have because of the foresight of our principal. This is the kind of opportunity and training that ALL teachers and staff should have at every school. We are not medical professionals. We must have training since we are the ones responsible for keeping our students safe during this time.

Additionally, time needs to be given for training on distance learning. Distance learning is much more complex than simply putting the lessons that I do in the classroom online. It involves understanding which platforms are best to do what kinds of instruction (synchronous vs asynchronous), understanding how to engage students online, knowing what's appropriate and within student limits (The length of time that students can listen and be engaged in person is not the same as online). Even if we have a program, like Acellus, we need time to learn the program - how to support students while they are on it, how to access student work and reports, and so on.

I understand the need to bring our students back. I, and all our teachers, WANT our students back. But we want to make sure that we are continuing to provide a safe environment for them to come back to. This means having a clear guidance and training on safety in school buildings with regard to COVID-19, as well as training on distance learning. Again, I strongly urge the BOE to delay the return of students on campus in order to do so.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.
Nikki Morishige

Testimony BOE

From: Gayle Fujita Ramsey <gayle.fujita_ramsey@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Gayle Fujita Ramsey
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:08 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony: Distance Learning at opening of school

Aloha BOE,

I am writing to you in regards to opening schools where students attend in person. I understand the pressures you are under from the powers that be. However, it amazes me that you think schools are ready and our state is ready to receive students without putting ALL lives on campus at risk.

Here are some things I want you to think about.

You want schools open because children are being harmed staying at home, their mental health is at risk. IF just one of them contracts COVID19 and dies from the virus what then. Was it better to jump the gun and open schools or is that life not important to you? If that child brings COVID19 home and infects grandma, grandpa, auntie, uncle, or sibling that has health issues and they die, as the child ages and realizes they infected and killed their loved one... what then? How will their mental health be affected? What will they turn to? Drugs? Suicide? Self-destructive Behaviors? Are you ready to provide the mental health supports well into adulthood because you rushed them back into the classroom?

Are you prepared to face lawsuits from parents, employees, etc because they were adversely affected by your decision by contracting COVID19. Which will most likely lead to being unable to work for months, huge medical bills, day to day expenses they no longer can pay, losing their home, so on and so forth because you rushed students back into the classroom when schools are not ready? This is a litigious country and I am sure someone will figure out how to make the state responsible for your decisions.

The news conferences that you are part of are farcical. Schools are not prepared for students to return physically. You say PPE is being provided really? Where? We are told we need to provide our own because they don't have funds. We were told we need to provide 6 ft distancing from the perimeter of the desk, leaving no room to be at the front of the classroom without invading a student's bubble or my own. We are at the front of the room with students all facing us, with tradewinds pushing their exhale even with a mask at us... really that is not HIGH RISK to Teacher's LIVES? WE CAN'T INVADE THE STUDENTS BUBBLE. So, tell me how do we use proximity to control behaviors? Tell me, how do we look at what the student is working on to help them? Tell me, what is the purpose of being physically in a classroom if we can't do what we do to maintain a well controlled, positive, learning environment.

I would love to see anyone of you with 15 students in person, 15 students online teach a lesson for a week. What are you at high risk? You don't know how to do it? WE are not trained to do that? Whatever your excuse for not trying is exactly what teachers are dealing with not to mention poor leadership beyond our Principals. By the way, our Principals are doing the best they can but their hands are tied by the powers that be that are clueless.

Summer for teachers is a BREAK. Yet, there are some that used their personal time to learn and figure out how to teach this coming school year. For those that did, they did this on their own

time. DOE did not provide mandated training because our contract does not allow them to. So how is it that our Superintendent, Governor, and BOE rep can LIE and say training was provided. If lie is a harsh word I am sorry but it is.

We have not been trained to look at a student and determine if they are sick without a thermometer. I did not go to medical school to be a doctor or a nurse. This whole line of thought is crazy. Parents send their kids to school all the time knowing they are sick because their lives are more important and educators are their free babysitters.

I am not asking for school to be delayed. I am asking for school to open on time with a clear plan for DISTANCE LEARNING. As it should have been from the beginning of summer. I don't know what game Kishimoto and Ige are playing. I don't care if we are the FIRST of anything. I care that our keiki, teachers, and admin are safe - as they should be. Personal interest is involved yet again not for the good of the whole.

Distance Learning is the only way to be consistent which is what our kids need. IF we teach our kids the skills they need to distance learn we are teaching them skills that they will use throughout their lifetime. For the BOE spokesperson yesterday who said you can only learn in a classroom I say you are an IDIOT. Colleges teach virtually and award degrees. Is the BOE discrediting universities. Is the BOE saying that teachers can't teach as well as college professors? Is the BOE saying that children can't learn new skills? You are all very close minded and focused on old ways of learning this is an opportunity to move forward and actually teach our kids skills they need to be college and career ready. The school system as designed currently is outdated. Take this time to update how we teach!

Open schools, but get rid of this idea of being physically present. Grow a backbone and keep EVERYONE safe. Our numbers are not going down, they are going up. You said that schools would not resume F2F until we are 4 weeks with no new cases... Why did you change this thinking? pressure?

Oh, and basing your reason on what the survey results were? CRAZY. Kishimoto set that one up by calling the 4th quarter of last school year ENRICHMENT. Had she said we were going to resume school as normal with distance learning I bet we would have had much better results. She set us up for failure. Own it Kishimoto you made a very bad decision without consulting teachers on the front line and this is the problem with our system.

--



Ms. Gayle Fujita Ramsey
808.266.7900 ext. 2252
Resource Social Studies/Care Coordinator

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Testimony BOE

From: Jeanne Eriksson <jeriksson@haleiwa.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Jeanne Eriksson
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:09 AM
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 Jeanne Eriksson. I work at Haleiwa Elementary as the FSC Special Education Teacher. I am currently receiving a differential and it has made a huge difference for me to be able to stay in my position. I am not tenured yet and am still very low on the pay scale so getting this differential has been huge for me. Even with this differential I am barely getting by each month being able to pay my bills. I normally work two jobs to be able to get by and if I lose this differential I will most likely be forced to find more work or work that can pay more. I know many other teachers in my same position and if this happens and many of us leave this will be devastating to so many of our students who need us. I hope this will be taken into account and help the decision that is best for our kids be made. Thank you,

Jeanne Eriksson

Testimony BOE

From: Annie France <France.Annie@hotmail.com> on behalf of Annie France
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:09 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Good morning,

As the cases of COVID19 continue to rise on Oahu, it does not feel safe to send our educators and children back into the classroom. We must protect our children and our staff. I am a long term substitute teacher at Pohakea Elementary and my anxiety is through the roof about going back to school. I have not been updated with what are plan is besides SPED will be in person Monday through Thursday. I am scared to go to work. I and scared to send my children to school. Please reconsider the opening of schools. Let's push it back to when our numbers are not going up every single day.

Thank you

AnnMarie France

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Testimony BOE

From: Bridgette Sholtis <bridge.sholtis@gmail.com> on behalf of Bridgette Sholtis
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:12 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for pay differential

To whom it may concern,

My name is Bridgette Sholtis. I teach at Leihoku Elementary in the Leeward District. I've been teaching at Leihoku for 14 years now and although I love teaching on the coast, the drive in and out of Waianae takes a toll on my family and I. The construction and traffic on the Waianae coast has made the drive significantly longer which has forced my family and I to alter our lives so that we are able to drop off and pick up my child from daycare. It would be easier and less stressful if I transferred to school closer to my home; however my heart is with the children of Waianae. The pay differential has helped my family to pay for the gas, mileage and wear and tear of my vehicle. It has also allowed me to buy extra supplies and resources for my classroom and my students, so that all students get what they need to participate in class projects and lessons. If this pay is taken away, my family and I may be forced to reevaluate my teaching location. It will break my heart to have to transfer because these students need stability and teachers they can depend on and build relationships with. However, the financial and emotional strain on my family also needs to be thought of. Please keep our pay differential. It helps; more than you realize!!

Mahalo,

Bridgette Sholtis

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Amy Okinishi <flutefreak38@yahoo.com> on behalf of Amy Okinishi
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:08 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Re: Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding Between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 Contractual Modifications and Conditions of Work Related to COVID-19 Response for Bargaining Unit 5 Employees

To Whom It May Concern:

I'm a resource teacher at Mokulele Elementary School and I'm asking the Hawaii State BOE to reconsider their opening of school year plan. Teachers are allotted two days of administrative meetings and two days of teacher preparation time to plan for the year and set up their classrooms. It is not enough time to also be trained in the new procedures and protocols that COVID 19 presents.

In a normal school year the principal takes the entire two admin. days to go over the DOE Employee Handbook, EES, watch all those training videos, update us on what happened over the summer, and inform us of any changes in the upcoming year. How are they also going to squeeze COVID 19 procedures into those two days? Yes, you've allotted half day training and prep for the first nine days of school, but shouldn't our training come **before** a student is allowed to step foot on our campus?

Adequate training takes time. Planning takes time. Figuring out new procedures on how to get students safely around the classroom and the school campus takes time. Each school is different. Each classroom is different based on who you are teaching and what you are teaching. Teachers won't be told the parameters under which we will be operating until the two admin. days at the beginning of the school year. We need more time to figure it out **before** students are involved.

Give us the time we need to open schools properly. The first two weeks of school should only be training and teacher prep time. The second two weeks should be half the school on campus for half days for student assessment and to adjust things that go wrong (and they will) and additional teacher planning and prep time to figure out delivery of curriculum in a blended learning situation as well as in a 100% online situation. This will also give the DOE time to create COVID prevention and procedure training videos for all the teachers in the state so we will all be on the same page.

Yes, we need to re-open schools, but we have a responsibility to our students to do it properly with as much training and planning as possible so we **all** stay safe and healthy.

Sincerely,
Amy Okinishi
Mokulele Elementary School

Testimony BOE

From: Jill Jacobs <jillybean05@gmail.com> on behalf of Jill Jacobs
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:13 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony on Differentials and Delay of Reopening

Dear Board Members,

I am writing in today in regards to action item H. Board Action on the Memorandum on Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response) 2017-2021 contractual modification and conditions for work related to COVID 19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 Member as well as the cutting of the shortage differentials that were put in place in January of 2020.

My name is Jill Jacobs. I teach third grade at Kealakehe Elementary School in Kona. This year will be my eighth year teaching in Hawaii. As a teacher I love to be in the classroom with my students. I think we would be hard pressed to find any teacher who would disagree with that. We all got into teaching to be with the students and to make the biggest impact on their lives that we can. I have been very vocal about the fact that full distance learning was not the best means of education for our students and was not very successful. However, in order to return to school we need to ensure that school is a safe place for the students, teachers, and community. In the MOU it was agreed upon that there would be guidelines, as well as training and planning. We have yet to see any guidelines. At my school the administration is trying their best to come up with a plan but how are they supposed to come up with a plan for nearly 1000 students, 75 teachers, and about 100 additional support staff in two weeks. Then inform and train all those adults on what they are going to do in just a few weeks. We are just over a week from the teacher report date and my school still does not have a plan for recess or lunch. We do not have a solid plan on what to do with a sick child, or adult on campus, or even really a place to isolate a person who is sick. We have yet to have any training on distance learning. Ten month teachers receive a paycheck in the summer, however, that is money that we earned by teaching during the school year. Asking us to give up our time with family, friends, or just trying to recover and gain the mental head space needed to be able to return school under all this stress is completely unacceptable. We need to have a fully flushed out plan with clear how to handle cases at the school, how to deal with lunch and recess. We can allow this to be a situation of the blind leading the blind. We can not allow our schools to become like the McDonald's in Kona and spread 14 cases, or the Hawaiian Airlines training that spread 40 plus cases. We need to have a plan so that we are keeping our schools and communities safe. Teachers need to be trained and the two training days next week are no where near enough time for that. Teachers also need to be able to plan for the what, and how they will teach. We also have to completely rearrange our classrooms, this will take one of the two teacher planning days before the students arrive. We need time to be prepared and to best serve and support our communities. Please do not send us back to in person learning woefully unprepared and under trained. Would any of you want to go to a doctor who has just finished medical school and has not done residency and has only book knowledge and not hands on experience? That is what opening our schools without training and planning is like.

Now onto the differentials. As a teacher I have had to have a second job almost all of my career. Having a school job takes time from planning (yes I have to plan at home and on weekends 45 minutes a day is no where near enough time to plan for six hours of quality instruction). There were also many times that I had to work late at the second job and come into work tired which takes away from the quality of teaching I can do as well as shortens my patience and grace with the students. These shortage differentials have allowed me and so many other teachers to quit our second jobs. My roommate who is a third year special education teacher was able to quit her second job and have more time to do things like write IEP's, modify content, and develop lessons to

meet all her students' needs. She also did not move into a non classroom teacher position at our school because she knew she would lose the SPED differential. These measures have worked to help fill positions that historically had been filled by subs. This is increasing the quality of education for our students. It is also making Hawaii a more desirable place for teachers from the mainland to come. If differentials are removed there will be many teachers who leave within the next year only making this issue much worse than it was.

Please honor commitments made to teachers, our communities, our state and most importantly our kids.

Thank you
Jill Jacobs

Testimony BOE

From: Zachary Hale <zachary.hale@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Zachary Hale
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:14 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

I am an Art teacher on the westside of Maui at which is considered hard to staff the school. I can tell you first hand how important the pay increase for our school has been for teacher retention. We all know that Hawaii has massive gaps in its employment for education, especially in our SPED and Rural communities. In my first year, I was one of 14 new teachers that were hired. That is an unacceptable number if you are trying to provide students with a connective and continuous education. The majority of the teachers that were hired with me were 1st-year teachers from the mainland. Our school is very secluded with only one road in and one road out and the majority of our teachers cannot afford to live in the community we teach and commute over 45 mins one way every day to help our students be successful.

During this last year with the increase in hard to staff areas, we saw only 3 teachers leave our school. The impact that it had on our school openings, discipline, and student engagement was incredible. We saw scores rise in almost all of our statewide areas of concern. Attendance, reading, and math skills saw improvement. The parent involvement increased greatly because they knew that the teachers were investing in the community and their keiki success. If you take away this pay increase we will be back to where we started with a high teacher turn over and more and more needed and qualified teachers leaving not only our school but the state for higher pay and support of another location.

Zach Hale
Lahaina Intermediate
Department Chair, Visual Arts

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Testimony BOE

From: Jenna Ballo <jennastanleyballo@gmail.com> on behalf of Jenna Ballo
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:15 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Push Back Start of School Year for Students

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.

My name is Jenna Ballo and I am a 5th grade teacher as well as a parent of 3 school aged children ages 14, 12, 6, and an almost 2 month old. I'm concerned to not only return to work but also to send my children to school knowing that our schools are not ready to return. To be honest, I have zero faith in the DOE that they will keep my children safe at school. It scares me! PLEASE PUSH BACK THE START DATE FOR STUDENTS!

The DOE is rushing its plans to reopen in the hopes that its "bubble system" explained by Dr. Park will work. I'd like to ask Dr. Park if she's ever taught in an elementary school? She has absolutely no idea how impossible it is to keep students distanced as well as keeping them facing the same direction all day. Teachers can try but ultimately students will go and cross into "other bubbles" not just at school but also outside of school. Also, there is no clear guidance as to what will happen if someone in my child's class or my class gets sick or is exposed. If someone next door to my sons class gets sick...how will you ensure that my sons class wasn't exposed. To assume that the students stayed in their bubbles is ridiculous and delusional!

As a teacher, I feel like we're rushing to open schools with no real plan or guidance just for the economy. Well I'm sorry but student and faculty lives matter more than the economy. Take the time to allow plans and procedures to develop. Push back the start date to train teachers like myself who are scared. Scared for our students lives, scared for our lives, scared for our families lives and scared for the community. We need proper training on handling students who might be sick, procedures on how to safely sanitize areas to ensure cleanliness and how to effectively implement distance learning in the event we do need to shut down. Invest the time in your teachers and the benefits will be so much more not only for students but for the community.

I'd like to ask that the Board of Education listen to the teachers, the parents, the community, and even some lawmakers as evident by the meeting that involved the superintendent and lawmakers.

Lt. Gov. Josh Green also states "We owe our teachers a comprehensive health care plan, in writing, before they open themselves up to added risk." **Give teachers the time and training needed to open up a safe environment for students and faculty.**

Thank you for your time!

Jenna Ballo

P.S. I'd like to add that I as well as many other teachers found Dr. Kishimoto's video to teachers to be condescending and practically a slap in the face. It made us lose all respect and faith in her as our leader. To imply that we did not want to work and "do our part" is outrageous. Anyone who truly has been in a classroom knows how much teachers give and how hard we work. We're not asking for school to be cancelled. We're asking for more time to put procedures in place and to be properly trained. Dr. Kishimoto's lack of leadership

and direction over the last 4 months is to blame for where we currently are at this point. I have never felt so undervalued and unappreciated as a teacher as I do now.

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Terrie Goodness <jgoodness001@hawaii.rr.com> on behalf of Terrie Goodness
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:14 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Reopening of schools

My name is Terrie Goodness-Palupe and I'm the SHA at Kapunahala Elementary School.

I really think that employees as well as students and their parents should have a clear understanding of all safety and health rules regarding COVID-19.

I as an employee have not been specificity trained or given any clear instructions as what are we doing and what do I need and where do I get PPE for COVID-19.

I have been to my health room and nothing's been changed except for a new scanner thermometer ,a few face mask , 2 face shields and 2 disposable gowns that are too small.

Students are to return to school in 2 weeks.

We need everything to be set in stone with all procedures in place , all staff trained and all PPE supplies at each school before students are allowed back on campus.

My biggest question is , where do I keep any students with a fever and or showing signs of COVID-19?

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Sandra Inglis <singlis@myhta.org> on behalf of Sandra Inglis
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:15 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: No Pay Cuts for Teachers and Pushback Student Return

Dear Board of Education,
You MUST NOT cut the pay of teachers for the following reasons:

1. Special Education Teachers are expected to do MORE paperwork, hold MORE meetings, and be MORE creative in reaching those students who. already have behavior and learning difficulties. A PAY CUT WILL ONLY WEAKEN THE MORAL AND INCENTIVE OF THOSE TEACHERS.
2. General Education Teachers are having to come up with more creative processes and learn a whole new way of teaching in order to teach the general population.
3. All teachers are WANT to do their very best to reach our students. All teachers have HUGE financial obligations and commitments. I personally may have to take on a part-time job since I have separated from my husband over the summer. A 20-25% pay-cut is harmful to teachers. We will be putting in more effort and time learning new ways to reach children. We will be communicating more with families, we will be dedicated and so why should we suffer financially?
4. RE-CONSIDER THE RETURN DATE FOR STUDENTS: If you can not guarantee that every school is READY to safely receive students, then students should not return. We have families who have weak immune systems. We are putting those families at risk.

Sincerely

Sandra Inglis
Hawaii Technology Academy
Middle School Special Education Care Coordinator
(808) 777-0443
singlis@myhta.org

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Testimony BOE

From: Jax Ollie <dougnsara@gmail.com> on behalf of Jax Ollie
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:16 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Hi,

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

My children attend Lincoln Elementary school and are going to be in the 3rd and 5th grade. Lincoln has chosen to follow the "blended" school schedule, however when we received the schedule, all students will be on campus at the same time with distance learning one Friday a month. The only staggering of the students will be drop off and pick up times.

As a concerned parent, we emailed the school voicing our concerns and to get more clarification. The VP called back and answered the majority of our questions. She mentioned the cleaning procedures and how students would be functioning on campus. We asked about classroom size, she said there would be 18 kids per classroom! Realizing how small the classrooms are and knowing that there should be a 6 feet distance, we don't feel that's possible. She said they removed the extra furniture.

We suggested maybe a staggered schedule where not all students are on campus at once and having different groups at a time. But she said they want all students on campus to get face to face learning. If that's the case, it's not a "blended" model they are following but a face to face model.

After speaking with her we hung up and thought about it. We didn't feel comfortable with the conditions of the school. We called back and said that we would prefer distance learning as our older child does have an underlying health condition and has respiratory issues when sick. She gave the impression that it was not a good enough "excuse" to have our children distance learn. We told her we were under the impression that distance learning was also an option should we choose that and cited the BOE agreement that was made. She was not aware of the distance learning option. She said the only other option would be homeschooling and that it would be a hassle. At that point we asked about a GE and the process about getting one. She didn't seem too happy once we said that. She asked to call us back.

She did call back within a couple hours saying she spoke with someone and that our children were on the list to distance learn and will provide more information at a later time.

We want our children to be on campus and have the face to face learning and realize the benefits of that, however we do not feel it is safe enough considering the plan the school has.

Ultimately, who is responsible should we send our children to school? We know when our child isn't feeling well and would not send them to school if they weren't. However, what if they get the virus at school while in their "Ohana bubble"?

What if our child does get the virus? Knowing that schools are trying to cut down on absences, if my child misses a certain amount of school days we get told that if we don't send them to school a social worker will be meeting with us.

How many children need to get the virus or be quarantined before the school closes?

We don't mean for this to sound like a grievance against the school itself. Lincoln Elementary is a great school and the teachers and staff are so good. However we are concerned about the safety, conditions and procedures of reopening the school and having students on campus at this time. We feel schools need more time to prepare, receive more training on the health and safety measures for the students, teachers and faculty.

Thank you

Testimony BOE

From: Bryan Guzman <bkguzman67@yahoo.com> on behalf of Bryan Guzman
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:16 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Good morning,

My name is Bryan Guzman, husband to a special education teacher and parent to an elementary student at Palisades 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 helps keep our teachers. My wife is a special education teacher. She's always writing IEP's, attending meetings, completing progress reports, or modifying lessons. She brings her work home everyday. After all these years, my wife and her colleagues have been rewarded for all their "extra" duties. Please don't take that away from them.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express my concerns regarding the August 4 reopening date. My elementary aged child attends Palisades Elementary School. Although education is a priority, the health of my family comes first. I inquired about full distance learning last week and I am still waiting for a call back. A+ registration is due Wednesday, July 22. Without knowing what full distance learning looks like, I don't know if my child will be attending school. How can schools reopen when there's so many questions unanswered? Health and safety first, please find the answers before reopening our schools.

Thank you,
Bryan Guzman

Testimony BOE

From: Courtney D'Agostino <courtneydags@gmail.com> on behalf of Courtney D'Agostino
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:17 AM
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.

I am a first grade teacher at Holualoa Elementary School. I love my school. I love my community. I love my students. I want nothing more than to be back in my classroom, face-to-face with my students. It's what I know, it is what I love, it is what I do. Although, as we anticipate our approaching start date I realize that as much as I long to return to school, we are not prepared to do so safely. We are unclear of the necessary measures and steps needed to reduce the risk of COVID-19 spread in our schools.

There are still many unanswered questions that have a direct impact on my ability to perform the responsibilities of my job. The guidelines are fuzzy, and the answers aren't there. For instance, 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 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? Please consider pushing back the August 4 student start date to allow extra time to ensure a safe and smooth return for keiki and adults on campus.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,
Courtney D'Agostino

Testimony BOE

From: Claire Barroga <clbarroga@gmail.com> on behalf of Claire Barroga
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:17 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha Board of Education members,

My name is Claire Barroga, and I am a Kindergarten teacher at Palolo Elementary School. I present to you today my testimony to postpone the opening of schools due to the current Coronavirus pandemic. With the information that is currently available regarding this disease, as well as the reports of increasing cases and deaths in our state, creates much anxiety and uncertainty amongst our teachers and among members of our school community. During my school's most recent volunteer faculty meeting, which was held remotely, one of the teachers found out not only that they were receiving a last minute course schedule change, but that our administration did not have an immediate response for them in regards to addressing their issue of being immuno-compromised, nor how to uphold the integrity of their health and safety while being exposed to multiple cohorts throughout the school week. Observing this teacher's plight also had me wondering about one of my students from this past school year who had to be hospitalized twice for pneumonia. This raises major concerns for other students and teachers who are considered high risk for contracting this disease. In addition, hearing and reading stories about those who have survived coronavirus does not provide much comfort due to the after effects it can leave behind, which include blood clots, stroke, embolisms, heart damage, lung damage, and neurological symptoms. Although I do not have children of my own, if I were in any parents' shoes, I would be incredibly hesitant and strongly opposed to send my child into an environment where they *will*, not may, **will**, be exposed to a life-threatening disease. I strongly urge you to have the opening of school be postponed to allow its faculty the time it needs to allow a safer reopening of school buildings. At the rate that we are trying to reopen our schools, I deeply fear that by the time we have widely available treatments for Covid-19, we may have a tremendous decrease of teachers who are *alive* to teach, as well as students who are around to teach.

Thank you for your time.

Testimony BOE

From: Robert Odoya <nismocemento@gmail.com> on behalf of Robert Odoya
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:17 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To whom it may concern,

As a teacher, parent and concerned citizen in my community I truly feel that our school systems are not ready to welcome our students back to school.

I'm a teacher at Waipahu High School and my wife is also a teacher at Salt Lake Elementary. Even though I would prefer to stay safe at home, if we are ultimately required to go back to work I would appreciate that the DOE care more about teachers. What do I mean by that? Let's compare and contrast. At the grocery stores, banks, and restaurants we see employees wearing gloves, face masks, standing behind plexiglass all to protect themselves. I walked into my classroom a few days ago and what did I see? Nothing.

My wife and I have an 8 month old child and it breaks my heart to see my wife crying with the fear that one or both of us could contract the Coronavirus due to the state caring more about getting kids back to school rather than keeping our teachers safe. Are we disposable? I thought we had a teacher shortage? I thought we had the most noble career? So what about taking care and protecting the ones who take care of your children? I love teaching. I couldn't see myself doing anything else. The state needs to really prepare us BEFORE the students come back. What's even more appalling is that the state epidemiologist said she expects an increase in COVID-19 cases as students return. Hello! So why are you sending us back? If you must, then prepare our classrooms. I have asthma and I do not want to get sick and die. Hear me, department of education. Hear me, Board of Education. Hear my plea and protect your teachers.

--

Robert S. Odoya

Testimony BOE

From: alistairmunslow <alistairmunslow@gmail.com> on behalf of alistairmunslow
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:18 AM
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 concerned community member of Kapolei and Makakilo I feel it necessary to give my plea to the BOA to reconsider August 4th as the start of the school year and to postpone the date of reopening of our schools. A very dear friend of mine, Shirley Mina Yamauchi, is an English teacher at Kapolei Middle School and quite frankly I am concerned for her safety as well as the safety of the students and all other faculty members. The reasons for my concerns are obvious and require no explanation.

It has also come to my attention that there are several faculty members, some of which are part of the administration faculty that hold the belief of outrageous conspiracy theories regarding the COVID19 pandemic. I am hesitant to mention names, but I invite you to browse the social media pages of these so called public servants since they so proudly make their unfounded opinions public, while mocking people who act responsible during this crisis. It has been my observation that people who reluctantly comply to rules do so in a half hearted manner. This disregard for scientific evidence as a hoax could very likely cost someone their life, and for me personally that life could be my good friend Shirley.

I beg of you please, please, please reconsider. This situation could become a horrible disaster very quickly, and nobody would want that kind of weight on their conscious.

Many thanks

Alistair Munslow

**State of Hawaii
Board of Education**

**Testimony by
Pukalani Elementary Administration**

July 21, 2020

Relating to Reopening of Schools for SY 2020-21

To Our Honorable Board of Education Members,

It is with great apprehension and concern that we submit this testimony to the BOE for consideration. We have made a good faith effort to plan for the reopening of our school and cannot, in good conscience, as an advocate for all kids, our staff, and community to remain silent and not express our concerns about this year's opening.

As Pukalani Elementary Administrators, we would like to submit testimony pertaining to the following areas of concern:

Safety and Health Concerns:

- Custodians, SHA's, Cafe, Office have not received appropriate training in COVID-19 cleaning and disinfecting protocols. Training has not been provided for new requirements in daily cleaning and disinfecting procedures.
- We are not fully equipped with PPE for all students, faculty and staff
- We do not have enough hand soap, hand sanitizer, hand sanitizer dispensers/stands, proper signage for walkways and classrooms

Personnel Concerns:

- In the past 2 weeks our school has had 3 teachers, 1 counselor, and 2 Part-Time Teachers (PTT) resign or take leave with possibly 2-3 more teachers who have expressed grave concerns about returning.
- With less than 3 weeks before the start of the school year, we face the likely possibility with starting with non-certified teachers in key positions. Currently we have only 2 out of 8 certified teachers for Kindergarten and 1st grade. This is very concerning to us. How can we justify this to parents?
- There will be a lack of substitutes. What training do we provide to those who are still willing? Who will coordinate this as substitutes can work at multiple schools.

- Lack of substitutes for paraprofessionals
- Lack of substitutes for custodians/room cleaners, cafe, office staff who will also need to be trained on proper protocols

Preparation for Distance Learning Concerns:

- Teachers have not been provided with the training necessary to effectively deliver instruction online
- Teachers have not been provided with adequate time to plan and prepare for online delivery of instruction
- Inadequate time and training has been provided to train classified support staff to assist in delivery of online instruction
- Inadequate time to communicate and provide parents with information regarding delivery of online instruction
- Inadequate time to prepare our procedures and set up classes for delivery of online instruction

Student Transportation

- Online system has recently been opened but many are not able to apply
- Will drivers keep daily logs to allow for proper contact tracing in case someone test positive for COVID-19?
- Will bus drivers have masks to give to students who don't have one?

Food Service

- There is inadequate space to allow many students to eat in the cafeteria with appropriate social distancing.
- If we have students eat in the classroom, who will supervise them? Teachers have a contractual right to a 30 minute duty free lunch and there is an inadequate number of staff that can supervise
- Inadequate staff and facilities to provide a separate point of sale for students who are receiving online instruction.
- How do cafeteria staff plan and order breakfast/lunch for students who are receiving online instruction?


Set up:

- Inadequate time to move and find storage for furniture and equipment that will need to be removed from classrooms in order to have more space to properly space out desks
- Inadequate time to put into place proper procedures for recess, attendance, virtual learning, classroom changes and staffing.

In your BOE resolution, school communities were encouraged to Give Hope, Act with Kindness, and Work Toward Togetherness in reopening our schools. As administrators, we are making every effort to make this reality, but as advocates for all kids, our staff, and our communities, we do not feel we can open safely and properly on August 4 as there has been minimal support and answers to address these concerns.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our concerns regarding opening our school campuses. We respectfully request that the reopening of school be postponed to allow for appropriate planning, training and guidance for the numerous questions that have not been answered.

Respectfully submitted,



Ty Ogaswara Principal



Jeneen Fuuroku Vice Principal

Testimony BOE

From: David Huitt <dlhuitt615@gmail.com> on behalf of David Huitt
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:07 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony
Attachments: BOE Testimony 7-21-2020.docx

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.

Please see attached letter for testimony for Thursday, July 23rd meeting.

--

David Huitt
Kealakehe High School
Social Studies Department Chair

To the Board of Education:

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 David Huitt and I have been a history teacher in Kona for over 25 years. I graduated from Konawaena High School with the goal of becoming a history teacher and then went to college, earned my degrees and came back to Kona to teach at both Konawaena and, presently, at Kealakehe High. From my perspective, teaching is not only a job but my calling; my vocation. I love working with my students and am passionate about doing what I can to help them find happiness and meaning in their lives.

Despite my love of teaching and my desire to work directly with students, I cannot, in good conscience, recommend that we return to “in-class/face to face” instruction at this time. We are in the middle of a horrific pandemic. We have seen positive test cases and deaths from covid19 rise and fall and rise again in various parts of the country and world. In the present situation, there is no way to “go back to normal”. Based on what we have seen around the U.S. and world, opening up to face to face instruction in a large school like Kealakehe High School, with a total population of 1300 students and over a hundred teachers and staff, will just lead to pain and suffering. Even if the number of students is cut in half on any given day, there will still be too many people walking around campus and the vectors for spreading the virus will be impossible to control.

For instance, at this time, we have no clarity about how students will socially distance while waiting for the bus, how they will stay safe on the bus ride to school, how to monitor student behavior and safety during non-instructional time (wiki, passing, lunch time, etc) and, lastly, how to teach and learn while wearing a mask, socially distancing, minimizing all contact (do we collect papers or not?), etc. We also have no idea what to do if a student is exposed to covid19. Do we quarantine students in their classes? Do we shut down classrooms? Do we shut down the school? What if a

student dies from exposure at school? Or a teacher? Or family members of students or teachers/staff? We still don't have answers for any of these questions.

I know that administrators are working on various methods and strategies to open schools for students. We have hybrid plans with both online and in-class instruction, classes that have been split in half to attain 6 foot distance in the classroom and have obtained masks and face shields for teachers. Unfortunately, we are working so hard to re-open that we've lost sight of the forest for the trees. All of the face to face options will put students, teachers, staff and the community at higher risk for coronavirus. And none of the school models solve the problems that our communities are struggling with. How will parents deal with child care when their child is on a rotational or hybrid schedule and will be at home several days a week? How will teachers provide both in-class and online instruction to their students? How can teachers cover the content standards for each class when the number of actual days in class has been cut, at least, in half? What strategies can a teacher implement in the classroom without encouraging any movement, student sharing or group collaboration? How do we take care of a child's emotional health while staying distant, limiting engagement and sharing through facial coverings?

As a result, even if we re-open our schools and put thousands of people at risk throughout the state, we will still have major child care problems, we will still struggle with classroom instruction and engagement and we will only cover a fraction of our normal curriculum. Under normal circumstances, I believe that online instruction is not an ideal teaching model. However, it is a much better option at this time because it really could save lives.

Instead of spending vast amounts of time and money producing a poor imitation of normal, face to face instruction in our schools, we should spend that time and money setting up successful home-based online instructional platforms and practices for both teachers and students. Otherwise, we will struggle to achieve success with our face to face instruction AND will end up hurting many of our students, parents, community members and school personnel.

I hope that you will seriously consider approving online teaching and distance learning in order to keep our students, teachers, staff and communities safe and healthy. It really is a life and death decision.

Thank you for your time,

David Huitt

Social Studies Teacher

Kealakehe High School

Testimony BOE

From: Cindy Tamashiro <cctamashiro@gmail.com> on behalf of Cindy Tamashiro
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:20 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am writing this 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.](#)

I am asking that you please delay opening of schools on August 4. I just watched a news interview with Lieutenant governor Josh Green who stated that he does not feel that schools are prepared to safely open at this time. Safety protocols and procedures on how positive covid cases will be handled need to be specifically outlined and detailed for the safety of school staff and students. Please help us be better prepared with more procedures in place to protect us so that the covid virus does not run rampant in our schools and cause mass infection.

Thank you for your kind consideration.

Sincerely,
Cynthia Tamashiro
Special Education Resource Teacher
Kapunahala Elementary School

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: myra_machado2003 <myra_machado2003@yahoo.com> on behalf of myra_machado2003
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:21 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Opening up schools

Dear BOE

I am writing to ask that you please consider pushing back the opening of schools.

As a veteran teacher of 20+ years, I will be putting my health at risk by going back to school without any training or protocols.

Moreover, I have watched Mr.

Bruce Anderson lead the state and wondered if he has ever been in a school. A few months ago he stated that schools could go back without having big gatherings such as assemblies, May Day etc. He failed to mention in his speech such things as lunch and recess

Now Mr. Anderson talks about Ohana bubbles. I again, dont think he realizes that if my bubble has a covid 19 case, there will be siblings, cousins, neighbors and community members affected in so called other bubbles. Closing down one class is an unrealistic option. Whole schools will need to be closed down. What is the plan?

Thus, I do not have confidence in the states plan and ask the BOE to consider the option of delaying opening schools. My health and safety matters. My students health and safety matter.

Sent via the Samsung Galaxy Note9, an AT&T 5G Evolution capable smartphone

Testimony BOE

From: Chikako Fujii <fujii.chikako@gmail.com> on behalf of Chikako Fujii
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:21 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Concerns Related to School Opening

Dear Hawaii Board of Education,

As we get information on the reopening plan and current expectations, there are significant concerns that arise for student/staff/community safety and properly providing educational services.

As a Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP), there are unique considerations and needs to properly do our jobs and ensure the safety and welfare of our students, community and ourselves. We service across all grade-levels and many SLPs and related service providers services across multiple schools as part of legally mandated special education programming. Concerns include safety, procedural consistency, and trainings.

One of my main concerns is regarding safety procedures. As a service provider that services preschool to 5th grade students, I usually work with at least 15-20 students minimum per day with exposure to many other students if working in students' classrooms (pre COVID-19). The Ohana bubbles appear to be a safety measure put in place but we have been directed that it is ok for us (related service providers) to "break the bubble" and service students as needed. When asked if there is a limit to how many classes/students we can see in a day or how many bubble we're allowed to "break," I was told there was not a limit. That is a major concern as the risk of COVID-19 is ease of transmission and if you have related service providers going in and out of classrooms without any guidance or limitations, it would put everyone at greater risk of exposure and in the event that a related service provider tests positive for COVID-19, make it more challenging for DOH to contact trace. There needs to be clearer guidance on when it is appropriate to "break the bubble" and how often it is appropriate to do so during the pandemic. Guidance may include limiting the number of people that may enter the "bubble" as per CDC or current best practices guidelines. Plans for us related services providers, of course, include providing services virtually as much as possible; however, if students are at school and certain students are not appropriate for virtual services, we will at some point need to "break the bubble." Depending on the type of caseload we have, that may be a substantial percentage of the caseload.

In addition, proper PPEs appears to be inadequately supplied at this time in our district and staff should not be expected to work prior to proper equipment being provided and trainings of how to utilize PPEs properly. A comprehensive training video such as the blood-borne pathogen video that staff is required to watch every year seem appropriate and necessary for this situation.

At the current time, there seems to be limited consistency in guidance as to how to properly service special education students that is reflective of their legally binding individualized education plans (IEPs). There needs to be clearer guidance on how schools must operate to provide IEP services that is CONSISTENT across all students so as to continue providing services in an equitable manner. This would help reduce confusion to educators and parents related to IEP matters. At this time, it appears that some schools are approaching IEPs one way and another school a completely different way. That will create confusion in the community and potentially create disparities in services provided. Disparities are very much noticed by parents and community members and it is not right 1) to create disparity and 2) to put teachers/administrators/related service staff on the spot to have to answer to parents who may be upset due to those disparities and questioning the legality of what we're doing when the guidelines are not clearly established.

I am also concerned about the limited trainings we have received that is specific to our unique needs as SLPs in order to do the job that is being expected for us to start to do by August 4. We need more comprehensive trainings in telepractice which we are being advised to do as the preferred deliver model at this time, similar to the types of specialized trainings being offered to teachers.

With the above considerations, it maybe not be safe to start the new school year on August 4 that is rapidly approaching. I sincerely appreciate the board's time and consideration to review my concerns related to this challenging situation. I trust that the board and the department of education will take into consideration everyone's input and concerns to make the best decisions for the safety and well being of our students, staff and community. I look forward to working with my complex area administrators/colleagues, the school staff and community and the entire department of education to properly support our keikis during these unprecedented times.

Mahalo nui loa,
Chikako Fujii-Segno, M.S., CCC-SLP

Testimony BOE

From: Georgia Welch <georgiahawaii@gmail.com> on behalf of Georgia Welch
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:21 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Delay start day

Hello,

It seems careless to start face to face without a plan of how to handle when a case presents itself on any campus.

We should delay start date during this Pandemic, hello? Do we really care about our teachers and people at school?

Just my manao....

Georgia Welch

Molokai Middle School

Testimony BOE

From: Abby Arnott <abby.arnott@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Abby Arnott
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:25 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Dear BOE,

I am writing to testify to Action item G, the temporary discontinuance of the extra compensation for Special Education teachers, hard to staff schools and Hawaiian immersion programs. I did not receive these funds last year as I was completing my teaching credential program as an Emergency Hire teacher, but I can say that knowing that I would see a higher pay beginning this year (2020-2021) was helpful in mentally getting me through my program. There were many monetary sacrifices over the past two years in my life and my family's life. I was a full time student, working full time teaching (emergency hires don't get paid well), a mother of 3 children and a wife and homemaker. My husband and I chose to give up a lot in order to get me through school, knowing that the paycheck would make our life easier once I received my teaching credential.

When I read about the BOE's consideration to stop these differential payments it felt like a punch to the gut. I had put in a lot in order to meet the requirements to receive a "living wage". We all know that teachers, all teachers, are not paid what they are worth. Teachers work hours beyond their work hours, teachers pay for supplies out of pocket, teachers teach because they love their students. It was a breath of fresh air to see that the BOE was acknowledging these misgivings and trying to adjust the system to help teachers.

And it worked!! Our schools saw more special education teachers hired, fewer special education teachers leaving, more teachers filling in vacancies at hard to staff locations and fewer teachers leaving these schools. So why would the BOE discontinue a successful program? Is there really no other way to adjust the budget than to take from these well deserving teachers? I feel tricked, I feel lied to, I feel like it's not too late for the BOE to see the error in this suggestion to stop these differential payments.

There has to be a different way. Please find it. I worked so hard to find this place, find this job, that will allow me to love what I do without sacrificing a living wage.

Thank you for your time,
Abby Arnott
Holualoa Elementary School
Special Education Preschool 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: Sarah Tiffin <sarahtiffin26@gmail.com> on behalf of Sarah Tiffin
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:23 AM
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.

My name is Sarah Tiffin and I am a special education teacher at Kalihi Kai elementary school. I have been volunteering my time over the past month to work with my school to ensure that our school is safe for my students. I do not think that we are ready to reopen safely.

I want to go back to school. My students with special needs need to go back to school. They need face to face instruction and I am so eager to go back but not at the risk of my students' health. We need to ensure that our students, staff and faculty can return safely. There are still too many unanswered questions and unaddressed concerns. How can our classrooms with the most vulnerable students open up safely? How can we have a classroom with students with the highest needs practice social distancing? Many of the students in the high needs classroom have a paraprofessional to provide 1:1 support. There is a nurse in the room as well as an educational assistant. 18 people will be in the classroom at one time. How is this safe? When I send my questions and concerns to district, I receive no guidance. I am told that every school is unique and that it is our responsibility to figure it out. Parents are concerned. My coworkers are concerned. My EAs are concerned. Paraprofessionals are concerned. We are not ready to go back. We need another week or two to answer all the questions and to ensure we have clear, written guidance from the state.

Sincerely,

Sarah Tiffin

Testimony BOE

From: katie parkinson <katieblack_4@hotmail.com> on behalf of katie parkinson
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:23 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Distance learning

I have concerns about sending my children back to school and would strongly prefer a distance learning option. I am able and willing to help them and it would free up space for other children who may not be able to stay home. I have concerns that there is not yet a distance learning option available at Kapaa Elementary. I am hopeful that a well organized distance learning option will be available. Other schools that offered this have been much more successful when the distance learning was consistent across the grade level so that parents teachers and students were all using the same tools. Video instructions made available on YouTube are also great options as many families have multiple children and work at home parents sharing devices. I am hopeful that Kapaa Elementary will be able to provide a distance learning option soon as school is about to start and many families (including my own) are not comfortable with in class instruction during this pandemic.

Thank you
Kathleen Parkinson
808 214 8933
Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Patricia Bailey <booka_boom@yahoo.com> on behalf of Patricia Bailey
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:24 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Underlined Health Issues

The BOE and The DOE should have Teachers and Staff trained professionally. There are a lot of students, faculty and staff members with asthma and diabetes and Teachers with infant children how will we protect ourselves? If there is an infected student or staff that have the COVID 19 Who will be fast enough to get to the Leeward side to contain the situation? Sure they gave us guidelines but that's not enough, we all need to be trained. Don't speculate that the guidelines is enough. We all know students need to have their education. I for one have asthma And 63 years old and my husband has diabetes how will opening schools keep me safe or my family. I fear going back to work! Parents fear their children going face to face learning. Yes and parents need to work. Has anyone who works for the Hotels etc. found a better job or a job at all? Superintendent Kishimoto, Governor Ige, Mayor Caldwell, and the Health Department hasn't taken this into effect. It seems that our lives doesn't matter just hurry up and let's be the first State to open our school show everyone we don't care about our Teachers, students and families safety! Distance Learning is the best solution for all !

Sent from my iPad

Testimony BOE

From: Cynthia Van Kleef <genkigirlmaui@yahoo.com> on behalf of Cynthia Van Kleef
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:23 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Maui Teacher

Aloha BOE,
Why are teachers and students going to be the guinea pigs of re-opening society?

Why not open movie theaters, music halls, sports, etc first to see how it goes?

Idea: send teachers back to school, train us on how to deliver effective virtual classes, let teachers teach from their rooms and students learn from home.

The statement about students who are facing forward can be 3 ft apart but if facing each other they need to be 6 ft. apart. . . really. . . have you even been in a classroom for an entire day?

Example: I'm a middle school teacher. Last year, B6, every single day, I had to tell two boys to stop hanging on each other, stop wrestling with each other. . . they like to pretend they're in the UFC, play around with headlocks, air punching, grabbing each other around the torso. . . every single day I had to ask them to stop.

Kids are not robots, they are not coming back to school subdued, they are going to be SO excited to see friends that they will act like kids like to act, wild, playful, joking, hanging on each other, etc.

I don't want to be policing kiddos to not.

Heck, adults can't even keep the 6 feet distance. . . I've been at small gatherings with friends and even after we've all agreed to stay apart. After an hour we are all standing and talking normal distance from each other. If adults can't do it, how will kids?

Classroom activities are all about interacting, solving problems together, discovering with partners, in groups and rotating those groups so kids get more ideas from others.

How is a teacher suppose to help a student with their work if we need to be 6 feet away?

Please, don't make us the guinea pigs.

Aloha Abundance,

Cynthia

"People do not shape their futures, they form their habits and their habits shape their future." F.M. Alexander

. . . Exhale . . .

Testimony BOE

From: Lester Rivera <riveralg@hawaii.edu> on behalf of Lester Rivera
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:25 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony: Reopening of Schools

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.

I'm humbly and respectfully requesting the delay of opening of school buildings to students. Unfortunately Hawaii DOE has not mandated that students and staff use masks or face shields in the classroom. I was hoping schools could be more strict than what the CDC, Hawaii Department of Health and OSHA is recommending about masks, in regards about requiring adults and students to wear masks or face shields that wrap around the sides of the wearer's face and extend to below the chin. My concern is because of recent information about the potential long term lung damage to asymptomatic children, as informed in the article titled, "Nearly one-third of children tested for COVID in Florida are positive. Palm Beach County's health director warns of risk of long-term damage" The Palm Beach County's health director warns that "They are seeing there is damage to the lungs in these asymptomatic children. ... We don't know how that is going to manifest a year from now or two years from now," Another doctor stated the following, "Dr. Jorge Perez, co-founder of Kidz Medical Services, said it's too early to say how common and severe long-term damage could be from COVID-19, but early evidence suggests some children infected with the virus could have lasting damage. Here is the link for the article: [Nearly one-third of children tested for COVID in Florida are positive. Palm Beach County's health director warns of risk of long-term damage.](#)

Our keiki should not be exposed to potentially unsafe environments. Hawaii DOE is asking its employees and students to basically treat schools like hospitals. Hospitals are environments that are required to be very clean and in order to operate require many rules and procedures to prevent spread of illness. An elementary school classroom should be structured and have procedures in place, but we are asking/demanding that our keiki abide to a more structured environment with more procedures and responsibilities that if not followed could endanger someone's life. Should our keiki be burdened with that responsibility? This situation reminds me of the perspective I had during my service in the military about mistakes. Mistakes in the military, especially frontline, could have the consequence of serious injury or someone's death. Now, mistakes in school about hygiene, social distancing, and undetected symptoms, could have the consequence of serious illness or someone's death.

Other reasons include the following:

Teachers need additional time to prepare the classroom for social distancing. Preparing the classroom for social distancing and creating plan that will not allow students to borrow items that would normally be borrowed, these two types of tasks require more time to plan and implement.

Custodians might be burdened with additional duties. Custodians physically work the hardest in schools, now they will be required to clean each classroom after breakfast and lunch because classrooms might be used as cafeterias.

EA's might be burdened with additional duties, EA's are already very busy with normal school responsibilities. They will most likely be tasked to distribute breakfast and lunch to each classroom.

Might not be fair to families that would like to change how their child receives instruction. For example, if a parent initially chooses full time virtual learning, the parent might not have the option to change to physical "f2f" because the max per classroom has been met because of social distancing.

The school's health aid might be burdened with additional duties and responsibilities. The health aids are very busy throughout a normal school day. The health aid might have to take additional steps when a student or staff member is suspected of having COVID-19.

There are many more reasons that justify why the school buildings should not be opened for students. The aforementioned reasons will negatively impact a teacher's ability to teach and student's ability to learn because there are a lot of additional responsibilities and tasks that are being added to Hawaii DOE employees and students that if not followed to the "T" might endanger someone's life, and one life lost would be one too many.

Thank you in advance for your consideration and efforts.

Lester Rivera
Elementary School Teacher
Keonepoko Elementary School

Testimony BOE

From: Sherisse Powell <sherisse@hawaii.edu> on behalf of Sherisse Powell
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:26 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Reject Proposal to Defer Differentials

To our trusted Board of Education,

My name is Sherisse Cambonga, I am writing to humbly ask that you please reject the proposal to defer our differential pay that has ALREADY BEEN ALLOCATED to our budget prior to COVID.

As a Hawaiian Immersion teacher, this differential was a huge incentive for many of us to stay in the immersion program, and I was grateful beyond words at the decision of the BOE to allocate funds to compensate us properly for the amount of work we put in.

At the end of the 2019 school year, I was one among many who was looking to find another position outside of Hawaiian Immersion, especially one closer to home. Although I have so much passion and love for Ka Papahana Kaiapuni, the commute and the amount of work we put in as HLIP Kumu (due to a major lack of resources) has taken its toll, and after 15 years, I was looking for the path of least resistance. Although that opportunity came up this year, as I was asked to teach Hawaiian Language at a school closer to me, I refused the position leaning on the incentive of the pay differential. During this time of COVID, myself and other Kumu have CONTINUED to go above and beyond to CREATE and DEVELOP online resources and accessible learning for our students. We are not able to pull work and resources from the internet like the rest of our English medium counterparts, who have countless websites and online learning tools and resources available at the click of the mouse.

Also during this time of COVID, many of us have been the only ones in the household receiving a paycheck. My summer job was cancelled, and if it wasn't for that differential, our mortgage could've easily gone into foreclosure. As we are now working to pull ourselves out of the additional debt accrued as a result of COVID, and while we prepare for these overwhelming days ahead with the reopening of schools and added safety measures, this proposal to defer differentials comes as another major blow to my spirit.

I would also like to speak to the challenges of my colleagues in special education who have struggled with the challenges of online instruction. I have witnessed the dedication to providing quality teaching during these trying times. It is NOT the time to leave us all feel devalued and overwhelmed with our financial situation as we should be focused on well being and teaching.

There surely has to be another path to offsetting the budget. We are expecting the state to appropriate the stimulus and rainy day funds carefully, and quit looking to make more budget cuts to any more areas of our already dismal education budget, especially to our teachers' pay, already ranked amongst the lowest in the nation not even considering the high cost of living.

Please, as our fellow educators, on behalf of the keiki who need teachers who are well and committed, please reject the proposal to defer differential pay.

With hope,
Sherisse Leialoha Cambonga

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Elizabeth Pieper <elizabeth.pieper@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Elizabeth Pieper
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:26 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Special Education Testimony
Attachments: SPED_TESTIMONY.pdf

Aloha,

I have attached my testimony in opposition to the special education pay differential decrease. Please view attachment pdf below.

Thank you.

Regards,



Ms. Elizabeth Pieper
Special Education Science Inclusion, 6th, 7th and 8th
Kealakehe Intermediate School
74-5062 Onipa'a Street
Kailua-Kona, Hawaii 96740
(559) 210-4552
20303819@k12.hi.us

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“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.” (Nelson, Mandela, Civil Rights Activist).

Aloha Hawaii Board of Education,

My name is Elizabeth Pieper and this is my 2nd year working as a special education teacher at Kealahou Intermediate School on the Big Island of Hawaii. I am writing in opposition to the defunding of the special education pay differential. It grieves me to have to write a testimony concerning the proposal to decrease funding for hard to staff positions such as special education because this proposal not only will have negative impacts on the lives of our teachers, but our keiki with special needs and families who care for them.

As Nelson Mandela said, “Education is the most powerful weapon, which you can use to change the world.” Our keiki with special needs deserve all the resources to obtain their best education because an investment in their education yields a return investment on the future state of Hawaii and the world at large. It all starts with increased funding for special education teachers who have a significant impact on the future of our students each and every day. To defund the work of special education teachers is to defund our students with special needs, defund our families and communities, and our beloved state of Hawaii.

In my first year as a special education teacher, general education teachers warned me that I would be working twice as hard as themselves due to the heavy workload that comes with being special education teacher such as writing Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs), hosting meetings with parents, teachers and families often outside of school hours, planning lessons, and co-teaching in 4-5 different inclusion classrooms sometimes leading lessons, small groups, and offering intense differentiated instruction for students who are often far below their grade level, or who have significant special needs. I experienced all of these difficulties in being a special education teacher, but I always came to school with a positive attitude and persisted in my work as a special education teacher because I knew that I was directly impacting the lives of my students daily. I also continued my professional development journey during these past few summer months by ensuring I could complete all preparation work necessary to obtain a special education license, so I could best serve my students with special needs this upcoming school year. My motto has always been to put the needs of students first and I believe the Hawaii Department of Education should consider the needs of our keiki first and the impacts of decreasing funding for special education teachers who work tirelessly to serve our communities throughout Hawaii year round.

The news of the proposal to decrease pay for special education teachers is a mirror reflection of the state of Hawaii’s educational values and the choices we as educational leaders make to benefit our communities in the midst of a pandemic. If we are seeking better educational outcomes for our students, we must continue supporting our special education teachers by giving them the resources they need to be successful.

What message are we as educators sending to our communities if we decide to defund special education teachers because of economic hardship brought upon by COVID-19? Our families and diverse communities throughout Hawaii anticipate students returning back to school and look upon teachers and other educational leaders as a lighthouse of knowledge, encouragement, and leadership for their children in the midst of COVID-19.

As paraphrased by Nelson Mandela- education is a powerful tool to change the world-, so why would we as educators defund special education teachers when our students and families most at risk during COVID-19 need teachers. The state of Hawaii and its global influence will be impacted by the next generation of leaders, our current students, who we are attempting to under-serve now.

I propose continuing increased pay raises for special education teachers because this pay differential allows special education teachers to better serve our students with special needs, our communities, our state of Hawaii, and it allows our students the opportunity to have a positive influence on the world.

Mahalo,

Elizabeth Pieper

Testimony BOE

From: Katherine Wallis <katherine.wallis@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Katherine Wallis
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:26 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Teacher Differentials

Aloha,

My name is Katie Wallis, and I am a special education teacher at Chiefess Kamakahelei Middle School on Kauai. I am emailing to urge you to reject the proposal to defer the shortage differentials for special education teachers, Hawaiian language immersion educators, and educators at hard-to-staff schools.

I have seen firsthand the negative effects a shortage of special education teachers can have on a school. I have seen special education teachers burnout and quit after their first years because they felt the heavy burden of taking on responsibilities of more than one position. With the differentials, I believe it will be easier to hire and maintain special education teachers in Hawaii. This will truly benefit the teachers, school community, and most importantly, the students.

Please consider rejecting the proposal to defer these shortage differentials in a time that these teachers require even more support. These differentials are necessary in these hard-to-staff positions.

Thank you so much for your time!

Sincerely,
Katie Wallis

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: Juan Espinal <thejuanespinal@gmail.com> on behalf of Juan Espinal
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:27 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha, my name is Juan Espinal, 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 been a general education teacher at Konawaena Elementary for the past 8 years on the island of Hawaii.

I created Hawaii's first education podcast, [Maestros Vibe](#)

I created West Hawaii's first keiki cooking show, [E Ola Pono & Mr. E](#)

I love teaching. But it is so difficult.

If it's not one thing. It's the other.

In the beginning of this entire pandemic, the governor said he was going to cut all teacher pay by 20%.

Now, differentials are being cut.

Nothing is ever secured for teachers who have been the worst compensated in relation to living expenses in the entire country for years.

There is a pandemic. There is also a crisis. A teacher shortage crisis.

This differential is the only thing that is keeping me thriving in Kona.

I am becoming a more important storyteller for this important community.

If you cut this funding you will drive me right back to poverty. This small differential in the grand scheme of these realistic obstacles we face is miniscule.

Hawaii schools have overwhelmingly been unsuccessful with the greatest amount of failure occurring in these identified neighborhoods.

Resources solve problems. Continue funding these resources.

Kona needs it.

We need it.

I met Kishimoto and Ige. I have attached a picture from last year.

They said they care about the crisis

They care about me.

I have done everything right

I have been there daily for my students.

You are driving me to the point of irrefutable anxiety with this decision making. Take care of teachers to take care of students.

Our schools weren't ready before. They are even less prepared now. Our teacher population is older, because of the teacher shortage crisis.

Let us take this time to all get back to work and call all of our student's families every day. Let us get to know them as ohana bubbles. Before we bring all bubbles together to burst.

Mahalo.



Testimony BOE

From: Jeannie Camacho <jeannie_camacho@hotmail.com> on behalf of Jeannie Camacho
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:28 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To 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 geographic locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

My name is Jeannie Camacho. I am a special education teacher of students with visual impairments (VI) across schools in Honolulu District. I urge you to continue funding the teacher shortage differentials. The differential was effective in retaining me in my position, which is highly specialized and nationally hard-to-fill. Suspending the shortage differential would be an affront to teachers who transferred or remained in their positions to meet the DOE's teaching shortage. It would be detrimental to our most vulnerable students who would again be without qualified teachers.

I have been a licensed and highly qualified teacher of students with special needs for 22 years. I hold licenses in multiple teaching fields: Elementary Education, Special Education – Blind/Visually Impaired, Special Education – Orientation and Mobility, and Special Education – Mild/Moderate. I am a special education teacher who provides two services for the visually impaired: Special Education – Vision and Orientation & Mobility (O&M).

The shortage differentials made a difference in recruiting and retaining teachers in special education or at hard-to-staff schools. Teachers who would not have otherwise transferred, switched to these hard-to-fill positions because of the approved shortage differentials. The differential encouraged me to remain in my job teaching students who have blindness and visual impairments.

The demands on a special education teacher are stressful, and it was especially taxing during the school closure. During the 4th quarter school closure, special education instruction was not optional. Special educators worked harder than ever. We continued to meet IDEA deadlines, planned lessons that were individualized to each student on our caseloads, and provided detailed documentation of every contact with students and their families. As a VI teacher, I averaged 10 to 15 hours per week preparing braille and audio materials for ONE student, so that this student had access to the general education, special education, braille, VI assistive technology, and Orientation & Mobility curriculum. 10 to 15 hours per week were spent for just ONE of my 20 VI students.

This summer, special education teachers have been on the front line. We were some of the first educators to go back into the classroom in the middle of this pandemic. We risked the health and lives of ourselves and our own families, to provide federally mandated IDEA ESY instruction to our students. We also provided distance learning to students whose families who were too scared to send their children to school.

There is an extreme shortage of teachers in special education and in hard-to-staff schools. If the BOE retracts the differentials, many teachers would leave these positions or schools. How would the DOE fill these already hard-to-staff positions? The lack of unqualified teachers would be devastating to Hawaii's most vulnerable students.

Please keep your pledge to fund the shortage differentials. Please explore other options in the budget, so that Hawaii's keiki can continue to be taught by qualified Hawaii teachers who are committed to education.

Thank you for your consideration,

Jeannie Camacho

Special Education Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments

Honolulu District, Oahu

Testimony BOE

From: F D <fd_665@yahoo.com> on behalf of F D
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:29 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony: Action Item G

Aloha,

I would like to comment on Action Item G, which will temporarily discontinue the extra pay for eligible classroom teachers in the Department of Education. As an elementary school special education teacher and a mother of 2 students attending DOE schools, it is my opinion that this is not the time to discontinue the incentives that were previously approved by the Board of Education for school year 2020-2021.

With the current conditions due to COVID-19 there's a lot of unknowns because this virus is relatively new and needs to be studied more. The unanswered questions that most people have regarding contracting the virus and infecting others is unsettling for educators who are expected to conduct face-to-face instruction. I can imagine that for some teachers who were on the fence about returning to school, the extra pay may have played a key factor in their decision to return. If it is decided that these eligible teachers like myself will not receive the incentive that was previously approved (with pledged funds from the Superintendent and BOE), Hawaii teachers will be dealing with setback and disappointment. In recent months, teachers have seen agreements and mutual understandings retracted, only to be drawn back to the negotiation table to work things out. Withdrawing from an agreement cannot be part of the "new normal" for education in Hawaii.

Currently there's a shortage of qualified teachers. The DOE needs to do whatever it takes to attract and retain teachers so that there are enough educators to support Hawaii's students when schools are reopened safely. Please do all that you can to honor your pledge for the children of Hawaii.

Thank you,
Felise Denis

Testimony BOE

From: Gerlinde Schmidt <gerlinde@hawaii.edu> on behalf of Gerlinde Schmidt
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:29 AM
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 Gerlinde Morris and I am a SPED teacher at Hilo Union School. Please do not reopen schools in a haste--we are in a unique situation--please put SAFETY FIRST!!!

Mahalo,
Gerlinde Morris

Testimony BOE

From: Dejah Padon <dejahpadon11@gmail.com> on behalf of Dejah Padon
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:30 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: School Delay Support

Aloha,

When teachers who are physically with our children on a daily basis feel not ready to open schools safely, WE MUST LISTEN! I am in support of delaying school openings until HSTA gets the answers that they need. What is the rush? We must be smart about this and take care of ALL our community. This is NOT an unreasonable request. I am mother of two children who will be affected by this decision to move forward without a concrete PLAN in place. Please give the schools and the teachers what they need to feel confident enough to proceed.

Mahalo,
Dejah Padon
Mother
--
Dejah Padon

Testimony BOE

From: Noi Nakano <noinakano@gmail.com> on behalf of Noi Nakano
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:30 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Please do not stop the differentiating pay for SPED

Dear BOE Members,

My name is Noi Nakano and I have been teaching in the Hawaii Department of Education (DOE) as a licensed Special Education (SpEd) Teacher for the past 18 years. I have to humbly admit that to be able to teach in SpEd as long as I have, you have to be a very special person (no pun intended) to endure all of the responsibilities and headaches that we all have to go through. I have witnessed many SpEd teachers quit, have a nervous breakdown (including myself), or change their profession shortly after teaching SpEd.

With that said, it has been very difficult being a SpEd teacher since most of my colleagues are inexperienced and unlicensed SpEd teachers. Our principal is only able to hire teachers who are right out of college with a Regular Education Degree or substitute teachers due to the lack of licensed SpEd teachers. Or, I have witnessed graduated licensed regular education teachers get hired in a SpEd position, then quit the following year and then get rehired from the DOE as a regular education teacher.

Due to this, tons of work is funneled directly to me being one of the few licensed SpEd teachers. The principal and the SSC are very reliant upon me and is given the task of dealing with the very high-end SpEd cases that parents are suing our school because of the lack of services for their child. In addition, I still have to prep for my class, teach my class and have all these unlicensed teachers coming to me for advice and information on how to do all of their IEP's and Reevaluations. I am usually the last person to leave our school campus at 5 PM every day. I literally had 2 nervous breakdowns and was told to see my doctors in the middle of the workday. I even had thyroid cancer last year that was removed due to what I believe was the stress from my teaching profession.

I highly urge you to continue the attractive differential pay for SpEd teachers. I have seen many teachers who are now seeking to get their license in Special Education or switching back to teaching SpEd if they are dual certified. This will only help to ensure that our SpEd students are being well-taking care with good licensed SpEd teachers and to help Hawaii be law-abiding and compliant.

--

Mahalo and God bless,

Noi Nakano

Testimony BOE

From: Tracy Lui <tracy.lui@mauihigh.org> on behalf of Tracy Lui
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:30 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: BOE General Board Meeting
Attachments: Maui High School Administrator Testimony for BOE .pdf

Maui High School Administrators Collectively

We oppose the reopening of schools on August 4, 2020.
We request that reopening be postponed to September 8, 2020.

Please find our testimony/rationale attached to this email.

**State of Hawaii
Board of Education**

**Testimony by
Maui High School Administration**

July 21, 2020

Relating to the Reopening of Schools for SY 2020-21

To Our Honorable Board of Education Members,

We submit this testimony to the BOE for consideration as administrators who have made every good faith effort to reopen our school. We collectively agree that it would be a critical error to move forward without voicing our concerns regarding reopening our schools. The health and safety of our students, staff and community is at risk and failure to address these concerns may result in grave consequences.

As Maui High School Administrators, we would like to collectively submit testimony pertaining to the following areas of concern:

Safety and Health Concerns:

- Custodians, SHAs, Cafe, Office have not received appropriate training in COVID-19 cleaning and disinfecting protocols. Training has also not been provided for new requirements in daily cleaning and disinfecting procedures. Still no guidance documentation from DOH, Public Health Nurses for our SHA (School Health Aides)
- We are not fully equipped with PPE for all students, faculty and staff.
- We are not fully equipped with enough hand soap, paper towels, hand sanitizer, hand sanitizer dispensers/stands, walkway and classroom social distancing floor stickers, inside/outside signage, etc.
- We are not able to limit the points of entry to campus leading to an inability to monitor or screen for student illness upon entry to campus.
- DOE continues to provide all training and meetings virtually yet claims that it is "safe" for students to be present in large groups on school campuses.
 - Educational Leadership Institute was held completely virtually on 7/21/20.

Preparation for Distance Learning Concerns:

- Teachers have not been provided with the training necessary to effectively deliver instruction online.
- Teachers have not been provided adequate time to plan and prepare for online delivery of instruction.
- Inadequate time has been provided to train classified support staff to assist in online delivery of instruction.

- No training or funding has been offered for classified support staff to assist in online delivery of instruction.
- Substitute teachers have not been provided with the training necessary to effectively deliver instruction online.
- Inadequate number of devices available to ensure all students have both internet access and a device to access online instruction.
- Inadequate time to communicate and provide parents with information regarding online delivery of instruction.

Personnel Concerns:

- Lack of qualified teachers - health and safety concerns have resulted in "at risk" teachers choosing to take leave.
 - When teachers, administrators and other staff members become ill we will not have the workforce to function
- Lack of substitute teachers
- Lack of substitute paraprofessionals
- Lack of substitute custodians/room cleaners

Food Service Concerns:

- Inadequate space to allow students to eat in the cafeteria with appropriate distancing.
- Inadequate staff and facilities to provide a separate point of sale for students who are receiving online instruction.
- Inability to provide "offer vs. serve" to students.
- Students who receive free and reduced lunch who are receiving instruction online will likely not be able to eat.

Student Transportation Concerns:

- Online system has just opened and many students have not been able to apply.
- There isn't a process for tracing which students ride the bus on a given day and route.
- The transportation guidelines allowing two (2) students per seat defeats the purpose of all efforts to maintain social distancing.
- Bus drivers can offer a mask to students but they are not required to wear the mask.

Guidance is Requested Regarding:

- Liability concerns
 - Student safety and wellbeing in the home while receiving online instruction.
 - Online activity while "in class".
 - Offline activity while "in class".
 - Student injury while completing learning activities "unsupervised".
- Chapter 19 reporting/enforcement
 - How to verify if students are "in class" when violations occur.
 - No training has been provided to adhere to Chapter 19 guidelines via distance learning.
- Special Education Services
 - What is considered direct instruction online for service minutes?
 - If parents choose distance learning is it considered a declination of FAPE?
 - How are students "included" if they are attending class live while the general education population is receiving instruction online?

- How is compensatory education need determined?
- How is compensatory education delivered?
- How is compensatory education documented?
- Clarification on discrepancies between multiple HIDOE documents (Principals Handbook, Reopening Plan, MOU with HSTA, etc.)

In your BOE resolution, school communities were encouraged to Give Hope, Act with Kindness, and Work Toward Togetherness in reopening our schools. As administrators, we are making every effort to make this a reality, but feel that we are being forced to reopen schools on August 4, 2020 with minimal support and without answers.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our concerns regarding opening our school campuses. We respectfully request that the reopening of schools be postponed to allow for appropriate planning, training and guidance for the numerous questions that have not been answered.

Respectfully Submitted,



Maui High School Administrators
Jamie Yap (Principal)
Lianne Dela Cruz (Vice Principal)
Kelcie De Mello (Vice Principal)
Paula Herbaugh (Vice Principal)
Joanne Higa (Vice Principal)
Tracy Lui (Vice Principal)
Mitch Wendorff (Vice Principal)
Mike Ban (Athletic Director)

**State of Hawaii
Board of Education**

**Testimony by
Maui High School Administration**

July 21, 2020

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- We are not fully equipped with PPE for all students, faculty and staff.
- We are not fully equipped with enough hand soap, paper towels, hand sanitizer, hand sanitizer dispensers/stands, walkway and classroom social distancing floor stickers, inside/outside signage, etc.
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- Lack of substitute paraprofessionals
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- Inadequate space to allow students to eat in the cafeteria with appropriate distancing.
- Inadequate staff and facilities to provide a separate point of sale for students who are receiving online instruction.
- Inability to provide "offer vs. serve" to students.
- Students who receive free and reduced lunch who are receiving instruction online will likely not be able to eat.

Student Transportation Concerns:

- Online system has just opened and many students have not been able to apply.
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 - What is considered direct instruction online for service minutes?
 - If parents choose distance learning is it considered a declination of FAPE?
 - How are students "included" if they are attending class live while the general education population is receiving instruction online?

- How is compensatory education need determined?
- How is compensatory education delivered?
- How is compensatory education documented?
- Clarification on discrepancies between multiple HIDOE documents (Principals Handbook, Reopening Plan, MOU with HSTA, etc.)

In your BOE resolution, school communities were encouraged to Give Hope, Act with Kindness, and Work Toward Togetherness in reopening our schools. As administrators, we are making every effort to make this a reality, but feel that we are being forced to reopen schools on August 4, 2020 with minimal support and without answers.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our concerns regarding opening our school campuses. We respectfully request that the reopening of schools be postponed to allow for appropriate planning, training and guidance for the numerous questions that have not been answered.

Respectfully Submitted,



Maui High School Administrators
Jamie Yap (Principal)
Lianne Dela Cruz (Vice Principal)
Kelcie De Mello (Vice Principal)
Paula Herbaugh (Vice Principal)
Joanne Higa (Vice Principal)
Tracy Lui (Vice Principal)
Mitch Wendorff (Vice Principal)
Mike Ban (Athletic Director)

Testimony BOE

From: Cassidy Devey <crdevey@outlook.com> on behalf of Cassidy Devey
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:32 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Action item G Testimony

Hello,

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

My name is Cassidy Devey and I work as an Autism EA in a special education classroom at Haleiwa Elementary. I see everyday how much passion and hard work the teacher in my classroom displays for her students. This compensation has been incredibly beneficial to her because instead of having to find work outside of school she has been able to use that extra time to focus on her students and their special needs. By removing this extra pay, I fear that we may end up losing these good teachers, which is the last thing these students and our education system needs. We need to support good teachers and I ask that we make the right decision for them and our students.

Thank you,
Cassidy Devey

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Lynn Charton <lcharton@kekahaes.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Lynn Charton
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:32 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am emailing testimony today regarding 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.”

My name is Lynn Charton, and I am a first grade teacher at Kekaha Elementary School on the westside of Kauai. I urge you to postpone the opening of school until both the campus safety concerns are figured out, and the teachers have been trained, and have time to prepare for virtual teaching.

I am 53 years old. My husband is 64. I am scared to death of contracting COVID-19 at school, and while I am scared for myself and my husband, I also feel an extreme guilt and burden about exposing the virus to the keiki and adults at my school. I feel like we, as teachers, are being sacrificed.

Especially after seeing Dr. Kishimoto’s “commercial” last night scolding all of us to work together to reopen schools, assuming we are all of the same mindset, I am shaking my head. It is stupid that we are pushing forward when we don’t have to. Many large school districts (LA, San Diego, Sacramento, and San Francisco, for example) have already announced 100% virtual learning for the opening term of school. They put safety and planning first.

This is idiotic. Opening my first grade classroom will look like:

- 13 double-wide desks spaced around the room, old-school-style. No students facing each other.
 - At each double-wide desk Student A comes M/W, Student B comes T/Th
 - Students 6 ft. apart from each other always
- Teacher Me is also 6 feet away from students ALWAYS
 - No leaning over the child to observe their work
 - No sitting together and listening to/helping a child read
 - No teacher-touching of their papers/work
- A constant black cloud over the classroom of:
 - Maintaining spacing
 - Keeping masks on appropriately
 - Using the bathroom? How to do this with supervision and social distancing—seriously?!
- No playing together!
 - No use of play structures
 - Indoor play is individual at desks
 - Outdoor play with no proximity to other children
- Learning
 - I will have to stay 6 feet away from the kids while teaching
 - Kids needing any support will have to receive it from a 6 foot distance
 - Any papers kids complete/turn in will need to not be touched by me for 3 days
 - Kids can not look at the picture books in our class because after touching a book it will need to sit for 3 days. So I have to deny the kids’ access to books!

Why would we do this to our children, just to get them on campus 2-3 days/week? We are going to spread the virus by congregating on campus! I am approaching panic-mode, and also a sense of resignation. I don't want to do this. We need to take a breath and keep the kids on virtual learning at home while we continue to figure things out.

Thank you for understanding,

Lynn Charton
First Grade Teacher
Kekaha Elementary School
8140 Kekaha Road
P.O. Box 580
Kekaha, HI 96752
808-337-7655

Testimony BOE

From: Yavette Charles <yavette.charles@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Yavette Charles
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:32 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha!

My name is Yavette Charles, I am a SPED Teacher at Kailua High School in an Alternative Resource Classroom. I teach students who have behavior difficulties, anxieties and health issues. I am writing to you today to ask that you PLEASE delay having ANY students come to campus by AT LEAST one - two weeks. The reason behind this is, normally teachers come back to their classrooms two days before students come to campus to set up their rooms and prepare their curriculum. A lot of us may come on our own time to prepare if we feel we need extra time. At this time, we are being asked to teach in UNPRECEDENTED times and teach in circumstances WE HAVE NEVER TAUGHT IN BEFORE. If you want us to be prepared, do our best, and give our students the best educational experience in these circumstances, then PLEASE help us out and give us the time we NEED to do this. For me personally, I have to be prepared to teach over 15 subjects due to the program I teach in. My classroom has been stripped bare due to making space for the appropriate "social distancing" space. Shelves that normally hold all the supplies I need to teach ALL the science classes, art classes, english classes have all been taken out of my room. I need the time to organize, sort and find a place to store my teaching essentials so that I am still able to teach my students and give them what they need to learn. I will NOT be able to do that in 2 days. The 1st two weeks of school have been allotted for half day of testing and training. As a SPED teacher, that means I will be doing two weeks of IEP meetings and I will not have time to take care of my room or my curriculum. PLEASE, give us the time we need to PREPARE! We want to be proactive and not reactive!

Mahalo!

--

Yavette Charles
Kailua High School
(808) 266-7900 ext. 2270



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Testimony BOE

From: Stacey Thom <sthomkat@gmail.com> on behalf of Stacey Thom
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:33 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To BOE

I am a teacher in Hilo union elementary school with many concerns about the reopening of schools. As a teacher I recognize the importance of reopening school however kindergartners And 1st graders are not able to keep themselves feet apart. The health and safety of the students as well as the teachers are being put at risk. teachers were not given the proper training for online distance learning during the summer months, many of us were not even aware of the training being available to us. There has been allotted no time for this training to be done during the opening of school.

Many of our students on the outer islands still do not have online capabilities and many of our families are not able to help them. Schools like ours are trying to help supply students with the equipment but are still waiting for funds or equipment or both.

Then there is the problem of the mask, face shields and distance on campus and in the classrooms. Which maybe simple with older students but not so realistic with younger children.

Finally there is the fact that numbers of cases are beginning to climb again on all the islands. How safe is it to return students and teacher/staff to the schools right now.

Please reconsider the timeline to add a more realistic timeline to the reopening of schools.

Thank you
Stacey Thom

Testimony BOE

From: la.pousoo29 <la.pousoo29@gmail.com> on behalf of la.pousoo29
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:34 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY

Lula Pousoo
Education Assistant

Aloha

I wanted to share my testimony. Mahalo for this opportunity.

My concern in the few weeks ahead of School Year Opening 2020-2021 is skeptical with this pandemic still around. Yes, our students need to be in schools, but i feel that this is being rushed and not thoroughly and completely thought out.

How is it that our very own leader of DOE has put the decision of Model A, B, or C to be chosen for each individual school. This decision should have come from her and her team with thorough thoughts, so that all schools/staff/administrators, along with our STUDENTS/Ohana are on the same page and receive the same information.

I have #3 children of my own, #3 school schedules to have to figure out on how to work it into our new Lifestyle/Schedules.

This is stressful and I can only imagine how all my fellow DOE employees who are parents/families are going to figure it out, not only us DOE but for all Parents/Guardians/Families.

I ask that you please think long and hard about our Safety and the Need of Our Keikis and Ohana in our Home State of Hawaii. Is it too much to ask to push back our start date for this school year to September 2020-June 2021...?!?! School Administrators & Staff can utilize the month of August to work on thorough planning and setting up school/classrooms and other Safety Guidelines, do orientations/training for situations that may occur that is pandemic related, following DOE Guidelines and Laws.

I DO HIGHLY ASK THAT ALL DOE SCHOOLS BE PUT ON ONE MODEL TO FOLLOW FOR THIS SCHOOL YEAR AND IN THE FUTURE HAVE OTHER MODELS TO CHOOSE FROM AS HAS BEEN STATED IN MODELS A, B, OR C.

MAHALO

Lula Pousoo

Sent from my T-Mobile 4G LTE Device

Testimony BOE

From: Adrienne Hale <adriannahale@gmail.com> on behalf of Adrienne Hale
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:35 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

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.](#)

To the Board of Education:

My name is Adrienne Hale. I teach at Holualoa Elementary on Hawai'i Island.

I urge you to delay the start of school. We do not have the man power, cleaning supplies, training, staff, health and safety protocols as an individual school to safely open schools. There will likely be terrible consequences to pay with the way this is all being done.

Adrienne Hale

Testimony BOE

From: Kayla Schlaich <kaylaschlaich@yahoo.com> on behalf of Kayla Schlaich
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:36 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Hello,

My name is Kayla, and I am a former DOE employee 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 submit to you that schools need more time to properly prepare for in-person learning plans, and teachers need to be certain that they will have the support, training, supplies, and classroom space to make the necessary accommodations for students during these uncertain times. Resources are already so limited during regular school years, that teachers understandably do not have full faith in their ability to take proper sanitizing precautions on top of juggling both on-campus and online learning. They also need to be sure that they will be taken care of in the event that they or a family member falls ill.

At 24, I took my first DOE teaching job. One week before school started, I was handed the keys to a room that had been used as a storage space. Every surface was caked in dirt and lizard poop. There was a major ant infestation, and the floor was covered in stacks of old textbooks. I spent the next week cleaning alone, with my own supplies, until my hands were raw. The VP helped me move hundreds of textbooks into an unused bathroom. I spent my small supply allowance on extra fans because the room was boiling hot.

I was so filled with hope when I took that job. At first, I smiled through every day. Students were continually added to my class to the point where I could barely move around - then to the point where I had to assign a girl to use my desk because I didn't have a desk for her. If I walked away from my lunch for 5 minutes to talk to a student, I'd return to it covered in ants. I felt for my kids who were constantly trying to stand in front of the fans and dry themselves off, even though I would have to tell them to return to their seats.

I was told to go home before dark because it wasn't safe to stay on campus, but I never felt like I was doing enough; there were always papers to grade, lessons to plan, activities to create to try to make my classes more engaging. (Despite her concerns for my safety, I always saw my principal's office light on, no matter how late it was when I finally went home). I worked 7 days a week. All I ever thought about or talked about was school, to the detriment of personal relationships. I fought every day against student apathy and a lack of parental support. I tried my hardest to encourage kids who thought they were incapable of success. Soon, I started crying every night as I drove home.

I did the one thing I swore I'd never do: quit mid-year. I felt like such a failure -- like I was just another person giving up on students who needed an adult to care for them. I earned two university degrees thinking that I would teach students to believe in themselves in a system that doesn't provide the necessary support. It was disheartening to say the least, and I left swearing to myself that I would never teach again.

That was not my first or last teaching job, but it's the one that sticks with me with most. Teachers go to school knowing they are fighting an uphill battle with little appreciation. Every teacher I know fully understands that they would be the first to take a bullet for their students or the last in the room in case of a fire. They take on the

mental, emotional, and financial weight of a job for which they are criticized left and right, all while being expected to make miracles happen.

If teachers are hesitant to return to school, it is because they know from experience that they will not be given sufficient space, time, supplies, or training to keep students safe while teaching them to the best of their abilities. It is because they know that appropriate plans have not been made for the numerous potential situations that may arise this year. It is because the people telling them to interact with 150+ students a week (even if it's on alternating days) are making these decisions safely over Zoom -- not in person.

I don't have all the answers, but I ask that we do not rush to making teachers go back to school unprepared. They need people to listen to their concerns and to advocate for them, for the sake of our children. Teaching has never been an easy job and it certainly is not getting any easier.

Thank you for your time,
Kayla Masuda

Testimony BOE

From: Kelsi Nitahara <klN114@icloud.com> on behalf of Kelsi Nitahara
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:36 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Reopening of schools

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.

I am an elementary school teacher and I'd like to ask the board to delay the reopening of school for students. Teachers need to be trained on various topics such as effective sanitation to safeguard staff and students, distance learning techniques in the event we go back to 100% virtual learning and overall procedures that we should follow in the event someone in our class becomes sick or is exposed. Allowing these trainings to happen and be developed BEFORE students return will allow for a smoother return and transition if we return to online only learning. Investing the time to set up procedures and training will benefit students, staff, and the community as well.

As a parent, I would want my child's teacher to have these trainings before my child returns to school to ensure a safe return. Parents like myself are entrusting our children to have a safe environment and without proper training how can we ensure that. So please reconsider opening schools on August 4.

Thank you for your time!

Kelsi Nitahara Moses

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Adrienne Hale <adriannahale@gmail.com> on behalf of Adrienne Hale
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:36 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Retain and support teacher shortage differentials

Aloha Hawai'i Board of Education,

My name is Adrienne Hale. I am a public school teacher at Holualoa Elementary on Hawai'i Island.

I urge you to support the teacher shortage differentials. I teach in a hard to staff area and have seen the negative impacts of the teacher shortage in our complex. Our students deserve highly qualified educators. The differential has proved to attract more teachers in our hard to staff school complexes.

Adrienne Hale

Testimony BOE

From: Rylee Newkirk <ryleenewkirk@gmail.com> on behalf of Rylee Newkirk
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:37 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Special education pay differentials

Hello Board of Education,

My name is Rylee Newkirk and I am an inclusion teacher for the upcoming year. With everything going on, and the already lack of pay teachers receive, special education teachers are extremely needed and wanted in the classroom. Cutting pay will lead to teacher shortages, the need for second jobs, and unwarranted stress when the focus should be on the students.

I hope you rethink the decision and look towards the future complications that it can have on Hawaii's teachers.

With aloha,

Rylee Newkirk

Testimony BOE

From: Kelli-Anne Kuroda <kelli-anne.kuroda@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Kelli-Anne Kuroda
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:34 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Dear Board of Education:

My name is Kelli-Anne Kuroda and I am a kindergarten teacher at Ala Wai Elementary.

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"^[1]. Especially in closed or poorly ventilated spaces such as many of our classrooms, it is absolutely essential to have a mandatory mask requirement for all teachers and students.
2. The current state plan relies on a fictional construct known as "Ohana Bubbles", which especially in the absence of a universal mask mandate, puts a family's health at the mercy of other families. However, no amount of distancing, disinfecting, or use of PPE will be sufficient to keep groups of people in confined, poorly ventilated spaces safe, because behavior of all those individuals outside the classroom cannot be assumed to have been safe.
3. The current DOE plan is to leave masking optional (at teachers' discretion) is unacceptable. Fundamental matters of scientific fact such as masks should not be left to teacher (or even school administrator) discretion. That would allow too many loopholes that will result in poor or no

compliance that puts their child's lives at risk. It also puts an undue burden on teachers and/or school administrators to decide and enforce mask rules.

4. It is likely that some teachers and/or school staff do not believe in the importance of masks. They of course have the right to believe that, 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 proposed current 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 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.

Personally, I can't wait to get back into my classroom to meet my students and to get this year underway, but not at the cost of my own health as well as my family. If you had asked me a month ago, I would have been so ready to jump in with a full class but it must be understood that we can't have a "we'll cross that bridge when we get there" situation, as too many lives are at risk.

I want to do what is best for the keiki and their families and I understand how hard it would be for essential workers to find daycare if schools aren't able to reopen. My sympathies are with the working parents and their families, but I must argue that their health is more important than their education at this point.

Schools are NOT ready for this; we were not all trained as Dr. Kishimoto has stated to the public. We need to be honest and transparent with all involved. The only constant with this whole situation has been the inconsistency. Speak to those involved and who will be directly affected, get a better understanding of the public situation because every news conference continues to spit out the same information. I've stopped watching already because I can't trust the leadership to tell me what is really going on.

With a shortage of teachers around the state already, why are you willing to put the lives of those who are still here, at risk because of funding? You will not have many great educators left if you continue to treat us like pawns in a political game and "closing the gap" will have an all new meaning in this state.

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



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Testimony BOE

From: Lindsey Robertson <lindsey.robertson@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Lindsey Robertson
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:38 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Lindsey Robertson, Special Education Teacher
Hawaii Department of Education

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

Wednesday, July 22, 2020

My name is Lindsey Robertson. I am a Special Education Teacher at Roosevelt High School (RHS) for our Community-Based Instruction Program. Everything I say in this testimony are my own words, and not to be representative of Roosevelt High School or any of the other teachers of RHS faculty.

I **oppose** schools opening in the manner that the HIDOE intends to do so. I cannot with confidence believe we will be safely entering schools, able to do "contact tracing" using the bubble method in a high school, and keep my staff and students safe during the school day. I do not support the BOE to approve this action step.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

--

Lindsey Robertson
Special Education Teacher
Roosevelt High School
1120 Nehoa St.
Honolulu, HI 96822

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Testimony BOE

From: Tina Rossman <christinamarie_kona@yahoo.com> on behalf of Tina Rossman
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:39 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony: Reopening of schools

Aloha,

As a teacher, parent, and lifetime resident of the Big Island, I urgently ask you to delay the opening of schools. The plan that has been provided, and which each school's administration is frantically trying to figure out, is not adequate and will not keep our community safe. There are too many unanswered questions and too little training. Too many unknowns and too many people in one place will be a breeding ground for disaster. Keep our teachers, our staff members, our students and their families alive by delaying the opening of schools. With more time and more training, teachers can provide effective lessons via online learning. Meaningful relationships and sharing can take place online without the risk of spreading a deadly disease. Please, in this unprecedented time, let us prioritize life.

Mahalo, Tina Rossman

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: David Sousa <dsousa@gmail.com> on behalf of David Sousa
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:37 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

When I responded to the parent survey in June, we had 26 active cases of Covid. Now we have over 300.

This changes my opinion on schools being safe.

Why does it not change yours?

Also, we are not the safest state in the country anymore. Vermont only has 160 active cases.

David Sousa

Testimony BOE

From: Cara Bertelmann <c.bertelmann@yahoo.com> on behalf of Cara Bertelmann
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:39 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony
Attachments: Testimony.pdf

Aloha Board of Education,

Please see the attached PDF for my testimony in support of delaying the start of school and continuing differentials for teachers.

Mahalo,

Cara Bertelmann

July 21, 2020

Dear Board of Education,

I am writing this testimony in support of rejecting the proposal to defer differentials for teachers and moving back the start of school for students.

My name is Cara Bertelmann and this will be my second year of teaching at Waimea Middle Public Conversion Charter School. My passion for teaching students and desire to constantly improve as a teacher even prompted me to obtain my master's degree in secondary education. I am currently taking doctorate level courses in teaching English as a second language. Receiving the differentials has allowed me to afford my third degree; however, without the differentials, I am afraid that I will no longer be able to afford furthering my education to improve as a teacher. Student loans and several other expenses are crippling and force me to live paycheck to paycheck even with differentials. Furthermore, I even have additional jobs as a source of income. I am urging you to please consider rejecting this proposal because a pay cut will not only affect me, but other teachers in the state.

The differentials encouraged more teachers to live and work in the state of Hawaii. It pains me that I need to consider moving to another state if I am unable to afford the high cost of living on top of educational expenses. I love the school I am at, I love the staff, and I love to teach my students. I am urging you to please reconsider this proposal so our highly qualified teachers, like myself, will remain in the state of Hawaii to educate the children of this state. Our children deserve a quality education from highly qualified teachers.


I have always felt supported as a teacher at my current school. Our principal goes above and beyond her duties to make sure the needs of her teachers, staff, and students are met. During a time of uncertainty and fear, she encouraged us to go above and beyond our duties, which I am grateful for. However, there are still several unanswered questions about the procedures and protocol for the return of school during a pandemic. I believe it is unfair for our principal to deal with the negative repercussions if we are forced to return with students on August 4th.

I want to return to work because I miss being in my classroom and doing what I love. However, during HSTA's live stream on July 21st, several questions were raised. These need to be addressed and made clear across the state. It was obvious to me that we are not ready to have students back. I fear that my lack of clarity on these procedures and protocols will negatively impact my teaching. When we return to school, teachers should focus on educating students in their content area. In my case, I am more concerned about keeping students safe and monitoring their social distancing rather than the content I want to teach them. Only with a set of procedures and protocols would I be able to properly do my job and focus on the content I want to teach.

We should delay the start of school for students so teachers are given time to prepare for educating during a pandemic. Four days is not enough for schools to prepare, we need a set of procedures across the state as a guide for our unanswered questions. Teachers and staff should be starting school with confidence, not uncertainty. Parents should feel safe sending their children to school. Figuring it out along the way is not something we should be doing

during a pandemic. It may even be a good idea to go virtual for the first quarter, but if this does happen, we will still need time to prepare. Furthermore, several families live in multigenerational households. If anyone gets sick and they are asymptomatic, the virus can easily spread to other families. I live with six other family members and it would pain me to see them or other families get sick from something that could have easily been prevented.

I learned a lot about what it means to be a teacher during my first year, and the pandemic has forced me to learn as an educator, which I am grateful for. I gained a lot of knowledge and confidence during a time of uncertainty. However, I am asking you to please support your teachers and listen to what they are asking. The board should consider the continuation of giving our deserving teachers differentials and delaying the start of school. Our safety and our students' safety depend on it.

Sincerely,

Cara Bertelmann

Testimony BOE

From: Caryn Fukuda <carynyayoi@yahoo.com> on behalf of Caryn Fukuda
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:35 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: Caryn Fukuda
Subject: re: testimony
Attachments: testimony for pushing back schools.docx

Dear Honorable Board of Education, Governor Ige, Superintendent Kishimoto:

The nation is watching us, they are wondering what will happen when the doors open up August 4. We are one of the first schools in the nation to open our doors because our numbers are low.

The governor has pushed back tourism to keep our Covid count low so that we can reopen our schools. The president is threatening to pull our federal funding if our teachers don't physically return to our classrooms. Meanwhile, in other states, the numbers of Covid patients and fatalities are rising. There is great pressure on our governor and superintendent to open the classroom doors as our economy nationwide is failing.

The teachers are anxious, we are to come to school with shields, masks, uncertainty, health issues, in the sweltering heat of our classrooms without fans or air conditioning because Covid thrives in the cold. Evidence now shows that the virus survives for eight hours waiting for a susceptible body to host them.

Teachers with multiple children are also experiencing frustration, if Covid happens to make their rounds in each of the schools, all of his or her children are bringing it home and speeding up the inevitable infection process, especially for those who have their grandparents who live with them or other family in their Ohana houses.

What is fearful is the day the governor gives the green light to let the tourists back in because small businesses, our favorite stores and restaurants, are shutting down and the government checks for the unemployed stop at the end of July. When the tourists come, they will have already circulated the virus asymptotically in the airplanes for several hours, only to deplane at the airport, leaving more viruses in tact for several hours, before arriving at the hotel to check in, dine in, and go shopping in Waikiki, to unknowingly infect the employees, many of whom are parents or relatives of our school children.

We are not shirking our duties, we love our children, when schools shut down suddenly in March, we had to suddenly switch to online teaching, although we have never done it before. We didn't have a choice, we didn't have the necessary time to prepare, we learned quickly, we improvised, and we did our best to provide lesson plans and assignments and tried to help our students to pass, to learn enough to prepare for their AP exams, and to continue to provide meaningful education for the last few months of school.

We love our children and we care about their families, we care about those who suffer from heart problems, immune disorders, diabetes, cancer, obesity, kidney disease, COPD, asthma, high blood pressure, mothers-to-be, people who smoke and others whom the CDC have listed are the most at-risk for susceptibility to Covid. Evidence is now coming out showing the after effects of people who have recovered from Covid. My classmate at Regent university is asking for prayers because a loved one recovered from Covid but now needs a kidney transplant. My fellow classmate at Regent recovered from Covid after catching it from her aunt, but her aunt fell into a coma and passed away. Her recovery was so debilitating that she dropped out of our class. My cousin's family usually comes to Hawaii yearly, one of the students at her son's school in Tokyo tested positive for Covid, the school is still open. They won't be coming to Hawaii any time soon.

We love our children, we teach and love them even if they can be difficult at times. We teach them because we want them to be successful, to be righteous, to be honest, empathetic, and future stakeholders in our community in a job of their choice.

We love our children and want to advocate for those who are voiceless and whose situation gives them no choice but to physically return to school. My children, my students, our Keiki, I love them so much, if I were to ever knowingly jeopardize any of their lives, and do as we are told... I would not stand by and

listen. I am willing to fight for them , hearing from other teachers and their fear and frustration from other states looking to us, just waiting for the inevitable to occur. Is it ten percent of the population that must be infected in order for the school shut down policy to take effect?

A lot has happened since March when the shutdown happened, I was taken to the ER because I thought I was having a heart attack, I could not breathe and the pain in my chest was heavy, it was an anxiety attack they said, I have never had those before, in May, my boyfriend left me, and my father passed away a month after that. Covid took from me my sense of security, my partner, my father, and part of my happiness. I suffer from type 1 diabetes, every day is a battle, many of my co-workers don't know i have it because I am ashamed to tell them. I have had it since I was 19, I work hard from the time I get up until I go to bed to test and maintain my blood sugar. I am insulin- dependent, I give myself a shot three times a day, sometimes extra in between if my sugar goes high, I have never been in a coma, and I try to exercise and take supplements to be as healthy as I can so I can work and support my family. I am having my will written because when my mom passed away from cancer suddenly and she didn't have one, we lost a lot and are continuing to undo what was done.

Please hear us, I am just one of many who are asking for your help. All of the parents I spoke to are ambivalent, they don't know what to believe, is it truly safe to send their children back to school? We are asking that you push back reopening the schools. We are the guardians, the advocates, caregivers, educators, nurturers of our innocent, voiceless Keiki who look up to us, who believe in us, who trust us saying that it is "safe to be back in school", they are depending on us. We are saying it is not safe, we are standing together to go against reopening the schools and are proposing to go fully online, until it is safe.

We are getting testimonies from other educators, from parents, people in communities who were exposed to the devastating virus and have survived or have seen others who have died.

Please listen to our pleas. It is not safe, we need to plan accordingly and not be pressured by the president, we are being watched, what we do will open up the eyes of our nation, we are the pioneers, this disease is here to stay, we don't even have a vaccine, we are telling you that we need time, we can instruct our students using online instruction. We need your support. We need our parents on our side, we are parents too, we love our children as well as yours.

We need to stand together, we won't silently allow this to happen because it is unjust, risky, irrational, and we are being pressured to keep our mouths shut , there are many who silently support us but are afraid to speak up, afraid of their employers, their jobs, our parents, the community...

I have God's protection, and I am going out on a limb in writing this. When I finish my studies at Regent University, I am going into youth ministry as well as finishing up my years in DOE.

Thank you for hearing us.

Sincerely and faithfully yours

Caryn y Fukuda

Teacher and parent

Testimony BOE

From: RAYNETTE KWAN <kailee92@aol.com> on behalf of RAYNETTE KWAN
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:39 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Reopening of Schools

I am an EA for 30 plus years. I am very concern with reopening to soon our public schools. I have many questions but one in particular. If I contacted COVID through one of my students or if one of my students test positive for COVID, who will pay for my 14 day quarantine at home? As you know many of us has earn sick leave and receiving 2 days per month for working 18 days out of a month. Many of us are hanging on to little sick leave for last school year. So my concern is, are the State willing to pay all the faculty, EA's and Teachers who've contacted COVID through a student for their entire time in isolation or even in the hospital?

With that being said, I am looking into retiring if the schools are opening with a bare minimum of training in dealing with this pandemic.

Thank You,

A Very Concern EA

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: c.logan@rocketmail.com
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:39 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Restarting School

Hello,

I want to express my opinion regarding the opening of schools this Aug 4th as currently scheduled. It is one of the most irresponsible choices that you could make! We have more cases now than when you shut the schools down the first time. While you may think that you can implement all kinds of safety measures what happens when we get an outbreak and it spreads to buses, student and teacher homes? Good luck fixing that. When kids kapuna get sick and heaven for bid, die, who pays for that? Oh, and one more thing. I hear that the Federal government is talking about legislation to limit liability for schools. If it's so safe to go back who would even need to be concerned about that? Please either delay opening or give teachers the option to distance teach FROM HOME and parents the right to choose in person or distance learning.

Community member

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Krisy Bajo <krisybajo@gmail.com> on behalf of Krisy Bajo
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:39 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

My name is Kristin Bajo and I'm a counselor at Kea'au Middle School. I am writing in regards to Action Item H; please do NOT reopen schools on August 4th, as I don't believe we are yet able to provide a safe learning environment for our keiki. This pandemic has produced too many unknowns, and risking the health and safety of our community is a gamble I am not willing to take.

As a counselor, I understand the psychological impact that this crisis has put on us all (both children and adults). While it is true that our keiki do need to return to a routine of education, the physical school environment is not safe for them right now and returning prematurely could result in dire consequences in the long-run. My colleagues and I worked really hard at the end of last year to provide quality, distance-learning instruction & resources to our students. We can certainly do it again...we just need time to prepare.

Please take into consideration that, as a parent, I am not comfortable sending my son to school at this time. Thus, we opted for 100% distance learning. This will put a harsh financial strain on my family (as it means that my husband will need to move to part-time work so that he can stay home with our son). However, that tremendous sacrifice is a much lesser evil than sending our child into a health-compromising environment. I've heard from many of my colleagues who will be opting for 100% online curriculum for their keiki this year as well. I think it speaks volumes that many educators aren't even going to send THEIR OWN children to school on August 4th.

There are definitely solutions that we can discuss to bring curriculum and services to Hawaii's keiki...but we need time to plan! Please do the right thing and postpone reopening. Our lives, and the lives of our children, are in your hands.

Respectfully,
Kristin Bajo

Testimony BOE

From: Jennifer Masutani <jm202@hawaii.edu> on behalf of Jennifer Masutani
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:41 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

The following is testimony for the Finance and Infrastructure Committee Meeting. We are providing comment regarding Agenda Item IV. A. “Presentation on Department of Education's financial plan supporting its comprehensive plan for reopening schools for the 2020-2021 School Year: budget appropriations from 2020 Legislative Session; unspent carryover amounts from the 2019-2020 school year; plan for reprioritization of existing funds, assistance from the Hawai‘i Emergency Management Agency ("HI-EMA") and timeline for these HI-EMA funds; Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief ("ESSR") Funds (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security ("CARES")) Funds awarded directly to the Department for K-12 education); potential sources of additional funds; additional cost of reopening schools for 2020-2021 School Year; and anticipated shortfalls and potential impacts of anticipated shortfalls.”

Aloha Chair Payne and Members of the Board of Education,

As the Board of Education looks at the HDOE’s financial plan to support reopening schools, we urge you to prioritize funding to support students on distance learning days.

According to a recent parent survey 65% of respondents said that it is unlikely someone in their family/household would be able to provide learning and technological support to their child if a form of distance learning continues in the fall.* Our students need a safe place to receive academic support when they are not in school and parents are working. The survey also found that 87% of respondents said their children would need extra academic support upon returning to school in the fall, with 36% reporting their kids would need “a lot” or “quite a bit” of extra support. Ninety-one percent of respondents were concerned about their children’s social-emotional well-being, with 49% selecting “extremely” or “quite” concerned. It’s quite clear that our kids will need extra support when returning to school. And that support will be much harder to access if they’re on a A/B rotation learning or full distance learning schedule.

As schools are strapped with limited teacher capacity to support both their in-person classes and online classes at the same time, we ask that you consider using ESSER Funds, CARES Act Funds, or create flexibilities in other pots of funding for schools to coordinate care for students on their distance learning days. This is an equity issue as we know families with resources will hire tutors or private teachers to help their children continue to learn on distance learning days. We are asking that the students without family members who can support their distance learning, or without the resources to hire someone, be supported equitably so they don’t fall behind their peers.

Afterschool programs are a great resource for schools and families who want to equitably support their students. They have the staff capacity and the proven record of supporting kids’ academics, social-emotional development, and providing a safe environment. Using innovative strategies like using afterschool staff as paraprofessionals to assist with homework help and online learning can address the equity gaps our vulnerable students face. Afterschool programs are eager to help and supplement--not supplant--the school day. See below for example guidance from other states on how they are leveraging their afterschool partners to support students on remote learning days.

We ask that you secure flexible funding for schools to partner with afterschool programs to provide a safe learning environment for kids while their parents are at work.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony,

Paula Adams, Executive Director
Jennifer Masutani, Program Director
Hawai‘i Afterschool Alliance

Guidance on leveraging afterschool partners from other states:

Connecticut: “[Adapt, Advance, Achieve: Connecticut’s Plan to Learn and Grow Together](#),” page 40

“After-school programs can play an important role in providing supports for students during traditional after-school hours, including days in which students are engaged in remote learning and not scheduled to be in class. Traditional after-school programs do not need to operate only after school dismissal and can support families on days when students are not scheduled for classroom instruction. As schools reopen and parents return to working outside the home, after-school programs can assist in providing safe places to provide care for students while simultaneously providing support and assistance to enhance remote learning.”

California: “[Stronger Together: A Guidebook for the Safe Reopening of California’s Public Schools](#),” Pages 27-29

“There are multiple models being considered for a redesigned school structure to comply with health standards and physical distancing requirements. After-school programs can help in each model. Across all of the following configurations, expanded learning providers can ensure that students are having positive social interactions with adults and peers in safe and supportive environments that value youth engagement and learning.

“Staggered Times: Some districts may have A and B groups that attend on alternating days or in AM and PM rotations. In either case, expanded learning staff could be

- working with the group that is not currently in class,
- doing innovative and engaging activities that build on the lessons taught in class,
- supporting students in completing projects assigned in class, or
- doing computer science activities, theatre, visual arts, or science to enrich students’ learning experiences.”

*Parent survey was conducted by the Hawai‘i Afterschool Alliance and the Hawai‘i Children’s Action Network received 721 responses across the state from July 8-17, 2020.

Testimony BOE

From: Julia Chong <julia.mi.chong@gmail.com> on behalf of Julia Chong
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:41 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Hello,

I would like to submit my testification 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 Chong. I have been a K-6 educator in Hawaii for the past 13 years. I have many questions and concerns about the Board's plan to reopen schools on August 4th.

1. Safety of Students, Teachers, Staff, and Community:

I teach in a military community where the majority of our students belong to military families. I appreciate all that our servicemen and women do for our country but am filled with anxiety about the health and safety of myself, my peers, staff, and of course our students and their families. Parents of our students constantly need to fly out of state for duty or deployment. Upon their return, if they do not self-quarantine or quarantine with their family, they (especially if they are asymptomatic) can put other students, staff, and teachers at risk of contracting the disease. Even though they state exempt, the military still makes its members quarantine. However, their child can still attend school. *What will happen should that service member contract COVID 19, especially if they needed to report for duty in a state or country with a high COVID count? What about for new family members PCSing from a state or country with a high COVID Count who are exempt from quarantine? How can teachers who teach in military communities feel safe and at ease that they are not in a more vulnerable situation?*

Even though I wear my mask, wash and sanitize my hands and supplies often, I can still contract the disease. Our students catch the bus, and will be in multiple "ohana bubbles." *How can the Department & Board of Education give everyone the assurance and peace of mind that we will be safe, that COVID counts will be low and possibly even non-existent, especially when there have been families who sent their child to school sick or with symptoms prior to the pandemic?* We are not trained to be doctors or nurses, so no one should expect a teacher to look for symptoms, especially when temperature checks are not mandatory.

I understand the importance of face to face instruction and thrive off of being physically in the classroom, but at what expense? This triggers my anxiety because I fall into the high-risk category with asthma, severe allergies, and being a borderline diabetic. What if I become pregnant? That will put me in an even riskier environment. I should not have to choose between my own health and well being. I should not have to unwillingly apply for leave, or submit a doctor's note to give up my passion for teaching just to be placed in a low contact position due to being a

high-risk individual. These scenarios put teachers in a very difficult position where there are only negative consequences for any choice we choose.

What if a student or faculty member contracts the disease? Teachers don't have the luxury of just "calling in" sick. It requires a lot of our time and energy since we need to prepare sub plans and ensure all the supplies and copies are prepared for the substitute. *However, if one contracts the disease, how can a teacher prepare if their room and supplies would be "contaminated?" If we need to be out until we get clearance from our doctor, we have to utilize all that sick time as a consequence of choosing to do our job. How is that fair especially for teachers who teach at a school where their student body is comprised of mostly military families?* To reassure teachers, there should be a clear universal protocol that ALL schools will follow (not school by school) should someone at the school contract the disease or be in close contact with someone that has?

Another area of concern is we are all nationwide suffering in our economy due to the pandemic. *However, what is the Board's solution to providing all schools with the necessary amounts of PPE and protection (masks, shields, gloves, thermometers, and even plexiglass dividers) if schools now have cuts due to shortage differentials?*

2. Time & Training

Someone mentioned that teachers are planners. I am a planner, therefore the unknown, no solid direction or sample "model", leaves me with the highest anxiety unsure of where to go and how to plan. I feel like I am being pushed into a pool to learn how to swim, but I'm drowning instead. This uneasiness of not feeling prepared will impact my students' ability to learn. A student will learn based on how prepared their teacher is. A student reacts based on how their teachers act and react. **Therefore, by postponing the start date for students, teachers statewide could and should have adequate training to better prepare for distance-learning where we can feel confident to provide the best learning experiences for our students virtually, especially if another stay at home order is mandated.**

I would like both the Board of Education and the Hawaii DOE to reconsider its decisions and guidance on how best to protect everyone at public schools in Hawaii. As a teacher, I understand the importance of students needing to learn, but at what expense? What do we have to sacrifice as teachers, students, and parents?

In this unique time, the health and safety of everyone in our schools should be the most important thing to consider above all else when creating reopening plans. These plans should not be rushed, but methodically thought out involving multiple parties to contribute.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Julia Chong
Grade 6 Teacher at an Elementary School

Testimony BOE

From: Arash Steindamm <arashiotoshi108@gmail.com> on behalf of Arash Steindamm
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:41 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am testifying on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawai'i Board of Education and Hawai'i State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modification and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

To whom it may concern:

With the aggressive nature of this virus and this desperate push to reopen schools, I find that teachers, administrators, and other staff members are being asked to fight what will eventually be a losing battle and not being supported enough. Even in the best of circumstances, a school does not have the infrastructure and facilities to safely serve hundreds of students. There are too many variables I feel like we can't reasonably control: students congregating at recess/lunch or during passing, enforcing an all-day mask policy in the August/September heat, student bathroom use, sharing the bathroom/lounge area with other teachers, how will we handle to sanitize desks between classes, students receiving and turning in hard copies, etc. On top of this, some of the specifics/guidelines on how these variables will be handled haven't been made clear to us and we are being told "specifics will be shared as we get closer to reopening." I know this is a very dynamic situation, but the fact that the faculty doesn't know how some of these variables will be handled and that we are being trained after students show up to campus, shows poor planning and that we cannot handle bringing students on campus. For me and everyone else, trying to make sure our students practice the proper health procedures on campus and in our classrooms will add an extra layer to the already difficult job we have. Therefore, I will find it very hard to teach my curriculum.

This feels like a logistic nightmare that is eventually going to fail and our students and the staff are being put unnecessarily at risk. My wife works at a hospital, which is set-up to combat the spread of disease by being thoroughly cleaned around the clock, and there have already been three employees who have tested positive. I could be wrong, but I don't think our school will be as thoroughly cleaned as the hospital. My observation is that students often practice poor hygiene: sharing food/water, not washing hands, constantly touching their faces, spitting, etc. I feel like the responsibility of teaching proper hygiene and protocols in this time will be left to the responsibility of the school (as if we don't already have enough expected of us). If three students showed up with the virus, I only think it would be inevitable that it would spread.

There seems to be a lot bending over backwards that we are required to do just to have our students be on campus twice a week (some schools, like Holualoa, students are only showing up once a week). Another thing that I don't understand is why this idea of students coming to school for their emotional well-being takes precedence over doing what is needed to stop the transmission of this deadly virus: staying at home as much as possible. I'm sure it will not be beneficial towards their emotional well-being if they, or other family members, contract the virus. The DOE/BOE seems to have just dismissed distance learning as being ineffective without deeply examining the gravity of the situation: we are in a pandemic that our generation has never seen before. With the stakes this high, I wish we would go to 100% learning. What we need to be is proactive towards this virus, not reactive. It won't be perfect, but we are much more outfitted and capable of going to 100% distance learning than we are trying to have students safely show up to school.

At my home, my wife and two of my daughters have asthma. My wife, in particular, has lately been having more difficulty with it and she already works in a high risk environment (the hospital). I feel like me being exposed to so many different students puts my family's health even more at risk. It also works the other way, I could easily contract the virus from my wife and then put many students and staff members at risk. I think most of us don't understand that a person's difficulty doesn't just necessarily end when someone recovers from the virus: there may be some long-term negative effects.

Sincerely,
Arash Steindamm.
Kealakehe High School

Testimony BOE

From: Caleb Bullock <calebjbullock@gmail.com> on behalf of Caleb Bullock
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:41 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Differential Pay Necessary

Aloha Board of Education,

My name is Caleb J. Bullock and I am a new hire from the state of Tennessee. I recently accepted the position at KKP Complex under Pahoa High and Intermediate. I will be the new ALPSS Instructor and am very excited for this opportunity.

I was made aware from a neighbor of mine that the differential pay may be taken away. As someone who has recently moved his entire possessions and life to teach here in Hawaii that differential pay is what I need to survive the move.

As you are aware the cost of moving is very expensive. The cost of flights, moving a vehicle from the mainland and the emotional cost of leaving family and friends. All that being said, the differential pay allows me to recover from the cost of moving and the high cost of living compared to Tennessee. Removing the differential pay would be a stressor as far as living here in Hawaii and overall affect the longevity I wish to have in the KKP area.

Overall I just wanted to state that as a new educator to Hawaii I believe that since the differential pay was guaranteed upon hire that it should absolutely be not removed from teachers who work so hard both inside and outside the classrooms and the communities.

Mahalo,

Caleb J. Bullock
M.S. University of Tennessee
B.S. Florida State University

Testimony BOE

From: Stephanie Taira <sktaira@gmail.com> on behalf of Stephanie Taira
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:41 AM
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 a second grade teacher at Ka'elepulu Elementary School and I would like you to delay the opening of school until the DOE can ensure that students, teachers, and staff can be safe and that our children will learn.

Currently our plan is reactive, not proactive, and we are putting something together piecemeal. During the regular school year, this is not ideal but in a pandemic this can be devastating. We need a solid plan and resources to implement this plan to safely bring back our students. We know that there will be new cases of COVID-19 when schools reopen, that is a given. How many children, teachers, and their families need to get sick before the DOE says go back to distance learning? How many people are you willing to risk?

Our campuses must be safe. We need proper PPE and the confidence that our classrooms will be sanitized. Surfaces are sanitized multiple times a day in stores, office buildings, doctors offices, banks, restaurants, etc. In my school, I don't know if my trash will be emptied at the end of the day. We were told that our classrooms were sanitized after it was shut down in March. When I went into my "sanitized" classroom, the trash from the last day of school on March 13 was still in the classroom. Our faculty bathrooms aren't cleaned daily because our custodians are overworked and we are going to add extra work on their plate. How are they going to do this?

We are expecting young children to sanitize their desks and chairs at the end of the day. Do parents want their children to touch disinfecting wipes multiple times a day? And, can we even get these wipes?

Our schools are so grossly underfunded and we have had to give up learning materials to pay for PPE. Now individual schools are expected to find funds to pay for distance learning for families who request 100% learning. We need to make a decision on distance learning by Friday and we were only given the information yesterday. We need time to create distance learning plans that tie the curriculum to the standards to ensure that our students are learning.

The DOE says that teachers have had training in distance learning since we closed. That is not true. I have attended "training" this summer on my own time. These trainings are simply different tools that are available. I have not had the opportunity to build lessons for the students. The problem with these trainings is that they are not comprehensive or required so only some teachers have had training.

This is what my summer has looked like:

Create a pacing guide for the year based on the idea that we are 180 days face to face.

Scrap that pacing guide, we don't know what school will look like so don't waste your time. Take some PD, if you want, to learn how to teach distance.

We are going to do K-2 face to face, full time, plan for that.

We are going to do K face to face, full time. Everyone else 2 days face to face, 3 days distance but we aren't really sure what it will look like.

We are going to have a new ELA curriculum.

Maybe we should use the distance learning curriculum for the whole school and supplement during our face to face days so scrap what we have done in the past, you will learn a new curriculum but we won't make a decision until Friday.

How is this a good thing for children?

The DOE needs a plan for training and for safety so our students will be able to have an education. This is an opportunity to do it right. Let's not lose this opportunity. Delay the opening of schools for students and give teachers the time to create a plan to create a learning environment that will allow our children to be safe, happy, and successful.

Respectfully,
Stephanie Taira

Testimony BOE

From: Stacy Miyashiro <truthchild@gmail.com> on behalf of Stacy Miyashiro
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:42 AM
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.](#)

Stacy Yang Miyashiro
Lanakila Elementary, School Counselor
Ma'ema'e Elementary, Parent

This testimony is short and simple.

Can the BOE and the Superintendent absolutely guarantee that they are doing everything they can do to guarantee the safety of our students? Do they have ALL policies and procedures in place to be prepared for the thousands of students who will be descending on our campuses in 11 days?

The Superintendent is pushing her own agenda at the jeopardy of our students and staff and does not even have in place a policy for if/when one of our children or teachers becomes infected with COVID.

She is leaving it up to the discretion of the schools, saying they know their communities best, but schools are ASKING for a comprehensive and consistent protocol from the DOE.

We are not ready. Tourism should have no affect on the safety of our children.

What is more important - that our children are academically up to par or that they are safe, virus free and not infecting family and friends.

Hindsight is 20/20. There must be so much pressure from parents to have students in school, not just for academics but for child care and the economic implications. But consider this, if children get sick, if one child or teacher gets ill or heaven forbid, passes away. Will the BOE, schools, administrators, CASs and the Superintendent be able to say they did everything in their power to prevent it? NO. It will be the opposite, it will be because you did nothing and worst you made it an unsafe environment that they contracted the virus. It will be on your shoulders.

Please act now. Take the harder step of keeping our children and teachers safe at the expense of public or DOE scrutiny. If even one child's life is lost it will be on the heads of the decision makers for our schools who skirted the hardest made choices and put it on the heads of the schools and forced their hands. This is on you. Please do the right thing.

Testimony BOE

From: Jodi Kunimitsu <jodikunimitsu@gmail.com> on behalf of Jodi Kunimitsu
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:42 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony - July 23 General Meeting Item G. - oppose

Dear Chair Payne and Members of Board of Education,

My name is Jodi Kunimitsu and I am a teacher at Maui High School. I am writing in strong opposition to Item G, the discontinuance of supplemental pay for teachers in special education, Hawaiian Immersion, and hard-to-fill geographic locations. I am not a teacher in any of these categories, however, I have been in the department for 16 years and have seen that the high need for these teachers has not diminished for all these years.

We are now in the middle of a pandemic and schools were asked to provide face-to-face instruction for the most vulnerable populations of students. This included SPED students. So first, the SPED teachers are asked to provide face-to-face instruction and then they are told that the well-deserved supplemental pay that they earned is going to be taken away? Do you see the problem here?

The same can be said for the hard-to-fill geographic locations. These are often the rural areas where students are less likely to have access to internet and devices. These students will also likely need to be on campus for instruction. Now these teachers who will most likely be teaching face-to-face are also going to have their pay cut?

Our state should be providing more kula kaiapuni schools for our students. We know that there is a need for more kaiapuni teachers in order to make this happen. For example, I live on Maui and there are NO kaiapuni programs in Wailuku, Kahului, or Kihei. Students would need to go to school in Pa'ia and Kula or Lahaina in order to receive an education in the kaiapuni setting. By rescinding this pay differential, you will continue to struggle to recruit and retain these teachers.

I know that the teachers in the three populations above work extra hard to provide for their students. The amount of time and energy that is required to provide the same education to their students as a student in a general ed population in a more accessible region is definitely more.

I am asking you to please use the funding provided by the legislature for this purpose, for this purpose. Please do not rescind the differentials and use the funding for other things. Please consider the recruitment and retention rates in these areas that the department has continually struggled with. Let's not take 10 steps back by forgetting the reasons the pay differential was provided in the first place.

Mahalo,
Jodi Kunimitsu
Maui High School

Testimony BOE

From: Shanna Nakamura <shannanakamura@gmail.com> on behalf of Shanna Nakamura
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:42 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

My name is Shanna Nakamura-Heaton and I teach kindergarten at Ali'iolani Elementary School. I am 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. I am writing the testimony to urge you to delay the opening of school buildings to teachers and students.

I teach kindergarten so I fully understand how crucial it is for students to be on campus! However, we need to be smart about how we are doing it to ensure the health and safety for all! Right now, I feel as though we are not prepared to minimize the risk of COVID-19! There is a nationwide shortage of PPE and everyone is struggling to get disinfecting spray, gloves, lysol, and hand sanitizer. When we go to Costco, Safeway, or any store, they all have plexiglass protecting them. Even with that precaution, these employees are still being diagnosed with COVID-19. What do we as teachers get? Maybe a face shield and a disposable mask if we are lucky. I taught summer school and we got one bottle of wet ones and one bottle of sanitizer for the entire duration of summer school. I was responsible for disinfecting my desks, chairs, and manipulatives in between the two sessions, which was my lunch break and while I was no longer on the clock. I can just imagine what the school year is going to look like.

The state has no plan at all to keep everyone healthy and safe, all they keep saying is that the keiki aren't in the high risk group. Well what about the faculty and staff?! We as teachers have had absolutely NO training about adjusting curriculum or safety. We start next week and we have no contingency plan on what will happen if a teacher or student gets infected with COVID-19. We also don't have any precautions about letting students on campus such as temperature checks. This visual check from six feet distance is a joke! As of now, parents are allowed on campus too which increases the risk of exposure to COVID-19. There is no plan in place to minimize the number of people on campus. There is absolutely no clear guidance. In a time like this, having a clear plan and guidance is crucial to a successful reopening! There is no set number on how many students can be in a class, yet stores have guidelines on this. The CDC recommends no more than 10 people in a room yet we are trying to shove as many kids as we can in a classroom as long as they are six feet apart. But is this the best way to be an effective teacher?! We are asking our five year olds to sit at their desk the entire day and if there is up to 22 kids in a room, they can be so far in the back that this will not be effective! There are so many things we are just winging to ensure we get students back in school. It feels as though we are being bullied into returning! Parents and students have the option to go with 100% distance learning because they don't feel that it is safe to return, but we as

teachers have no say at all! I know doctors who are pulling their children because it isn't safe. Parents are pulling their children because it is evident we have no plan and they are worried for their child's safety! All your meetings happen virtually because it isn't safe to meet face to face however you are forcing us to be in a classroom for 7 hours. Why don't our lives matter, why don't we have an option or a say? As a kindergarten teacher, it is imperative that I work closely with my students. I don't feel safe at all! If I had the training and knew there was a solid plan I would feel safer. If our class sizes were limited I would be onboard to return but right now there are too many uncertainties!

Being a kindergarten teacher is my dream job, it is something I have dreamed of since I was in kindergarten but I am terrified of returning to work and I often wonder if I should even return or if I should take a year off, leave with no pay. I have been doing my part of flattening the curve but I don't know what everyone is doing. Parents send their child to school sick all the time! They give them medicine and send them to me and we have no right to send them home because "they don't have a fever". Reducing their fever doesn't make them cured, they are still contagious! While they spend the four hours in school waiting for the medicine to wear off, they are passing their germs to everyone! We are NOT babysitters! I have had asthma for my entire life. When I was a baby, it was so bad that I had to stay in an oxygen tent for a few nights. Asthma makes COVID-19 a little more dangerous for me. Not to mention the fact that my husband and I are always around our parents who are in the "at risk" age group. Last year, my husband and I suffered a miscarriage. We have struggled to get pregnant since and have been seeing a fertility specialist. Taking the risk of catching COVID is me also taking the risk of not being able to start a family. My fertility clinic has made it clear that if I test positive for COVID everything will stop. I will NOT forfeit the dream of having a family of my own for my career. I beg of you to take the faculty and staffs health and safety into consideration!!! All of our lives matter!!! Push back the reopening of school buildings like many colleges and mainland schools are doing. Come up with an effective plan that will keep everyone safe. Give our schools time to order the necessary equipment. Please realize how important this is!

Shanna Nakamura-Heaton

Testimony BOE

From: nicole amby <yellowgirl96792@yahoo.com> on behalf of nicole amby
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:42 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY

I am writing in regards

to http://boe.hawaii.gov/Meetings/Notices/Meeting%20Material%20Library/GBM_07232020_Board%20Action%20on%20MOU%20Between%20BOE%20and%20HSTA.pdf

I am a parent of a young child who has special needs and I do not believe that it is safe for school to start. I think teachers need training, protocols and procedures as well as safety equipment to keep themselves and the students safe. Please reconsider delaying the opening of schools!

Mahalo,
Nicole from Pearl City
Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Marvi Shibuya <msyis2020@gmail.com> on behalf of Marvi Shibuya
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:42 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: NO GUARANTEED CONTROLS—DON'T OPEN SCHOOLS TO INFECT INNOCENT KIDS

I am a grandmother, Kupuna, and 'certainly' not a political person.

Position:

Schools will not have the ability to control all kids and all society needs is for one kid to not follow the virus-preventative rules that will surely spread the virus to other kids like a chain reaction and schools will have to shut-down again. It's difficult for a teacher to confine kolohe kids or kids with special needs and it's an extra burden for them to be a teacher and security guard all day long. Get it in your fat political minds that kids will be kids with various habits, values, and actions —with high probability of socializing, whispering in ears, touching, yelling & spraying, showing off in various ways, running around. — jeopardizing other kids & school officials should just one of them be infected with this contagious virus.

By opening schools, you are going backwards of the normal routine of life and not accepting/following the NEW NORM as preached to society.

Don't use our kids as your political experiment of what happens next. We need to PROTECT and keep them SAFE!

Name: Marvi Shibuya, retired, & concerned

Sent From Marvi's iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Lindsey Robertson <lindsey.robertson@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Lindsey Robertson
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:42 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Lindsey Robertson, Special Education Teacher
Hawaii Department of Education

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

Wednesday, July 22, 2020

My name is Lindsey Robertson. I am a Special Education Teacher at Roosevelt High School (RHS) for our Community-Based Instruction Program. Everything I say in this testimony are my own words, and not to be representative of Roosevelt High School or any of the other teachers of RHS faculty.

I **oppose** the board action to temporarily discontinue the extra compensation for special education, HTS, and HI language immersion programs for the upcoming school year. My question would be, "At what point would the 'temporary discontinuance' be revisited to reinstate the compensation that is so very deserved by our classroom teachers in these respective areas?" Without clarification on understanding pay cuts, how or why would I support this notion for myself, other faculty members, and my personal friends who are teachers?

For the past two and a half years, I have worked in two different types of special education classrooms, serving as a case manager for each student's Individual Educational Plan, and facilitating the services needed to support each student with the greatest resources and opportunities with special needs. Although I love my job as a special education teacher, the reality of continuing to teach as a special educator within the Hawaii Department of Education is both unrealistic and harsh. According to NPR, my current salary is the lowest salary in the country when adjusted for the high costs of living in Hawaii. As a result, I have considered not only leaving the special education profession to pursue another career in Hawaii, but the state altogether, which will only continue to add to the current teacher shortage.

Ultimately, students with disabilities, regardless of the extent of their disability, deserve to be taught by highly-qualified special education teachers who are paid a fair, living wage. Students need to be taught by teachers who are paid a living wage and who desire to stay, not by new hires who are constantly leaving through a revolving door. In expanding the strategic plan to recruit and retain qualified special education teachers, we are providing students with disabilities the services they need to lead successful lives and be contributing members to the community.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

--

Lindsey Robertson
Special Education Teacher
Roosevelt High School
1120 Nehoa St.
Honolulu, HI 96822

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Testimony BOE

From: Meghan Hirokawa <meghanhirokawa@gmail.com> on behalf of Meghan Hirokawa
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:43 AM
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.

To whom it may concern,

Hi, my name is Meghan and I am a teacher at Waipahu High School.

As a pregnant woman, I have so much fear of returning back to the classroom. Although I do not qualify for ADA, it is shown in studies that pregnant women, once contracting Covid, have a higher percentage (50%) of being hospitalized and being put on a ventilator. After reading the "Return to Learn" plan from the DOE, I had no faith that the DOE had specific protocols of what the school needs to do if there were cases of Covid on campus. All I could find in the manual was that the school will clean more efficiently? What if more students and teachers came into contact with that person? Will they be notified? Will they be allowed to quarantine? How many people will that affect? As a math teacher, I understand how likely it is for the cases of Covid to become exponential once schools reopen.

The superintendent talks about having safe "bubbles" for students to come into contact with less people. How does highschool use bubbles? This is not possible because of the way the school system is built for high school. I am not confident that the DOE has truly and thought about the safety of their teachers, faculty, and students.

After prayer and talking with my family, we decided that if schools re-open in August and I am forced to teach in a classroom, in one of Oahu's hot spots for Covid, I will resign. My health and safety for my family are simply not worth it.

Thank you for reading,

Meghan Hirokawa

Testimony BOE

From: Ashley Olson <ms.a.olson@gmail.com> on behalf of Ashley Olson
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:43 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony: July 23, 2020, Item VI H, MOU, Students' return to Hawai'i Schools

Aloha Esteemed Members of the Hawai'i State Board of Education-

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony to your virtual meeting.

When you begin to again meet in person, because it is safe to be in a room crowded with other people, that will be the time for all Hawai'i students, teachers and support personnel to report to their schools. When you begin to cover classes because of our desperate teacher (and substitute) shortages, that will be the time to regroup, with all Hawai'i students, teachers and support personnel back on campus.

Until then, please delay the start of face to face classes. Give educators time and training to prepare for distance learning and to figure out the protocols for a safe return to 'normal'.

Mahalo-

Ashley Olson
Lahainaluna High School
Maui

Testimony BOE

From: Rose Stabenau Jenner <roseinmaui@yahoo.com> on behalf of Rose Stabenau Jenner
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:44 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

My name is Rose Baagoe; I am a teacher and this is 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.](#)

Teachers are being sacrificed as an experiment to school opening, wondering which students and colleagues very lives will be the “uptick in COVID-19 illness” anticipated , as stated by Governor Ige, “once schools reopen”.

All kinds of compensations (monetary & other guaranties) are being given to other professions but teachers have been on their own with no support (monetary or other guaranties) To learn the science art of their whole Professional lives online -with no training . Teachers need & deserve, students need & deserve, parents & families need & deserve—specially trained educators and teams of teachers who are confident I. Teaching kids online.

This cannot happens with schools opening so soon with no offering of teacher training & no guaranteed supplies on campus for safety-no thermometers, no screening - the list goes on & on.

Therefore, I request that the state of Hawaii and the Board of Education 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.

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

Testimony BOE

From: Kara Sweeney <ksween0810@gmail.com> on behalf of Kara Sweeney
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:45 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: SPED PAY DECREASE ON DIFFERENTIALS

Aloha,

I'm writing to ask you to reconsider your vote on decreasing pay differentials for SPED teachers. As a special ed teacher at Kealakehe high school, I'm already pushed to my limits with IEPs, meetings, extra accommodations, and ensuring that my special ed students are provided an equal education. It's already difficult for me to make ends meet, and the extra 5,000 dollars was going to assist me even further. Now hearing that things might be cut has me wondering if I will be able to stay, and or have to get a second job. This is NOT the area where we should be cutting. We already have next to none resources and our kids are of the highest need! This may lead to more teacher shortages and less qualified teachers being spread even more thin. I beg you to reconsider, if not for my well being, for our keiki.

Mahalo for listening,

Kara Sweeney
Special Educator Kealakehe High

Testimony BOE

From: Gerlinde Schmidt <gerlinde@hawaii.edu> on behalf of Gerlinde Schmidt
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:45 AM
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 Gerlinde Morris and I am a SPED teacher at Hilo Union School. Please continue with your highly successful strategy (see your department's data). Already, more teachers are transferring into SPED positions and significantly fewer teachers are leaving their SPED positions. Our most vulnerable keiki need certified teachers--not substitute teachers!

Mahalo,
Gerlinde Morris

Testimony BOE

From: Lynette Zakabi <lynzakabi@gmail.com> on behalf of Lynette Zakabi
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:45 AM
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 delay the start date of the student's return to school until September 1. As a classroom teacher, I have no prior experience of teaching online. I have heard from a co-workers that the distance learning classes will not be using the same curriculum as the face-to-face classroom. I have yet to receive clear procedures from our school.

I received this book when I began teaching 12 years ago, and it still applies today.

THE FIRST DAYS OF SCHOOL by Harry K. Wong and Rosemary T. Wong

What you do on the first days of school will determine your success or failure for the rest of the school year. You will either win or lose your class on the first days of school. The first days of school can make or break you.

Wong, H. and Wong, R., 1998. *The First Day Of School*. Mountain View, CA: Harry K, Wong Publications, Inc., p.3.

Lynette Zakabi- Iao School 7th Grade Math teacher. My proposed position for the upcoming school year is to teach completely online.

Testimony BOE

From: Jenny Solmirin <jennifer_solmirin@yahoo.com> on behalf of Jenny Solmirin
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:46 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony Action Item H

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

To Whom it May Concern:

I am testifying to protest the opening of in-person learning at schools across the State of Hawai'i.

As a classroom teacher at a public high school in Honolulu, I can tell you I am literally terrified to return to in-person learning in the next couple of weeks with the Covid-19 pandemic raging across the United States. The premature opening of school campuses will place unnecessary risks upon both our teachers and students. Classrooms are not ready. Schools are not ready. The public schools have struggled to find adequate classroom cleaners for years. How will rooms, desks, bathrooms, and facilities be cleaned throughout the day, every day? How can students be kept at 6 foot distancing at recess, lunch, on the bus, etc? The majority of teachers need quite a bit more time to prepare for full online learning for the inevitable event that schools must close again. The current start date is premature.

Therefore, I ask and implore the State of Hawai'i 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.

Thank you,

Jennifer Solmirin
Hawaii Kai, Honolulu, HI

Testimony BOE

From: Hirokawa, Nadine K CIV USARMY MEDCOM SBAHC (USA)
<nadine.k.hirokawa.civ@mail.mil> on behalf of Hirokawa, Nadine K CIV USARMY
MEDCOM SBAHC (USA)
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:45 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY

To Whom It May Concern: I am testifying on Action Item H. Board Action on Memoradum 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 Dr. Nadine Hirokawa and my daughter is a teacher at Waipahu High School and she is 2 months pregnant. I work for the DOD at Schofield Barracks Health Clinic. I feel it is unsafe for the teachers and students at this time to return to school. I recommend complete online teaching where there is no contact at this time until an appropriate vaccine is available. Safety is the issue here. Aloha, Dr. Nadine Hirokawa

Gloria V. A. Ilagan, EdD

(808) 987-1972

P.O. Box 624 Capt Cook, HI 96704

drgilagan@gmail.com

June 22, 2020

Aloha Chair Payne, Vice-Chair Uemura, and Committee Members:

My name is Dr. Gloria Ilagan. I have been an educator for thirty years with the Dept. of Education at Konawaena and Kelalaheke Schools in the West Hawaii District on Hawaii Island. I teach, coach, mentor, consult, and design curriculum and instructional programs in the field of Physical Education and Health. I am submitting testimony in support of "Continued Differential Pay" and to reject the Department of Education's Temporary Discontinuance.

Please provide the necessary continued funding to the pay differentials for teachers in special education, Hawaiian language immersion, and hard-to-staff positions to instill the value of education to teachers during these extreme circumstances of Pandemic times to deliver effective instruction to vulnerable and at-risk student populations. The Department of Education has been allotted to fully fund these essential needs for our teachers. Fixing the compression issue has placed our teachers where they should be for their many years of service, and continued funding will help us recruit and retain our teachers in the hardest-to-fill areas. Our teachers are invaluable as they provide stability for the future of our Keikis especially in rural districts of Kau, Kohala, and Puna Schools.

I have been in rural Kona as an educator for the past thirty years, as a graduate of Konawaena High School, University of Manoa, Florida State, and Argosy University, I have been trained at the highest level of excellence to make a difference in the lives of many people. I have provided access to at-risk and vulnerable populations to gain certification programs to provide a bridge of alternatives to gain skills and get a job to support and feed their families. I barely survived those periods where I had to be furloughed and stood up for my union in bargaining negotiations with the State for better work conditions and acceptable pay.

Collaborating with local community leaders, Universities, and non-profit as well as for-profit corporations, I am able to continue to secure grants and funding for the purpose of having students stay healthy, learn a skill, stay out of jail, and secure a job.

I am unable to do this without the support and assistance from my colleagues, part-time teachers, librarians, special education assistants, Hawaiian Language Immersion, and the educational Ohana I am Blessed to work with. However, the cost of living, the years of service and the Educational Talent that I have to offer have not been properly compensated as the cap on

step increases and the number of education credits earned is at a crisis that makes reconsidering location to another state or leaving Public Education to compete in the Private Sector more appealing. Your support in this endeavor to provide for proper compensation will continue to provide the services we all do in the Public Education business and prepare our Keiki for our future in the State of Hawaii.

We need your kokua. Mahalo Nui Loa!

Gloria V.A. Ilagan, EdD

Kealakehe High School

West Hawaii District.

**State of Hawaii
Board of Education**

**Testimony by
Pukalani Elementary Administration**

July 21, 2020

Relating to Reopening of Schools for SY 2020-21

To Our Honorable Board of Education Members,

It is with great apprehension and concern that we submit this testimony to the BOE for consideration. We have made a good faith effort to plan for the reopening of our school and cannot, in good conscience, as an advocate for all kids, our staff, and community to remain silent and not express our concerns about this year's opening.

As Pukalani Elementary Administrators, we would like to submit testimony pertaining to the following areas of concern:

Safety and Health Concerns:

- Custodians, SHA's, Cafe, Office have not received appropriate training in COVID-19 cleaning and disinfecting protocols. Training has not been provided for new requirements in daily cleaning and disinfecting procedures.
- We are not fully equipped with PPE for all students, faculty and staff
- We do not have enough hand soap, hand sanitizer, hand sanitizer dispensers/stands, proper signage for walkways and classrooms

Personnel Concerns:

- In the past 2 weeks our school has had 3 teachers, 1 counselor, and 2 Part-Time Teachers (PTT) resign or take leave with possibly 2-3 more teachers who have expressed grave concerns about returning.
- With less than 3 weeks before the start of the school year, we face the likely possibility with starting with non-certified teachers in key positions. Currently we have only 2 out of 8 certified teachers for Kindergarten and 1st grade. This is very concerning to us. How can we justify this to parents?
- There will be a lack of substitutes. What training do we provide to those who are still willing? Who will coordinate this as substitutes can work at multiple schools.

- Lack of substitutes for paraprofessionals
- Lack of substitutes for custodians/room cleaners, cafe, office staff who will also need to be trained on proper protocols

Preparation for Distance Learning Concerns:

- Teachers have not been provided with the training necessary to effectively deliver instruction online
- Teachers have not been provided with adequate time to plan and prepare for online delivery of instruction
- Inadequate time and training has been provided to train classified support staff to assist in delivery of online instruction
- Inadequate time to communicate and provide parents with information regarding delivery of online instruction
- Inadequate time to prepare our procedures and set up classes for delivery of online instruction

Student Transportation

- Online system has recently been opened but many are not able to apply
- Will drivers keep daily logs to allow for proper contact tracing in case someone test positive for COVID-19?
- Will bus drivers have masks to give to students who don't have one?

Food Service

- There is inadequate space to allow many students to eat in the cafeteria with appropriate social distancing.
- If we have students eat in the classroom, who will supervise them? Teachers have a contractual right to a 30 minute duty free lunch and there is an inadequate number of staff that can supervise
- Inadequate staff and facilities to provide a separate point of sale for students who are receiving online instruction.
- How do cafeteria staff plan and order breakfast/lunch for students who are receiving online instruction?

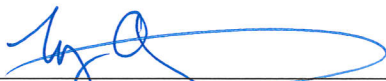
Set up:

- Inadequate time to move and find storage for furniture and equipment that will need to be removed from classrooms in order to have more space to properly space out desks
- Inadequate time to put into place proper procedures for recess, attendance, virtual learning, classroom changes and staffing.

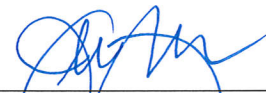
In your BOE resolution, school communities were encouraged to Give Hope, Act with Kindness, and Work Toward Togetherness in reopening our schools. As administrators, we are making every effort to make this reality, but as advocates for all kids, our staff, and our communities, we do not feel we can open safely and properly on August 4 as there has been minimal support and answers to address these concerns.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our concerns regarding opening our school campuses. We respectfully request that the reopening of school be postponed to allow for appropriate planning, training and guidance for the numerous questions that have not been answered.

Respectfully submitted,



Ty Ogaswara Principal



Jeneen Fuuroku Vice Principal

Testimony BOE

From: Giau Perdido <20248416@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Giau Perdido
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:45 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: What is the plan when someone is tested positive?

McKinley Complex

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Testimony BOE

From: Tim D <timfumie2006@yahoo.com> on behalf of Tim D
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:46 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Dear BOE,

I am a teacher at Mililani High School and I am all for opening schools on time. Our complex has a solid plan using the hybrid model and we need to press on and ensure student learning takes place and gets on track.

Testimony BOE

From: Ileana Haunani Ruelas <ileanahaunani@gmail.com> on behalf of Ileana Haunani Ruelas
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:46 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: Leimomi Leong; maileathilo@gmail.com; Maile Correct One Sing; David Keoni S.; Laurie Takeno
Subject: Rejection of Proposal to Cut Compensation Pay for SPED , Hawaiian Immersion, Hard to fill positions

Aloha mai kakou,

My name is Ileana H Ruelas - I am from the Waianae community. I am writing my testimony to BOE to oppose the Supt Proposal to cut compensation pay for SPED and Hawaiian Immersion and Hard to fill positions.

Teachers will be asked to work twice as hard and a kaiaupuni (Hawaiian immersion) teacher starts at a disadvantage with less resources (digital and physical) to teach and require an additional skillset to teach.

This is an equity issue - that has a history of being minimally addressed in our state. Please do not cut compensation for our teachers in these critical roles.

Kaiaupuni schools, SPED populations, and hard to fill schools (ie Waianae, Keeau, Ka'u, Pahoia, Nanakuli, Molokai) - malama & teach a large number of Native Hawaiian students. NH students are overrepresented in SPED populations. Hard to fill Schools & Kaiaupuni schools have a disproportionate number of Native Hawaiian learners - when compared to their population representation in the state. As a result - Hard to fill schools have had long generational histories of ongoing teacher attrition, learners & families experience chaotic uneven educational conditions due to constant teacher turnover, - while short term solutions such as filling the gap with nonqualified substitute teachers exceptions (ie BA not needed) do not address the root of the problem & exacerbate conditions.

Please do not cut compensation for our teachers in these critical roles.

Alternative solutions:

- Consider a temporary - proportional incremental percent pay cuts for any top wage earners in the DOE. Revisit when reviewing the budget each year. For top wage earners - wage earners tend to go to savings vs revitalizing the economy. We need to support Hawaii's economy by putting wage earnings into circulation.
- Consider a temporary - proportional incremental percent pay cuts for all staff statewide that are making way above ALICE (Asset Limited Income Constrained) wages or above perhaps \$100,000. Revisit when reviewing the budget each year.
- Consider surveying + meaningfully including the voice of all DOE staff to weigh in on creative solutions. Your DOE community is filled with innovative thinkers, brilliant solutionaries, creative strategists, & generous growth mindsets. They will be able to pool together a rich set of alternative ways to weather this storm collectively, in unanticipated but mutually community supported ways.

Please do not cut compensation for our teachers in these critical roles.

mahalo for your consideration, Ile

Testimony BOE

From: Christopher Huynh <chrishuynh87@gmail.com> on behalf of Christopher Huynh
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:46 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Delay reopening of schools

21 July 2020

Dr. Christina M. Kishimoto
Superintendent
Department of Education
State of Hawaii

Dear Dr. Kishimoto:

My name is Christopher Huynh and I am a parent and teacher who teaches at Waipahu High School and has an 1-year old child at home.

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"^[1]. Especially in closed or poorly ventilated spaces such as many of our classrooms, it is absolutely essential to have a mandatory mask requirement for all teachers and students.
2. The current state plan relies on a fictional construct known as "Ohana Bubbles", which especially in the absence of a universal mask mandate, puts a family's health at the mercy of other families. However, no amount of distancing, disinfecting, or use of PPE will be sufficient to keep groups of people in confined, poorly ventilated spaces safe, because behavior of all those individuals outside the classroom cannot be assumed to have been safe.
3. The current DOE plan is to leave masking optional (at teachers' discretion) is unacceptable. Fundamental matters of scientific fact such as masks should not be left to teacher (or even school administrator) discretion. That would allow too many loopholes that will result in poor or no compliance

that puts their child's lives at risk. It also puts an undue burden on teachers and/or school administrators to decide and enforce mask rules.

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 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 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,

Christopher Huynh
1580 Hoolana Street
Pearl City, HI 96782

Testimony BOE

From: Dawn Homont <dhomont@gmail.com> on behalf of Dawn Homont
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:48 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

My name is Dawn Homont, I am a teacher at Wai'anae Intermediate. I love my school and community, however, it is difficult to teach my students when some of them question why they bother.

I teach a college prep course called AVID. This is an elective class that students choose while they are in 6th grade and need an interview to get accepted into the program. My students care about their education and want to learn. Their hopes are to increase their skills to one day get a college education and a great career.

Most of my students want to be able to take care of their families. It is difficult for me to guide my students into a college situation as I'm a 43 year old teacher with a college education and still paying off my loans while I still live with my parents! I can not live on my own as I do not make enough money. I even have a second job coaching students in various sports. In other states coaches could be a full time job as they get paid very well.

When my students learn of my financial difficulties, they question going to college. They ask is it really worth it?

When we received the differential this past year, it really helped. I actually started to save a few dollars in hopes of buying my own home one day here in Hawaii. My parents are getting older and one day I might not be able to live here if I don't have their financial support.

I hope you choose to support us! I love my work and I'm passionate about teaching our youth. I do believe college is the right path for students and hope they can see the benefits once we get the differential.

Mahalo for your consideration,
Dawn Homont

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Drew Waddell <drew808@gmail.com> on behalf of Drew Waddell
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:49 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Covid-19 and Teaching

Please delay the opening of schools until all questions are answered. Any lawsuits against the State for not doing this will be an easy class action lawsuit.

Thanks,
Drew Waddell

Testimony BOE

From: alexandra douglas <ajadedouglas@gmail.com> on behalf of alexandra douglas
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:50 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Can we use this template, but change the subject matter?

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

RE: HB 2200, HD1 RELATING TO THE STATE BUDGET

MONDAY, MAY 11, 2020

10:30 a.m.

Chair Dela Cruz and members of the Ways and Means Committee:

My name is Alexandra Douglas I am a Special Education Teacher at Kohala Elementary in Kohala on Hawaii Island. I am submitting testimony in support of HB 2200, HD1.

I want to thank the Legislature for finding ways to revise the state budget and cover COVID-19 revenue losses without including any suggestions of pay cuts or furloughs for our educators in our public schools, including our charter schools, or any other state employees. As Chair Dela Cruz said this week, "We don't want to have an additional negative effect on the economy that might make matters worse."

Please do not cut pay or furlough. My students and children would suffer. I would have to leave the island and Hawaii would lose another valuable certified Master teacher.

Mahalo,

Alexandra Douglas, Hawaii Island, Kohala

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Monica Armstrong <monica_armstrong81@yahoo.com> on behalf of Monica Armstrong
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:52 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Plea to hold off on re-opening schools on 8/4/2020

Aloha,

I am a School Counselor at the largest windward school on Oahu and I am asking that you thoughtfully re-consider re-opening our schools on 8/4.

Like so many teachers, I have questions about the safety/health practices, scheduling, distance learning platform, PPE for students/teachers etc. I don't believe that we are given enough time to plan and prepare for our students returning to campus. We have been given very little directive about these concerns and I believe it would be the prudent and responsible thing to do to allow teachers more time to prepare themselves mentally/physically for the new normal and challenges that lie ahead.

I want nothing more than to see my students back on campus learning. However, we need more time to plan and discuss in order to thrive in this "new normal" and not just survive.

Please carefully consider my testimony. Mahalo for your time and commitment to our children & community.

Monica Armstrong

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Lorianne Salazar <lorianne.salazar@gmail.com> on behalf of Lorianne Salazar
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:55 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony: BOE General Business Meeting, Oppose Action Item G, Comment Action Item H

Members of the Board of Education,

I am writing testimony to address Action Items 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](#) & 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 discontinue differential pay, when shortages in these areas will further increase the gap in service to our most vulnerable. 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.

I am a special education teacher teaching in a hard-to-staff position in Waianae. A temporary discontinuance of the differentials will drastically affect my ability to provide for my family, which includes members in the increased risk category for COVID-19. This, combined with the expectation to return to in-person teaching without adequate preparation time or safety measures, is forcing me to seriously consider leaving a teaching position I am highly passionate about and effective in. The anxiety and fear of health and liability, along with the increased stress on finances not only affect me and my family, but the students, families and community of Waianae, who have historically been so underserved.

What qualified personnel will the State find during a pandemic when teacher shortages In the hardest-to-fill positions increase? What specific steps will be required of staff if and when a student, teacher, custodian, parent, community member related to a school becomes sick with COVID-19 & exposes us to the virus?

We want to be compensated in a way that respects the mountain of responsibility we are now burdened with, rather than removing such incentives and devaluing our profession. We want schools to open to students safely, with a specific plan for opening, as well as addressing specific protocols for if or when a school community member gets COVID-19. I call on the BOE to take your teachers' and community's concerns seriously, and to prioritize health, safety, and well-being by retaining differentials and delaying students returning to school buildings.

Thank you for your time.
Lorianne Telles

--

[Lorianne Salazar](#)

Testimony BOE

From: danayolanda1@gmail.com
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:55 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Delay reopening/salary

I see the need the delay of reopening our schools because teachers and staff have not had enough time to create a safe plan. The school I'm at said teachers just set up your room. We (admin) will be working on all the other protocols and procedures. Ummm....NO, that is not a safe environment to return to. No definite plans no return.

Admin says clean out your classroom and set up for social distancing. Well we don't have enough time to do that and plan for the return of students.

After spring break the school did not let us return to close up our classrooms as we usually do and now they expect us to do it all??? Crazy...

I worked hard to become a teacher and I work hard as a teacher. I love my job, students, parents, and community. But really people let's be safe about it.

As for cutting teacher pay... please don't do that. Most of us has to take out student loans to become a teacher. We all work diligently for our communities. What you are asking is to do and then on top of that cut our pay? That makes teachers feel unappreciated.

The nation is watching us, they are wondering what will happen when the doors open up August 4. We are one of the first schools in the nation to open our doors because our numbers are low.

The governor has pushed back tourism to keep our Covid count low so that we can reopen our schools. The president is threatening to pull our federal funding if our teachers don't physically return to our classrooms. Meanwhile, in other states, the numbers of Covid patients and fatalities are rising. There is great pressure on our governor and superintendent to open the classroom doors as our economy nationwide is failing.

The teachers are anxious, we are to come to school with shields, masks, uncertainty, health issues, in the sweltering heat of our classrooms without fans or air conditioning because Covid thrives in the cold. Evidence now shows that the virus survives for eight hours waiting for a susceptible body to host them.

Teachers with multiple children are also experiencing frustration, if Covid happens to make their rounds in each of the schools, all of his or her children are bringing it home and speeding up the inevitable infection process, especially for those who have their grandparents who live with them or other family in their Ohana houses.

What is fearful is the day the governor gives the green light to let the tourists back in because small businesses, our favorite stores and restaurants, are shutting down and the government checks for the unemployed stop at the end of July. When the tourists come, they will have already circulated the virus asymptotically in the airplanes for several hours, only to deplane at the airport, leaving more viruses in tact for several hours, before arriving at the hotel to check in, dine in, and go shopping in Waikiki, to unknowingly infect the employees, many of whom are parents or relatives of our school children.

We are not shirking our duties, we love our children, when schools shut down suddenly in March, we had to suddenly switch to online teaching, although we have never done it before. We didn't have a choice, we didn't have the necessary time to prepare, we learned quickly, we improvised, and we did our best to provide lesson plans and assignments and tried to help our students to pass, to learn enough to prepare for their AP exams, and to continue to provide meaningful education for the last few months of school.

We love our children and we care about their families, we care about those who suffer from heart problems, immune disorders, diabetes, cancer, obesity, kidney disease, COPD, asthma, high blood pressure, mothers-to-be, people who smoke and others whom the CDC have listed are the most at-risk for susceptibility to Covid. Evidence is now coming out showing the after effects of people who have recovered from Covid. My classmate at Regent university is asking for prayers because a loved one recovered from Covid but now needs a kidney transplant. My fellow classmate at Regent recovered from Covid after catching it from her aunt, but her aunt fell into a coma and passed away. Her recovery was so debilitating that she dropped out of our class. My cousin's family usually comes to Hawaii yearly, one of the students at her son's school in Tokyo tested positive for Covid, the school is still open. They won't be coming to Hawaii any time soon.

We love our children, we teach and love them even if they can be difficult at times. We teach them because we want them to be successful, to be righteous, to be honest, empathetic, and future stakeholders in our community in a job of their choice.

We love our children and want to advocate for those who are voiceless and whose situation gives them no choice but to physically return to school. My children, my students, our Keiki, I love them so much, if I were to ever knowingly jeopardize any of their lives, and do as we are told... I would not stand by and listen. I am willing to fight for them, hearing from other teachers and their fear and frustration from other states looking to us, just waiting for the inevitable to occur. Is it ten percent of the population that must be infected in order for the school shut down policy to take effect?

A lot has happened since March when the shutdown happened, I was taken to the ER because I thought I was having a heart attack, I could not breathe and the pain in my chest was heavy, it was an anxiety attack they said, I have never had those before, in May, my boyfriend left me, and my father passed away a month after that. Covid took from me my sense of security, my partner, my father, and part of my happiness. I suffer from type 1 diabetes, every day is a battle, many of my co-workers don't know I have it because I am ashamed to tell them. I have had it since I was 19, I work hard from the time I get up until I go to bed to test and maintain my blood sugar. I am insulin-dependent, I give myself a shot three times a day, sometimes extra in between if my sugar goes high, I have never been in a coma, and I try to exercise and take supplements to be as healthy as I can so I can work and support my family. I am having my will written because when my mom passed away from cancer suddenly and she didn't have one, we lost a lot and are continuing to undo what was done.

Please hear us, I am just one of many who are asking for your help. All of the parents I spoke to are ambivalent, they don't know what to believe, is it truly safe to send their children back to school? We are asking that you push back reopening the schools. We are the guardians, the advocates, caregivers, educators, nurturers of our innocent, voiceless Keiki who look up to us, who believe in us, who trust us saying that it is "safe to be back in school", they are depending on us. We are saying it is not safe, we are standing together to go against reopening the schools and are proposing to go fully online, until it is safe.

We are getting testimonies from other educators, from parents, people in communities who were exposed to the devastating virus and have survived or have seen others who have died.

Please listen to our pleas. It is not safe, we need to plan accordingly and not be pressured by the president, we are being watched, what we do will open up the eyes of our nation, we are the pioneers, this disease is here to stay, we don't even have a vaccine, we are telling you that we need time, we can instruct our students using online instruction. We need your support. We need our parents on our side, we are parents too, we love our children as well as yours.

We need to stand together, we won't silently allow this to happen because it is unjust, risky, irrational, and we are being pressured to keep our mouths shut, there are many who silently support us but are afraid to speak up, afraid of their employers, their jobs, our parents, the community...

I have God's protection, and I am going out on a limb in writing this. When I finish my studies at regent university, I am going into youth ministry as well as finishing up my years in DOE.

Thank you for hearing us.

Sincerely and faithfully yours

Yolanda Dana
Teacher and parent

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Christel Lleces <pualani87@hotmail.com> on behalf of Christel Lleces
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:56 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

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.

My name is Christel Lleces. I am a second grade teacher at Holomua Elementary School. I also have 2 children, one in 2nd and one in 5th grade at Holomua Elementary School. I am set to return to work on July 31st to set up my classroom and be ready for my students on August 4th. I love my job and would love to be back in the classroom with my students but I also understand that being back in the classroom comes with many risks to my students' health, my health, and ultimately my family's health. Not having specific guidelines on what will happen if a student or staff member tests positive is very unnerving. The uptick in cases increases the possibility of someone in "our bubble" becoming infected and infecting others. Without any clear cut guidelines, I do not feel safe having my students, my children, or myself being back in the classroom.

My daughters are set to be on campus for 21 days, while I am set to be on campus for the whole semester. How am I expected to care for my students face to face and online while leaving my own children behind? My children and my family will always come first. I implore you to push back the start of the school year until clear cut guidelines are given to schools and schools have the time to prepare so that those guidelines are met.

Mahalo for your time,

Christel Lleces
2nd grade Teacher
Holomua Elementary
Mother to 2 school-aged students

Testimony BOE

From: Ursula Baysa-kohn <ursula.baysa-kohn@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Ursula Baysa-kohn
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:56 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To The Board of Education,

I am writing to testify that the Board of Education and the Department of Education should delay the opening of schools. As a teacher I feel that I am not prepared for my students to come back to school buildings. I would like training on a distance learning platform that my school will choose to use. At the end of last school year, I felt lost on distance teaching/ learning - I was not confident in distance teaching and I did not know what to do. I would like training so that I feel confident and know what I am doing so that my students will benefit and learn from distance learning; if for some reason we have to go to distance learning.

I would like to be trained and informed of the safety protocol that will be used at my school. I would like to see the written procedure for health check screening for the staff and students at the school as well as the procedure if a person gets sick and or contracts the coronavirus. I would like to be trained in how to address students' mental health, and social and emotional health with what is going on. I need to feel prepared, confident, and safe with my school safety procedures before my students come back to the classroom so that I can provide a safe and healthy environment for them to learn in.

Thank you,
Ursula Baysa-Kohn
August Ahrens Elementary

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Testimony BOE

From: Winnie Quiton <wquiton@kanoelanies.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Winnie Quiton
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:56 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha!

Hope this email finds you well. I am a special education teacher at Kanoelani Elementary School and have been for the last 17 years. 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.

Differentials have helped me remain in my position. In fact, it helped me remain in this teaching career. The extra money makes my personal life less stressful financially, which in turn affects me as an effective teacher. Being less stressed allows me to exude positivity in the classroom. This results in more successful students, especially that the kind of students I have are ones that need positive influences, not just for academics but social factors.

If differentials are taken away, the effect will trickle down to the success of my students with special needs. We don't need failures in our community, especially when we know students have what it takes to succeed. Please help teachers remain in their positions as teachers. We love what we do, but when stress and financial matters exist, we cannot perform our duties positively to our potential in the classroom.

Thank you for your time.

Mahalo,
Winnie

Testimony BOE

From: Julia Wagner <julia.wagner3@gmail.com> on behalf of Julia Wagner
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:57 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Differentials Testimony

Aloha members of the Board of Education,

I am writing to urge you to keep the newly instated differentials active for the 2020-2021 school year.

I am a special education teacher in the island of Maui. I am a teacher leader, Nationally Board Certified, in a hard to fill area. I was fortunate enough to receive most differentials that the state decided to award hardworking teachers of Hawaii last semester. I was thrilled earlier this summer when the state announced continuing with those. It meant I could stop looking for jobs on the mainland and be able to stay in a position I LOVE. I have been in Hawaii teaching ever since I left college in 2012. With the new economic impacts of this virus I understand the state is not doing well. However, neither are teachers. There have been many that have chosen to leave the state because of the impacts, and now with the threat of pay decreasing and differentials being cut more are deciding to. I can honestly say the differentials were a BIG reason whether I stay on island and continue to teach, and although spread out over the months wasn't a huge impact on my take home pay, it allowed me to stay here on Maui and teach. Unfortunately I have it worse now than in May, with my roommates leaving the state I need to look for new housing, which is so expensive, especially in the area where I currently live and teach. I am not sure how I will make ends meet next year, probably forcing me into a 2nd or 3rd job.

Please consider all the testimonials you are receiving in regards to pay differentials this upcoming school year. Teachers all over are worried enough with being exposed to a deadly, unpredictable virus in a couple weeks. We don't want to worry about how we are going to pay rent. Please, please consider reinstating pay differentials this school year.

Best,
Julia Wagner
Special Education Teacher, NBCT

Testimony BOE

From: Andrew Grant <andrewggr@gmail.com> on behalf of Andrew Grant
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:58 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Keep Teacher Shortage Differentials

My name is Andrew Grant and I am a Special Education teacher at Jarrett Middle School.

I believe you should not discontinue the teacher shortage differentials. Special education teachers do more work such as:

- IEPs
- Reevaluations/eligibility meetings
- Differentiating all lessons for individual students
- Mastering and teaching in kinesthetic, auditory, and visual ways
- Parent communication
- Advocating for disability rights
- Collecting data for all objectives
- Evaluating every objective every single quarter for progress reports (this results in Special Education teachers providing 7-12 grades per student per quarter whereas a Regular Education teacher only provides one grade per student per quarter)
- Maintaining best practices for novel disabilities that students bring to the classroom

There are certainly more items that I could add to this list, but these are the big reasons.

Furthermore, due to COVID-19, all Special Education teachers must reevaluate and assess all SPED students upon return to school. This means that for every single student we have on our caseloads special education teachers must conduct an IEP. So, on top of all of the things we must do to re-open schools, we will be doing IEPs for all of our students at the same time. Then, special education teachers need to conduct another IEP with the same student later in the year when their annual date comes up. This means that special education teachers will be doing two IEPs for every student next year.

Special education teachers proved they are worth a pay differential already. The fact that next year special education teachers will be doing much more and that the DOE is considering cutting that differential is unconscionable. More importantly, you will be losing highly qualified and experienced special education teachers to the general education classrooms if the pay differentials are cut. Ultimately this will mean that our special education students will suffer since they will no longer have the highly qualified and experienced teachers to provide them the help that they truly need.

Do not get rid of the teacher shortage differential. Our children deserve better.

Andrew Grant

Testimony BOE

From: Jennifer Urata <jennifer_urata@kwes.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Jennifer Urata
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:58 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To whom it may concern,

I am writing in regards to Action Item H. My name is Jennifer Urata and I am currently a 5th grade teacher at Kalihi Waena Elementary School. COVID-19 has impacted all of our lives within the past 5 months and to say that teachers and parents are scared to be back in school or send their child to school is an understatement. In Hawaii, our positive COVID-19 numbers have been slowly rising and to send teachers and students back to school now is not the right decision. What happened to waiting until we had 4 weeks of no new cases to return back to school? If the BOE stuck to this statement then teachers, parents, and students would feel a lot safer to return to campus. However, the BOE is not sticking to their word and wants to put everyone at risk. I live in a multigenerational household and going back to school has worried not only myself but also the people I live with. I would feel VERY guilty if I was the person to bring home COVID-19 and then have my grandparents get sick or even my mother. This whole situation makes me think that living alone would be safer for everyone in my family but I can't afford to live by myself on a teachers income. I am sure many of you are also parents, would you be okay sending your child/children to school when there is a chance they could bring COVID-19 into your home?

My school has decided to have face-to--face and online learning. I do not feel comfortable enough to teach my students in an effective way using technology. Although Dr. Kishimoto has stated that teachers have received training throughout the summer, those trainings were OPTIONAL and many teachers do not check their school emails over the summer since we are not required to. Teachers need time to learn new skills and strategies, just like our students but the BOE is not giving us enough time. A few days of 11:30am dismissal to get trained on Distance Learning is not enough. As teachers, we want to do what is best for our students and teach them in the most effective way possible. To do that we need more time to learn about different strategies that we can use to help our students learn while they are at home. I miss my students, being able to see them everyday, and talk story with them. However, I do not feel comfortable or ready to welcome students back to campus.

Please think about pushing the start of school date back so we can all feel safe, ready, and comfortable.

--

~Jennifer Urata
Kalihi Waena Elementary
Grade 5 - A11

Testimony BOE

From: Cami I <camisemail@gmail.com> on behalf of Cami I
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:58 AM
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 employee.

I have been teaching for 28 years, and for the first time, I am seriously considering leaving this profession that I have always viewed as rewarding. Unfortunately, I am uncertain about returning to a work environment where I know we are not prepared to protect our students, ourselves, and ultimately our community. As teachers, we put on a brave face for the parents/public to convince them that their children will be safe, when realistically I know our schools are not prepared. Ultimately, this can cost us our lives.

Teachers and staff have not been trained in how to deal with Covid safety procedures and will have only 4 work days to learn and make the necessary changes prior to hundreds of children congregating in one location. This will be the largest gathering in one area within our state, with youngsters who are already challenged with social distancing and hygiene. Within the 4 days, we'll need to plan procedures and make changes as quickly as possible, to try and safe-proof our campus, but we do lack the funds to purchase enough proper PPE, and to hire personnel to monitor children and consistently sanitize all of our high touch areas throughout the day.

Our school will be lacking supervision during non-instructional time (before school, recess, lunch, and after school) as we were unable to hire back our Admin Aides due to the new policy which indicates non-instructional personnel can not be hired this year. Without them, how do we start our morning supervision of over 300 students (half of the school) from 7:00 - 8:00am without using teachers, thus violating their contractual start time and prep time?

Assuming there is enough time to put all of these procedures in place within those 4 days, we will also need to include preparing for a new type of instruction. Distance learning instruction is completely different from the enrichment instruction that was done in the 4th quarter of last year. Teachers have not yet received training to instruct students who will be distance learning or will be at home with the blended model. We are currently preparing to instruct those that will be on campus for face-to-face learning, however we also must learn about the distance learning programs available. This is something new for all of us. Plus, in our community, many students do not have internet access or wifi. We have enough chromebooks for one-to-one technology, but need more time to prepare our teachers and families so those who do not have wifi can have the programs loaded on to their devices for learning to continue at home without wifi. Teachers will then need to learn how to monitor the work/learning done during distance learning.

All of this will need to be done within 4 days. I understand that we do need to start opening schools, but I am begging that we be provided more time by pushing the start date back a bit, to provide the schools and teachers time to implement these important changes. We want to be fully prepared to start the year safely. Our students and ohana are too precious to "assume" schools are prepared. We are rushing to meet an Aug. 4th date, by people who are not directly aware of what is happening at the ground level. Please hear us when we say we are not prepared and request a little more time.

Please give us more time.
Mahalo for your attention,
Cami Iwanaga
Konawaena Elementary School

Testimony BOE

From: Juliana Mae Neves <juliana_mae.neves@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Juliana Mae Neves
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:48 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony - Sped Pay Cuts

To whom it may concern,

Cutting the salaries of special education teachers tells both special ed teachers, students, and families that they are less than. Special education teachers have so many additional expectations and are critical to student success. Paying them less (when they already are not paid enough) says clearly that they are second class teachers.

Paying them less will most likely send qualified teachers away, because they know they are worth more.

If you want success for ALL our students, you will reconsider this decision.

With aloha,

Juliana Mae Neves

Social Emotional Learning Teacher | Gr. 6 Kealahou Intermediate School
juliana_mae.neves@k12.hi.us
845-554-2946

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Testimony BOE

From: Yumie Lefebvre <yumie.lefebvre@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Yumie Lefebvre
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:59 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: testimony

My name is Yumie Lefebvre and I am a SPED teacher at Momilani Elementary School, Pearl City Complex, Leeward District.

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

I fear that cutting teacher salaries even in the slightest, we will lose our qualified teachers for special education, hard-to-staff geographic areas, and Hawaiian Language immersion program.

Hawaii DOES NOT have enough teachers to support our Keiki. We heavily rely on substitute teachers to cover the teacher shortage but it is not sustainable to provide quality education for our students. In spite of this pandemic, we, teachers, are going above and beyond to make sure that our students and families feel safe to come back to school. At the same time, we are scared, too. Please understand that.

In addition, COVID-19 has been causing financial damages to many of us. Personally, I am one of them. My husband is a sales rep. so he does not have a base salary but only commission. After this pandemic, his sales decreased and the company cut down his commission rate. With that, my salary has become our household's stable income to pay for our expenses. I believe this is just one of many families who faces financial hardship during this pandemic. By discontinuing extra compensation for the teachers, we may have to consider another career that can give us financial security or early retirement. Again, this will cause a great risk of the worst teacher shortage in Hawaii.

"Teaching = underpaid profession" and we all know that, but I chose to become a teacher because love this profession. I am not asking for a big raise at this point, but I am only asking to keep our salaries as you promised us. I believe that your promise to the teachers is a promise for our students' future. Please keep the compensation as you promised before the pandemic.

Thank you very much for your time and considerations.
Sincerely,

Yumie Lefebvre
Momilani Elemmentary School
Special 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: Ashley Ono <ashley.ono24@gmail.com> on behalf of Ashley Ono
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 8:59 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony Action Item G

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 Ashley Ono and I am speaking as a special education teacher. I teach at Nanaikapono 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,
Ashley Ono

Testimony BOE

From: Delia Browning <rbrowning@hawaii.rr.com> on behalf of Delia Browning
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:00 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To whom it may concern,

I am a public school teacher on Maui with over 26 years of experience in the DOE. I am writing to express my concerns about the return to school scheduled for August 4.

There is no doubt that our students need to be educated, and that in person, face-to-face instruction is best. However, there are too many uncertainties and unanswered questions to open the schools right now. I live next to my 84 year-old mother. What if I, my wife (who also works for the DOE), or one of my children, who each attends a different public school, brings home the virus, and gives it to my mom? I'm sure that there are many, many students, teachers and staff in similar situations. It is EXPECTED that there will be incidents of COVID-19 in schools. How do we justify to people who lose a family member that we just could not wait to reopen our schools?

The safeguards described in the Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding Between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 Contractual Modifications and Conditions of Work Related to COVID-19 Response for Bargaining Unit 5 Employees are impossible to implement in my school setting. How do we social distance students who will be lining up in hallways to enter classrooms, passing each other in hallways, interacting in classrooms, etc.? A school is not like a business or supermarket which can have people form a line, six feet apart, and wait until it is their turn to enter. All of the students have a limited time to enter their classrooms, which are all close to each other. Even with only half of our students on campus at a time, as we are planning, that will entail over 500 youngsters, with up to 16 in a room at one time. Is this plan realistic???

I saw that all students are supposed to be checked daily about certain symptoms. When, and by whom? What if a student says that he/she is fine, but "My brother had a fever this morning." What do I/we do then? How do we sanitize areas when students transition from one class to the next? There are too many unanswered questions, with serious consequences to getting this wrong.

The bottom line here is very, very clear. We are risking lives in order to reopen our schools now. How many lives will be lost? Is it worth it?

Please delay the opening of schools for face-to-face instruction until it is clearly safe to do so! My mother, and the vulnerable and Kupuna in our community, are putting their well-being in your hands!

Mahalo,

Ron Browning
Educator

Testimony BOE

From: Jackie Chung <jackieluv@gmail.com> on behalf of Jackie Chung
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:00 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: sendelacruz@capitol.hawaii.gov; senkidani@capitol.hawaii.gov;
senkeohokalole@capitol.hawaii.gov; senmoriwaki@capitol.hawaii.gov;
senfevella@capitol.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Dear Board of Education:

My name is Jackie Chung and I am a teacher who teaches special education classes at Kapalama Elementary School. I am also a mother of two children and one of my children is receiving special education from Hawaii DOE public school. My son's teachers have inspired me to become a special education teacher and I became one, very proud one until recently.

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. It does 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.

Government and Hawaii DOE have claimed that teachers are ready to reopen the school year, unfortunately, I am the teacher and my other teacher friends agree that we are not ready. I've never heard about the training that the superintendent provided during the summer and my school just made a plan for reopening which is unacceptable because we, teachers/staff are not sure what is going on. I still don't get the answers from my admin on distance learning requests and I asked them a few weeks ago. I don't know if we have enough PPE. My teacher friends and I have been hunting for PPE during the summer but we are still in need of many PPE.

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.
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 proposed classroom rules and conditions. Also I am not sure about in person services for my son with special needs.

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

1. 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

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,

Jackie Chung
1288 Kapiolani Blvd. #1802
Honolulu, HI 96814

Testimony BOE

From: tracy deshield <rainbow61@hawaii.rr.com> on behalf of tracy deshield
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:01 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha BOE,

My name is Tracy. I'm a special education at Kalama Intermediate School on Maui. I've been a special education teacher there for over 20yrs. For as long as I can remember our dept has had a difficult time filling the special education lines. Every year we have unqualified substitutes filling in or no teacher at all because if our school has a day where classrooms didn't have a sub they would take the sub from a special ed class. This would mean the special education students would end up in the cafe all day. This past school year, there were one or two special education classes that were in the cafe about 50% or more the whole yr. If I were a parent I would be upset. This is unacceptable.

I understand that the HIDOE wants to defer differentials this coming school yr even though they helped fill vacancies. There is data to show that because of the differential there will be an increase by 29% over the previous school yr, while the number of teachers who left Sped Ed positions decreased by 57%. Same holds true to the hard to staff schools.

"The differentials have already made a huge difference in recruiting and retaining teachers in these shortage areas.

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. According to Rosenlee, "Even now, with the uncertainty and anxiety surrounding the reopening of our school campuses, we are seeing even more educators choosing to retire or leave the profession. Slashing educators' pay will be the last straw for many already hanging by a thread."

It is my understanding that on Dec. 5th, our schools Superintendent Christina Kisimoto and BOE agreed that there was need to take action to ease Hawaii's critical teacher shortage. Also during the meeting, Kishimoto and Board of Education Chair Catherine Payne, a retired principal and longtime educator, pledged to fund the differentials from existing HIDOE money if state lawmakers did not fund it for next school year.

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

I'm asking the BOE to please consider what rescinding the differential would mean to Hawaii's hard to fill positions. Hawaii needs to continue to put our keiki first!

Mahola,
Tracy

Testimony BOE

From: Krisy Bajo <krisybajo@gmail.com> on behalf of Krisy Bajo
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:00 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

I am writing to testify on Action Item G. It's with a heavy heart that I must humbly beg for the differential I feel teachers deserve. Please do not take this from us, as it is one of the only "perks" we have.

In the last 13 years as an educator, I have endured many a struggle. Still, I power forward because my heart still carries the hope that I am making a difference in the lives of my students. I know that my job is not an easy one, and I was fully prepared to "work harder for less" when I decided to teach in my hometown. Still, I believe the differential pay is just a small way to feel positive about not using my English degree to become a journalist, editor, or author instead.

Please keep our differentials...they really do help to remind teachers how important we really are.

Mahalo for your consideration,
Kristin Bajo

Testimony BOE

From: Taylor Williams <taylorwilliamskk@gmail.com> on behalf of Taylor Williams
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:01 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Hello,

My name is Taylor Williams and this year will be my fifth year teaching 3rd grade at Pohakea Elementary School. While I understand that education is very important, I am hoping you will consider delaying the reopening of schools.

Why? As we all know COVID is still a growing issue today. Numbers are soaring and the amount of cases we get everyday are way worse than the beginning of March when you chose to shut down schools. Of course we want our children to go back to school, but if we continue to do meetings virtually and conferences virtually for our safety, what makes you think it's okay for students to be meeting in person?

I still live with my parents and grandparent, I do not have kids, but if I ever do contract COVID I'm very scared of passing it to them because they are more vulnerable than I am. By sending us back to school with cases continuously growing, you are putting us and our own families at risk. I know we teachers are essential, but so our lives, our students' lives, our family's lives, and their family's lives.

Would you feel 100% safe sending your child to school? I wouldn't. Not right now. This will also allow teachers to actually set up everything in their classrooms and lesson plan for the reopening of school. Right now, it's our summer break, and technically we don't need to plan and go into the classroom. Are we though? Yes. But if we delayed the reopening, that would give us more time to really ensure that our classrooms have 6 ft. difference at all times and to plan our lessons for blended learning.

I write this to ask you to please please please consider delaying the reopening of schools.

Thank you for your time,
Taylor Williams

Testimony BOE

From: athena <kuhiwa@yahoo.com> on behalf of athena
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:01 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To Whom it May Concern,

This email is in regards to the following:

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 oppose the current plan for our students to physically return to school buildings on August 4th.

I am a 6th grade teacher at Kalama Intermediate on Maui. I have taught for HIDOE for 18 years and I truly believe that we are putting our students and teachers at risk in regards to the COVID virus by returning to school, physically. With technology at our fingertips, it is not only possible to do online learning, it is a wonderful solution to the current chaos surrounding the opening of schools. Our school will provide devices for students in need. My own son is in middle school and is affected by the decision that the state makes. As a teacher and parent, I ask to be heard. For parents, it will be difficult to follow schedules that are not consistent and many students will end up staying home regardless.

As I read the news, the largest two school districts in the state of California, San Diego and Los Angeles have opted for online learning. Both of these school districts have a large percentage of a vulnerable population, and it appears they have put humans first. Teachers, students, and families will be safe-guarded.

This is an issue of humanity. The rates of COVID are increasing, not decreasing. We need to carefully consider the ripple effect in this situation and not mandate students to return to the physical school buildings on August 4th. Thank you for taking the time to read this testimony, it is much appreciated.

Sincerely,

Athena P. Anderson, M. Ed
Kalama Intermediate School

Testimony BOE

From: Deneva McGill <deneva84@yahoo.com> on behalf of Deneva McGill
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:01 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: 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 Whom it May Concern,

Our schools are woefully unprepared to reopen during the Covid-19 pandemic. Rushing to open schools on time is going to cause a spike in infections rates and deaths of teachers, family members, and potentially children. I am medically fragile and my fiance has severe asthma. We share a bonus son who will be watched by his grandparents on each side and they all have health conditions and advanced age that would result in their deaths if the were to contract covid-19.

Before we go back to school teachers need answers to the following concerns:

- 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?

We want to keep our bonus child home but his school said they won't be providing an online option and he will need to give up his spot at the school and we will have to homeschool him on our own. This is unacceptable. I urge you to delay the opening of schools so teacher have adequate time to prepare for the health and safety of everyone. Thank you for your time.

Deneva Broughton-Neiswanger

Testimony BOE

From: Malakai Bears <malakai_panuve@baldwin.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Malakai Bears
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:01 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Pay Cut on differential

Aloha BOE, in regards to this pay cut that is being proposed, I strongly feel that this proposal will lead to more problems with teacher shortage and vacant classrooms. Not to mention an increase of Substitute Teachers who are non-qualified to teach our keikis in the classroom.

We are already living in one of the most expensive states in the country with high cost of living. Having this proposal introduced I feel not only discourages highly qualified people to teach, but also leaves students vulnerable to poor education practices from non-qualified teachers.

Aloha,

Baldwin High School
Special Education Teacher

Testimony BOE

From: Crisathan <crisathan@yahoo.com> on behalf of Crisathan
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:02 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Cuts to teacher differentials

Dear Board of Education,

Aloha! I thank you for the hard work you do to safeguard the integrity of the educational system in Hawaii.

I have been an educator for over 30 years, the last 17 years in Hawaii. The last few years I have been the most hopeful in all my years of teaching that educators were finally getting the opportunity to be financially compensated for the incredibly difficult and pivotal job they do to shape the citizens of society.

I really felt Hawaii was looking at the educators with a real interest in correcting the financial hardships teachers have faced and finally beginning to compensate teachers in a more respectful and just manner.

The end of last school year I accepted a job in an complex that is a hard to fill area and was hoping to receive the corresponding differential to help me meet the high cost of living here in Hawaii. I can just barely get by with my salary and so I work 2 extra jobs to help out. The teacher differential would help to lessen the financial burden and allow me to not have to work extra jobs to get by. The teacher shortage in these uncertain times is only looking to get worse and without added incentives like the teacher differential it will tip the balance for more to leave.

Please find the courage to not make teachers again the target of cuts we have endured and sacrificed for far too long.

Respectfully,

Cristy Athan

Testimony BOE

From: H Garcia <honey.k.garcia@gmail.com> on behalf of H Garcia
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:02 AM
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 Honey Garcia and I am a special education teacher at Manoa Elementary School. I have taught special education there for 15 years and have gained a wealth of knowledge and experience on how to teach students with disabilities, work with parents, related service providers, general education teachers, and administration all for the benefit of the student.

Although I have taught in special education all of this time, I had decided that if the teacher shortage differential pay was not approved last school year then I would not return.

It was promised that we would receive extra compensation for the 2020-2021 school year, which is the only reason I didn't apply for another position or quit. How many more promises are the BOE and HDOE going to back out on? Please continue the extra compensation so that students can continue to have experienced teachers.

Respectfully,

Honey Garcia

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Nicholas Matherne <nmath@hawaii.edu> on behalf of Nicholas Matherne
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:02 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Hello,

My name is Nick Matherne and I am the Band Teacher at Kaimuki High School and the Co-Director of the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa University Chorus. 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.](#)

At the current time, I do not believe that we are prepared to return to schools in person. I am tracking research on returning to school that is being conducted across the nation. Many of these studies (including the singular study focusing on music) do not have results released until the end of July. While preliminary results are quite positive with regards to music classes, the full results and guidance are still not available. It is simply too soon to have all of the necessary information. We cannot presume to make effective decisions that are in the best interests of both students and staff until we have empirical research on which to base our plans. Once the results are released, we need at least 2-3 weeks to purchase necessary equipment and make other alterations to school re-opening plans. The DOE must be cognizant of the limitations of the currently available information on the spread of COVID-19 in school environments. The DOE must also be prepared to supply teachers with the necessary resources to ensure that the risk is *as minimal* as any other common virus such as the flu.

Please consider pushing the return to in-person classes back by at least 2-3 weeks as so many other schools in the nation have done. This will provide more time to understand and apply empirical research results, obtain the necessary personal protective equipment, effectively understand our schools' structural limitations, and plan for effective instruction.

--

Nick Matherne
Band Teacher,
Kaimuki High School
Co-Director, University Chorus
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa Choirs

Testimony BOE

From: Teacher Rights 808 <teachpower808@gmail.com> on behalf of Teacher Rights 808
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:03 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Fwd: Testimony

Just reading some news articles about potential long-term impact of the virus after exposure, and here's some food for thought. You aren't just condemning students and teachers to a "flu" that will go away. This is more akin to a permanent scarring of the body in many ways. You are okay with exposing people to this when there are alternatives.

<https://www.yahoo.com/news/as-post-covid-heart-and-brain-problems-linger-some-coronavirus-survivors-find-its-a-long-haul-to-recovery-165434453.html>

Look up the article yourselves if you won't click the link. It has plenty of resources you can check out. You KNOW about these things, and sending anyone back into it when there is a viable option is murder.

Testimony BOE

From: Lulu Wu <yumestore888@gmail.com> on behalf of Lulu Wu
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:03 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Please delay the school reopening.

Aloha!

The number of infected COVID-19 cases has been increasing in Hawaii especially Oahu since middle of June. It shows that we have hard time to keep the pandemic under control and how could we expect schools can do better job especially both 6 ft social distances AND mask covering are not required for all schools?

We all know that the only way we can lower the risk of virus spreading is to have 6 ft social distances and also wearing mask. If schools are not able to request everyone to do so, it means the chance to have community spread at schools are high!

Please reconsider to delay school reopening until ALL schools have better plan to keep students, teachers and all staff safe!

Lulu Wu
Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: mjoaquin <mjoaquin@hawaii.rr.com> on behalf of mjoaquin
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:04 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY

MaryJane Joaquin
Kawananakoa Middle School

MY CONCERNS:

1. When Health Aid person is out for the day, we are not trained to assist this pandemic?
2. We need more information how to handle things cause we are front line in the office.
3. School lunch & assisting in cafeteria?

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

Testimony BOE

From: Kanoelani Rosenberg <kanoelani07@gmail.com> on behalf of Kanoelani Rosenberg
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:04 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha e ke kōmike ho‘ona‘auao (BOE),

My name is Kanoelani Rosenberg, and I am testifying on Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard to staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian Language Immersion Programs for the 2020-2021 school year. I am a Hawaiian Language Immersion teacher at Ke Kula Kaiapuni ‘o Waiau, and I oppose the discontinuance of extra compensation. While I understand that we are in a difficult time, cutting funding would negatively impact myself, my coworkers, and my students.

Before discussing financial impact, I'd like to highlight the fact that our workload during this time has increased exponentially. Due to the ever-changing nature of this pandemic and safety guidelines, my colleagues and I have had multiple voluntary (unpaid) meetings over the summer to discuss and implement safety protocols for our school. Despite our safety protocols, many parents are not comfortable sending their children to school. Distance learning options for Elementary schools were approved last week, therefore we are currently creating a distance learning plan for those families. Unlike our English teaching colleagues, there is no online program that will instruct our students for us. In the Hawaiian Language Immersion program, we are creating all resources and facilitating all online instruction in addition to providing face to face instruction for students on campus. While we are willing to put in extra work for our students, cutting promised compensation should not be an option during this time.

This cut will directly impact my students this year. Like many teachers in Hawai‘i, I have two jobs. I have a part time job at Target because my base-pay from the HDOE is not enough to cover living expenses. Some days I go straight from my classroom to Target, and do not get home until after midnight. Having two jobs has been difficult because teaching requires more than the 6-8 hours we spend on campus, and having a second job has left me with little time outside my on-campus hours. I have always felt guilty for having a second job, because it slowly takes time & energy that could be spent on my students. When the additional \$8,000 was approved, I was able to spend less time working at Target, and I was planning to leave at the beginning of the new school year. With this potential cut in pay, I will be forced to increase hours at my second job. I worry not only for the health and safety of my students, but also for my preparedness in teaching with our increased workload. Creating digital resources, providing online instruction, and providing face to face instruction requires more preparation time than contractually allotted. The extra time needed to prepare for my students will be greatly reduced if my pay is cut and I am forced to keep a second job. My students deserve the best care and instruction, and it is not ok that their education suffers because their kumu needs a second job to survive. My situation is not unique; I know many Hawaiian Language Immersion educators with 2 or more jobs necessary for financial security. Our keiki & kumu deserve better.

I urge the Board of Education to continue extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard to staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian Language Immersion Programs for the 2020-2021 school year.

na‘u nō,
Kumu Kanoelani Rosenberg

Testimony BOE

From: Calvin Nakano <cnakano777@gmail.com> on behalf of Calvin Nakano
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:05 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha BOE Members,

My name is Calvin Nakano and I am a licensed elementary teacher and a licensed CTE in Communications and Arts (6-12 gr.). I have been contemplating getting my special education license for the past 3 years now knowing that we have a state shortage of special education teachers. I also had many people tell me that I was "Crazy" to do so and that it wasn't worth it.

When you came out with the incentive of \$10,000 for Sped, I felt it was now the appropriate time and it was a good reward to be "Crazy". So, I have been studying for my SPED 5354 Praxis Exam day and night and had finally passed it! I just recently got hired as a special education teacher and am really looking forward to working with my students in my new profession. I was also looking forward in receiving the "Incentive Reward" for being "Crazy" and then I heard of the heart-sinking state plan of taking away this incentive. It was like a switch-a-roo trick that I feel I taken for.

The state was on the right track to draw in licensed special education teachers and I believe it was working. By taking the incentive away, we will have withdrawals of sped teachers who were encouraged by this incentive and only worsen the situation for our state for being non-compliant in having licensed sped teachers teaching our special needs students.

I urge you to continue funding our differentials.

Thank you very much,
Calvin

Testimony BOE

From: Kathleen Hoppe <msjhops@gmail.com> on behalf of Kathleen Hoppe
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:06 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Delaying Student Start Date

Aloha kākou,

Since March, educators such as myself, my husband, my sister in law, and my mother in law have worried about our students non-stop. We worried about their academic exposure and progress, about their 'ohana (which includes immediate and extended 'ohana), their emotional well-being, whether or not their basic needs are being met, we worried about their safety, and worried about how we would ever get back to school safely. During this time, we have also waited for a comprehensive plan and explanation from those leaders at the very top, and all we have received is "guidance" in how to reopen schools safely which has lots and lots of pukas.

When we hear the superintendent say that it is "time to do our part" it is insulting, and dangerous to shoulder the weight of the economy on teachers. What will it take to do things RIGHT, to PLAN WELL, and to RESPECT school staff and teachers' safety as well as students' safety? Doing distance learning (which MANY, MANY families want) and a hybrid face-to-face model takes careful, intentional planning, not thrown-together guidance with a wish of good luck to schools.

Lastly, a complex problem deserves time to solve. In this whole situation, the complex problem has been constantly changing with leadership struggling to meet the shifting expectations for reopening. There has been insufficient time to train teachers, to examine best practice models and plan for our new normal. Postponing the start of the school year beyond having a laughable two weeks of 1/2 days for training is necessary, and is the right thing to do. This will allow schools to determine who may conduct virtual classrooms, how to deliver things like counseling, be thoughtfully creative about use of space, ensure all safety equipment is in place, and ensure that all staff are INFORMED AND READY.

Mahalo for your time.
Kathleen Hoppe

Testimony BOE

From: atyndzik <ambertyndzik@gmail.com> on behalf of atyndzik
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:08 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha Chair Payne and other BOE Board Members,

I am a teacher at King William C. Lunalilo Elementary school. I am testifying in regards to Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between the State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawai 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 it is premature to be welcoming our students back to campus until the following questions are answered:

What is the plan for when a teacher and/or a student gets sick with Covid-19 once the school year has resumed?

Who will substitute for my class if I am out due to illness and what safety precautions and protocols will be followed in my absence?

How will a substitute teacher continue implementing the distance-learning I am being asked to provide?

Currently the plan for my class this year is to separate my class into four groups of students, A/B/C/D. Each group will attend class physically once a week. The rest will be doing distance-learning. While my principal has been doing all that she can to make us as safe as possible within the current parameters given, we are still very unprepared. I ask you, when will I be trained in how to provide distance learning? I have not been trained.

Are we really being asked to welcome our students back in just two weeks without the proper training and safety protocols in place?

I ask that you delay the return of students to our campuses until we have the proper safety protocols and procedures in place and that they are communicated to both teachers and parents.

I ask that you delay the return of students to our campuses until teachers have been properly trained in teaching distance learning.

I am ready to get to work and I am eager to learn and to do all that I can to prepare so that I can teach my students in a manner that they deserve. They deserve my absolute best. They deserve the best from the Department of Education. Teachers cannot do this alone. We need proper training. We need to be able to answer questions you know the parents of our students will have about safety protocols and plans.

I ask that you delay the return of students to our campuses until all of these vital questions have been answered and teachers are properly trained.

I thank you for your time and attention to these matters.

Mahalo,
Amber Tyndzik

Testimony BOE

From: Kelly Kaholokula <10047205@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Kelly Kaholokula
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:08 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

> Aloha,

>

> I am a teacher at Moanalua High School and I am testifying on Board
> Action on Memorandum of Understanding Between State of Hawaii Board of
> Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19
> Response): 2017-2021 Contractual Modifications and Conditions of Work
> Related to COVID-19 Response for Bargaining Unit 5 Employees

>

> As an educator and a member of the community I strongly believe that the health and safety of our students and teachers should be the number one priority when it comes to our public schools. We do not have the proper training or equipment to return to school and provide a safe learning environment for our children. How will teachers be able to teach when we are in fear of contracting a fatal virus and possibly giving it to not only our close loved ones, but spreading it to others in the community.

>

> Not only are we NOT ready to return to school but important questions that validate our concerns have not been answered. Questions like, when will the State of Hawaii's Department of Health provide guidance on the reopening of school buildings which the 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 of now, we teachers seem to be most at risk when schools reopen. In turn putting their own children and family members at risk because we will be in contact with dozens, maybe hundreds, of children for hours in a day, in an enclosed environment. Please put our safety first, not just save our lives but the many lives that we will be in contact with after our work shift has ended. Let's stop something bad from happening before it happens and take the proper precautions before opening up our schools again. As you can see so many questions have not been answered and the numbers are only increasing in Hawaii...

>

Aloha,
Kelly Kaholokula

--

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Testimony BOE

From: Tracy Aki <tracy.j.aki@gmail.com> on behalf of Tracy Aki
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:08 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Delay the opening of school

As Corey Rosenlee explained to the public, teachers need more TIME. Schools are still working on finding out parents' preferences (A/B or fully online distance learning.) Without those survey results, our principal can't yet even figure out how many teachers are needed per grade level. Without knowing that information, teachers don't even know to what GRADE LEVEL they will be ABRUPTLY MOVED! Teachers will NOT be ready by August 4 to teach, because of those specific factors. Also, HSTA is awaiting the specific protocols from the DOE regarding what to do if/when teachers/students get infected with COVID. If teachers need to stay home to self quarantine, do the students in his/her class also self quarantine for the same amount of time as the teacher? That will put parents in the situation once again of caring for their children rather than going to WORK. How can families then pay their bills, have food to eat, and have electricity? Yes I strongly ask that the opening of school be DELAYED until these issues are completely taken care of.

Tracy Aki
2nd grade teacher

Testimony BOE

From: Alexis Endicott <alexis.endicott@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Alexis Endicott
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:11 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony
Attachments: Letter to BOE.docx

To Whom It May Concern:

Please see my attached testimony for concerns I have about the 2020-2021 School Year amongst the COVID-19 Pandemic. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Alexis Endicott

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.

Meeting: General Board Meeting July 23, 2020 1:30 PM.

Agenda Item: Testimonials A, G, and H.

Position: Opposed.

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express my concerns as we all collectively go forth into this upcoming 2020-2021 School Year. I am asking you to speak with your fellow constituents about delaying the opening of schools while continuing the discussion of the need for schools to be solely online, removing various educators differential's, the proposed pay cuts for Principals and Teachers, and discussing "what-if" scenarios of what to expect for casualties and long-term impact from the Pandemic.

History has shown us that this pandemic is just beginning and that this fall it is a very high possibility it will again ramp up potentially infecting and killing hundreds of thousand. Data that has been collected which show that students 4th grade onward are as likely to get COVID-19 as adults, Hawaii Schools have many teachers who fit the criteria for contracting/dying from the virus because of age and/or health conditions, and it would be increasingly difficult to get substitutes once teachers and students are contracting the virus.

As an educator, I know how hard it is to recruit and keep educators here in Hawaii since the cost of living is high. Our educators and their families have happily made many sacrifices for the opportunity to make a difference, and the differential, which was directly instrumental in the ability to retain teachers this year, and over the last few months has made it more accessible for families to meet their basic needs for things such as: medical, rent, insurance, automotive expenses, various utilities, etc. Now, on top of losing the differential, taking 20% more from teachers and 40% from principals will exacerbate the already difficult time our state has in the retention of educators. Many of who will now have to make the tough decision to retire, to quit, or to move. Others will be making the decision to feed their loved ones instead of themselves, buying medication instead of utilities, or deciding to pay rent to have one more month with a roof over their heads. But at the same time knowing that means no food medicine or other bills are paid, and many more scenarios. How can we hope to bring and retain educators here if we cannot guarantee sufficient pay and benefit packages that will allow them to live a decent life instead of just surviving? Please help to retain our educators and build a better solution.

Speaking from a parent perspective, I am filled with deep concern for our keiki and our kupuna. We are not familiarly set up like other mainland states, and as such have many generations and ages all living under the same roof. Please ask yourselves how our families will survive if we can't guarantee that sending our keiki to be educated face to face

won't expose them to a greater risk of contracting Covid and bring it back home to some of the most vulnerable of our populations.

There are answers, we just have to think outside the box, work together as one community family and remember to give each other love and grace as we all go through this together. Please consider these words and thoughts from my heart. Help everyone understand the severity of their actions and how our communities will carry their decisions for generations to come.

Thank you,

Ms. Alexis Endicott

Meeting: General Board Meeting July 23, 2020 1:30 PM.

Agenda Item: Testimonials A, G, and H.

Position: Opposed.

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express my concerns as we all collectively go forth into this upcoming 2020-2021 School Year. I am asking you to speak with your fellow constituents about delaying the opening of schools while continuing the discussion of the need for schools to be solely online, removing various educators differential's, the proposed pay cuts for Principals and Teachers, and discussing "what-if" scenarios of what to expect for casualties and long-term impact from the Pandemic.

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As an educator, I know how hard it is to recruit and keep educators here in Hawaii since the cost of living is high. Our educators and their families have happily made many sacrifices for the opportunity to make a difference, and the differential, which was directly instrumental in the ability to retain teachers this year, and over the last few months has made it more accessible for families to meet their basic needs for things such as: medical, rent, insurance, automotive expenses, various utilities, etc. Now, on top of losing the differential, taking 20% more from teachers and 40% from principals will exacerbate the already difficult time our state has in the retention of educators. Many of who will now have to make the tough decision to retire, to quit, or to move. Others will be making the decision to feed their loved ones instead of themselves, buying medication instead of utilities, or deciding to pay rent to have one more month with a roof over their heads. But at the same time knowing that means no food medicine or other bills are paid, and many more scenarios. How can we hope to bring and retain educators here if we cannot guarantee sufficient pay and benefit packages that will allow them to live a decent life instead of just surviving? Please help to retain our educators and build a better solution.

Speaking from a parent perspective, I am filled with deep concern for our keiki and our kupuna. We are not familiarly set up like other mainland states, and as such have many generations and ages all living under the same roof. Please ask yourselves how our families will survive if we can't guarantee that sending our keiki to be educated face to face

won't expose them to a greater risk of contracting Covid and bring it back home to some of the most vulnerable of our populations.

There are answers, we just have to think outside the box, work together as one community family and remember to give each other love and grace as we all go through this together. Please consider these words and thoughts from my heart. Help everyone understand the severity of their actions and how our communities will carry their decisions for generations to come.

Thank you,

Ms. Alexis Endicott

Testimony BOE

From: Mary Phillips <mphillips872@gmail.com> on behalf of Mary Phillips
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:09 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Continuing Differentials

To whom it may concern you,

I am a special education teacher at Lincoln Elementary. Our school has 6 special education teachers. The turnover rate in our school for special education teachers is we lose about two special education teachers a year.

I moved to Hawaii in 2001 as the state was under the Felix decree. The Felix Decree included a judge mandated order of the hiring of hundreds of special education teachers from the mainland. This was a bandaid approach to the teacher shortage that was short term as the teachers who were hired as a result of the Felix Decree were not invested in the Hawaiian community and left after less than 2 years. Many would argue this aspect of the Felix Decree caused more harm than good in the long term.

Parents are frustrated with the turnover rate of teachers in special education. Their children are getting shortchanged as they are being taught by substitutes. Another mandate such as the Felix Decree appears inevitable.

I was so proud that the Department of Education announced that they were providing the teachers in special education and in hard to fill schools with differentials. This is a solution to the teacher shortage that will likely have long term positive results. Anecdotaly, a friend delayed moving back to Oahu from Molokai as the differential is allowing her to better afford remaining in that high need area. A teacher in my school stated that she was staying in Oahu for five more years due to the differential.

We are going to lose teachers next year as a result of Covid. The differentials will offset that loss by giving teachers in high need areas a reason to stay. If the differentials are removed, it is likely that many teachers will leave the Hawaii DOE by the end of 2nd quarter.

Sincerely,

Mary Phillips
Special Education Teacher

Sent from my iPad

Testimony BOE

From: Kaitlyn Higa <kaitlynhiga@gmail.com> on behalf of Kaitlyn Higa
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:09 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony: School Reopening

Board Members,

My name is Kaitlyn and 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 am the child of a Roosevelt HS alumnus and a Hilo HS alumnus, and I have many nephews and nieces who are students in Hawaii Schools as well as many friends who are their teachers.

HIDOE has still not fulfilled their side of the agreement(Memorandum of Understanding) that HTSA has provided. Many essential questions about safety procedures have not been answered, putting the lives of our teachers, our school staff, and our keiki at risk. PPE orders have not arrived and opening the schools without them would be irresponsible, again, putting so many lives on the line.

I owe my family and friends everything. My parents are the very reason that I exist and am able to enjoy my life. The education they received in Hawaii Public Schools prepared them to live happy and successful lives. It is my hope that all students are able to achieve the success my parents did, which means they have to survive this pandemic first. Please reconsider postponing reopening the schools until a better plan to ensure the safety of all teachers, students, and staff.

With the reopening of some states, COVID-19 infection rates have skyrocketed. Reopening our schools puts us at risk for the same to happen. A virus with the potential to kill should not be taken lightly. One student, one teacher, one staff member -- losing one is one too many.

We want schools to reopen, but only if they can open safely. The lives of our next generation and the people who support their growth should not be an afterthought.

Sincerely,
Kaitlyn Higa

Testimony BOE

From: Jamie Hoopes <hoopesjamie@gmail.com> on behalf of Jamie Hoopes
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:09 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

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

First of all, the health of teachers and students should be the top priority. The insufficient plans and "answers" to questions are proof that education in Hawaii is not a priority. Classroom teaching involves so many small details to keep it running smoothly. The lack of leadership in planning demonstrates just how little those in charge understand about the complexity of what teachers do on a daily basis. School should not open unless the details and expectations are made clear to everyone. The start of school needs to be pushed back until this is done.

Secondly, the teachers should not be penalized by losing pay. This is not a vacation for us. When we switched over to distance learning, I was still putting in 10-12 hours a day. Any other profession would expect compensation for their time and no one would question it. Why are we treated with less respect than other professions? Teachers are highly educated professionals that work very long hours year round, but only paid for 10 months. Many teachers hold second jobs just to pay their rent and make ends meet. We can't afford to have a pay cut.

Lastly, the video that was sent out last night was very condescending in the nicest way possible. It was made clear that you have heard us, but are tired of our complaints. So let's make a deal. Here is what I propose:

If the Superintendent and the board members are so confident in the safety of reopening the schools then offer to resign if schools are forced to shutdown due to an outbreak. If they are not willing to risk their jobs then how can they risk our lives?

Thank you,

Jamie Hoopes

Jamie Hoopes
Kindergarten Teacher
Hawaii Academy of Art and Science

Testimony BOE

From: Christina Hill <collegeinclusion@gmail.com> on behalf of Christina Hill
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:09 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: testimony

Aloha,

My name is Christina Hill, I am an FSC teacher at Waipahu Intermediate School I am testifying on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees. Just receiving an Email from the superintendent office today stating that HDOE has been assured by medical experts that it is safe to reopen, has compelled me to write this testimony. We have more COVID-19 cases daily than we originally had when we closed schools in March due to the unsafe nature of having students in school during that time. How can there be assurance that it is safe to open schools now, when it was unsafe to do so in March with fewer cases? I testify that schools should be delayed in opening until it is truly safe to reopen.

Testimony BOE

From: Samantha Kuakini <skuakini9@gmail.com> on behalf of Samantha Kuakini
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:09 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To whom it may concern,

My name is Samantha Kuakini and I am a kindergarten teacher at Ma`ili Elementary. I would like to reject the proposal. Receiving the differential has helped me continue my education by helping me pay for my masters. If I do not receive the differential, I may not be able to continue my education to become a better teacher for my students.

Please reject the proposal.
Thank you!

Samantha Kuakini

Testimony BOE

From: Leihuanani Canino <leihuananicanino@gmail.com> on behalf of Leihuanani Canino
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:09 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Delaying return to school campus

My name is Leihuanani Wike, I am a Makua of Ke Kula o 'Ehunuikaimalino ma ka moku o Keawe. I am submitting testimony in support of delaying the date that students physically return to campus for the 2020-2021 school year.

Ke Kula o 'Ehunuikaimalino is located on a small campus in South Kona. Over the last few years, we have seen an increase in student enrollment, so much so that we do not have the physical space to house all of our haumana. With the implementation of social distancing, we are left wondering how our already overcrowded kula will be a safe space for our haumana and limahana. Our kula has not been given clear safety protocols, nor have all of our limahana had the opportunity to be trained on how to implement the vast amount of new expectations placed upon them for this school year.

With the huge rise in cases across the country I just don't feel it is safe to send our haumāna back to school. Considering that the mainland is already looking at closing businesses due to rapid rises in new cases truly shows that it would be a step in the wrong direction. I don't think we need to be putting our haumāna and kumu health at risk.

Mahalo nui no kou kōkua,
Leihuanani Wike

Testimony BOE

From: Gloria Bandsma <gbandsma@hawaii.rr.com> on behalf of Gloria Bandsma
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:10 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: Gloria Bandsma
Subject: Starting public school unprepared

Aloha all members of the Board of Education,

First I would like to say thank you for taking the time to read my testimony,

I have 3 grandchildren who attend school, 1 in a private collage off island and 2 in Kauai public schools. So I do know the importance of education.

I feel it is a must that everyone in the class room wears a mask, sanitize there hands and have there temperature checked before entering the class. Now our teachers will have that extra burden to contend with, plus keeping there class room clean. Now they are a teacher, janitor and a nurse.

If you go into the grocery store and other establishments you need to be masked and use hand sanitizer. Most of our small food business's here require you have your temperature checked, hands sprayed with alcohol or other hand sanitizer, and keeping 6 ft. from each other, this is the same at the pharmacy, going into the medical clinic and just to many for me to name, My thought on this is why are we doing all of this protection of society and do not want the same thing for our school children and teachers.

We have some parents demonstrating here on Kauai in front of our Safeway. Calling out through a bull horn that it is against there child's civil right to have to wear a mask. This is what our teachers and office staff are going to have to put up with. Is that fair to add to there load? Where is the respect each person deserves.

I have helped out in classes in public school and under the best of circumstances you have some unruly children who don't follow the rules.

Look at how many children and adults were exposed to Covid on Oahu from 1 sick child in the Summer Fun program.

The teacher is not only being exposed to Covid 19. When they go home to there family they may have at risk spouses, or elderly parents or grandparents who could be exposed, As we all know your contagious with almost anything a few days before you feel sick.

We know our medical system especially here on Kauai could not handle a large outbreak.

We know when the quarantine is lifted we will have friends and family coming to visit here. Many of them will be staying in house holds that have school age children. That will be another avenue of exposure.

Today on the news it spoke of how tourist and skirting around the system, buying inter island tickets, renting a place for supposedly long term term and then cancelling and going home in a couple of weeks. There ads every where of private car rentals. People are getting by with not doing the 14 day quarantine.

People are looking to escape Covid and come here where we have worked so hard to keep it under control.

There is still a possibility that teachers will get a 20% pay cut even with all the added things they will have to do. We already have a teacher shortage and are one of the most under paid teachers in the US.

But the most important issue is that our schools and teachers are not prepared to deal with this. We have to think of the health of our children, office workers and teachers.

Lets think out of the box and you have the ability to do that. Lets wait until the schools and everyone associated with them are ready and prepared to go back to teach the children.

Gloria Bandsma
gbandsma@hawaii.rr.com

Testimony BOE

From: Rena Shiroma <rena.shiroma@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Rena Shiroma
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:10 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Good morning,

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

My name is Rena Shiroma and I work at Wheeler Elementary. I've been a special education teacher for almost 10 years, and am currently receiving a differential. Before receiving the differential, I felt that with the amount of work required of a special education teacher, we should be more appropriately compensated. With the differential, I feel that we are now receiving more of a fair pay compared to other positions or professions. There were times that I wanted to resign and seek another profession due to our pay, and I believe that's how many teachers have felt. This differential helps to keep highly qualified teachers in our positions. Taking away this differential will not only hurt highly qualified teachers in specialized positions, it will hurt the students receiving specialized instruction and services. They will not be receiving quality instruction and services that they deserve.

Please consider continuing the differentials and find another solution to the budget crisis. Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony.

Rena Shiroma
Special Education Teacher
Wheeler Elementary School

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Testimony BOE

From: Joseph Menor Jr <menorj@gmail.com> on behalf of Joseph Menor Jr
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:10 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha Board of Education,

My name is Joseph Menor, Jr. and I am a special education teacher within the Central District for the Hawaii State Department of Education.

I am opposing the request for a temporary discontinuance of differentials for special education classroom teachers, Hawaiian language immersion educators, and hard-to-staff schools.

Current data indicate that teachers were increasingly retained in multiple districts across the state of Hawaii when teachers in the following areas (special education classroom teachers and hard-to-staff schools) were given compensation for these important areas to create a community of highly qualified teachers in very high demand as many schools in the past found it hard to staff these different teaching positions.

In addition, the incentives for differential pay allowed more teachers, like myself, to be recruited into the field of special education and I was an emergency hired special education teacher since 2017.

The differential pay allowed teachers in special education classrooms, Hawaiian language immersion and hard-to-staff schools feel more appreciated.

Special education teachers are required to do more compared to other teaching lines. The amount of time spent for IEP meetings, documenting multiple paperwork, supervising multiple adults in the classroom, following federal and state guidelines, collaborating with multiple individuals (general education teachers, speech language pathologist, occupational therapist, physical therapist, Licensed Behavior Analyst, and others) to ensure accommodations and modifications are being met to aid the students' needs as well as other duties.

I strongly agree that the funding for teacher shortage differentials has positive results as indicated for recruiting and retaining teachers especially in Special Education teaching lines and hard-to-staff schools. At this time, the Hawaiian language immersion position does not have data to compare; however, being in the state of Hawaii, the importance of Hawaiian language immersion is very important for the revitalization to the Hawaiian language and ensuring the language lives on with promoting the Hawaiian language provided by the public education sector.

Sincerely,
Joseph

Joseph Menor, Jr., M.Ed.
Special Education teacher

Testimony BOE

From: Korey Gayer <korey_n_lexie@hotmail.com> on behalf of Korey Gayer
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:10 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

If sick positive tested parents still sent their children to summer fun which later their child also tested positive for covid how are we to be sure it won't happen again.

If a leader was positive tested for covid who was wearing a mask, face shield and gloves was working with kids how is that okay.

I'm sorry but I will not let my kids be Guinea pigs to test this plan out to see if we can trust eachother as a community.

Sent from myMail for iOS

Testimony BOE

From: ilin300412 <ilin300412@aol.com> on behalf of ilin300412
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:10 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Please delay school opening date

Dear BOE Members,

I'm a mother of 3 boys who is extremely worried about public school re-opening soon on Aug 4, due to the rising cases of COVID-19 on Oahu.

I understand that F2F is the best way for my 3 boys to learn from their teachers, however, to me health comes first than everything else.

I sincerely ask BOE members to reconsider of the school opening date and stand firm on the original decision, that kids go back to school one month after if there's NO confirmed COVID-19 cases are reported.

Thank you for your time and hard work for the students in Hawaii.

Mahalo!!

Rebecca Mao

Sent from my T-Mobile 4G LTE Device

Testimony BOE

From: Heidi Zucker <heidieasthawaii@yahoo.com> on behalf of Heidi Zucker
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:11 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Dear Concerned,

I am Heidi Zucker and have been a teacher in the State of Hawaii for 16 years; I work at Pahoa Hight & Intermediate School. I love my job; even on those stressfull days! I strive to provide a quality learning environment for my students and to model and teach them how to be not only good at math; but how to be a lifelong learner who knows how to get along with others and who will be a successful community contributor as they become more and more independent and able to be a model citizen in the community and beyone to the whole global world.

Both my students and I were thrilled when we found out special eduation teachers were getting a increase in pay. The addtional ten thousand dollars is well deserved for the extra hours, extra educational requirements, unique skills needed to undersrand and comply with IDEA laws, and the services we give to support our general education teachers and students; who frequently come to special education teachers for advice and suggestions on how to serve special needs students in a more better and equitalble manner.

My students when asked; they say they would never consider being a special education teacher. They see how stressful iit is; they even write my apology letters for being so hard to handle. Please do not take away our differntial pay. It is an insult to me and to my students who were so relieved I was getting a raise in my salary. By taking away what you once agreed to give; you are violating the trust and appreciation that so many have for the decision we fought hard to get.

Taking away this differential pay is the surest way to lose quality teachers and a sure way to scare new teachers away from Hawaii. If you take this away; you will never be trused and looked upon as being able to "be in our shoes." Our students and community need teachers like me; who are so much more content knowing we are valued and acknowledged for our extreme dedication to our profession.

Please, think carefullly; and do not take our differential pay away. In the long run; it is not worth it. Our childrens and our community is at stake; as well as the lives of wonderful intelligent dedicated speical educaiton teachers. Do you know how much my general educaiton teachers say how much they appreciate my skills? My general education teachers I co teach with; tell me each class period how much they appreciate me and need my highly specialized skills in order to help all students; not just special education.

I am highly qualified to teach and to mentor others; I am an essential roled model. Do not devalue me and insult and denigrate me.

I also am requesting that students start date is not August 4, 2020. Hawaii has low rates of COVID 19 cases; lets keep it that way. Let us not proceed too quickly; let us be patient and not act without truely thinking this through. Let health come before opening our schools. We are a part of the United States; and the mainland opens after Labor Day. Please, please; lets follow their timelines. It is not a requirement that we be the first to open our classroom doors for students.

Thank you for listening and taking the time to read this. Are you taking a pay cut? I am sure many at the top are not taking a pay cut; DO NOT make it so I get a pay cut. It is not accepatable. Special education teachers are special and are essential to the smooth runnings of our schools in Hawaii.

Remember, there is not a need to rush the opening of schools. Read the news; the virus is expected to increase in the number of people it effects. Be safe and not sorry.

Sincerely,
Heidi Zucker

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](#)

Shortage differentials and or delaying student start date

Testimony BOE

From: Joshlyn Noga <joshlyn.noga@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Joshlyn Noga
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:11 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha 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. I am a teacher at King Intermediate School on O'ahu.

The cutting of these particular funds will directly hurt our already vulnerable students. Special education programs, hard to staff geographical locations and Hawaiian language schools have a common denominator, the student population is greatly represented by those of Hawaiian ancestry and other South Pacific islands.

Shall Superintendent Christina Kishimoto move forward with this, she will be contributing to the genocide of Hawaiian children by not providing them with the quality education they rightfully deserve. Their education is tied to their identity as young Hawaiians who are learning to perpetuate the practices, knowledge and worldview of their kūpuna. Cutting these funds is no different from the Hawai'i public education system of 1896 who banned the use of Hawaiian Language in all classrooms.

There are different avenues available in the existing budget that can financially support the continuance of these programs. On December 5, 2019 Superintendent Kishimoto and Board of Education Chair Catherine Payne pledged to fund the differentials from existing HDOE money if state lawmakers did not approve these funds. Going back on a promise made to explore other options is inadmissible.

Mahalo,

Joshlyn Noga

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Testimony BOE

From: Taylor M <tama96231512@gmail.com> on behalf of Taylor M
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:12 AM
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 believe that it isn't safe to open school campuses to students on August 4th. For starters, we're in the midst of a Pandemic that is rapidly spreading not only around the world, but within the United States. With the uncertainty of the symptoms in children, I don't believe that it's yet safe to place kids in a confined space even if there is 6 foot distancing. If kids go back into the classroom with a 6 foot distancing rule, there's no guarantee that the younger kids will be able to constantly be 6 feet apart. We need to take in the consideration that especially elementary schools would have a much harder time keeping that distance. If found that the rule can't be enforced, it can lead into an increase of cases, which is already happening around the state. With that, brings up the point of symptoms in children. The fact that this illness is still so new, we don't know for certain what the effects are on children. Lastly, as a concerned daughter of a teacher, I'm concerned for all teachers. Recent news shows the outcome of children going back to school - COVID positive cases and in some cases fatalities. We need to not only think of all the children, but the teachers and faculty that are being required to go back into the classrooms. Especially those teachers who are high risk or even teachers that live with someone who is high risk. Please reconsider the decision to open school campuses on August 4th. We need to wait for a decrease in cases and more research.

Thank you,
Taylor

Testimony BOE

From: Hillery Taylor-Young <hillery_taylor-young@baldwin.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Hillery Taylor-Young
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:13 AM
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.**

I taught Special Needs at Chicago Public Schools for 16 years upon leaving that position I was making \$70 an hour close to \$100,000 a year. When deciding to relocate to Hawaii and take a position as a Special Needs teacher at the Hawaii D. O.E salary was a major factor. **The Hawaii DOE started me off with a salary of \$53,000 a year, half of what I was paid in Chicago to essentially do the same job I did in Chicago.**

In order to get good qualified Special Needs teachers you must stick to the promise you made of increasing salaries as an incentive to recruit more teachers. Teachers in general have a difficult job as it is **not making enough money to survive in Hawaii should not be a huge part of that equation.** I know teachers who are constantly moving from apartment to apartment to accommodate DOE's low salary. When the DOE pledged to give a \$10,000 raise to increase incentive **alot of teachers felt that they were finally able to make enough money to settle down in one residential place for a long term.**
Bottomline the low salaries just add onto an already stressful situation. After 4 school years I am beginning to wonder if it is worth it at all.

Most people look at me and wonder first of all why would you leave a 6 figure salary to move to one of the most expensive places in the world for half the salary to just struggle and worry about making ends meet.

Moreover, I feel if you want to recruit new teachers from abroad and from the mainland remembering this involves packing up your life and relocating to an unknown place the least you could do is pay them a decent salary that would relieve stress not cause it!

Testimony BOE

From: Noelani Chang <noelanichang@icloud.com> on behalf of Noelani Chang
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:14 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Delay the opening of school

Goodmorning, I am a teacher of 28 years in the Honolulu District. I was the GT, lower EI technology teacher and robotics teacher up until the other day when I was notified that I will take on the role of Distance Learning Coordinator for our school that will be on a Hybrid Schedule. I was given a link to Acellus an online distance learning Program that the state is planning to use for students in the state who will remain at home. I know nothing about the workings of this program yet, haven't had any training but am now deemed the DL coordinator. In addition to the risks of COVID-19 I feel that our school needs more time to better prepare for our students so the quality of their learning is not compromised by rushing into program we all don't understand and can use diligently yet. Please delay the opening of school!

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Florence Langaman <flo_cads@yahoo.com> on behalf of Florence Langaman
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:14 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov; testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: flo_cads@yahoo.com
Subject: Testimony

Dear BOE,

Aloha. I am Florence Langaman, Grade 5 teacher, of Eleele Elementary School on the island of Kauai.

I believe schools are not ready to open for the following health, safety, and outbreak readiness reasons:

First, all teachers have not had the proper training to teach distance learning should there be an outbreak of positive cases.

It is summer and some teachers are taking "optional" webinars on their own to be ready for remote learning. I have taken a few myself, however, it is not training done by the school where all faculty are learning the same thing. It is a hit or miss. I know some teachers are just doing it on their own, so they are not scrambling like quarter for of last school year.

Second, teachers were told that we have supplies to keep us safe, however, in our voluntary virtual meeting, I asked if teachers would have shields between the students and teachers. The answer was no. During this pandemic, many businesses have equipped their work area with shields when in contact with people. For example, the grocery stores, the banks, the restaurants, etc. I do not feel safe working in a class of up to 12 students, who come from their own ohana bubble. Families are going out to beaches, parties, gatherings, churches, and some are starting sports soon. How can one be completely safe if you are with these students every day for 6-7 hours in your own classroom ohana bubble?

Testimony BOE

From: Michael Richey <michael.richey@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Michael Richey
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:15 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

My name is Michael Richey, I teach English Language Arts at Kailua High School.

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

"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**."

My position is any pay cuts to HSTA is laughable! 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.

Mahalo for your time & consideration.

--

Michael Richey
ELA Instructor
Kailua High School
(808)266-7900 ext. 2263

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Testimony BOE

From: Summer Holwegner <summer_holwegner@kaumualii.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Summer Holwegner
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:15 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for Agenda Item G

My name is Summer Holwegner and I am a gen ed teacher for the 3rd grade at King Kaumualii Elementary School on Kauai. I am testifying on 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 oppose this action that the would like to take for several reasons.

First, Special Education (SpEd) teachers need to be compensated for the extra time that they have to put into their jobs. These teachers often go well past the 2:00 school day and 45 minute teacher prep time. I have been a regular ed teacher in an inclusion classroom for the last 6 years. It is a challenging and rewarding job to work with students with disabilities. I have seen first hand the sheer amount of extra work that SpEd teachers are required to put in - from work on drafting and meeting for IEPs to modifying instruction to support students with varying (dis)abilities. Keeping track of student progress throughout the quarter of each students' learning goals in addition to completing quarterly progress reports is time-consuming and exhausting. Managing supporting assistants such as educational assistant work and training and paraprofessionals who come in to work with students with behavioral needs. I have worked with SpEd teachers who have been known to plan into the evenings - sending emails, responding to text messages, working on drafting IEPs, and updating quarterly progress reports. This is NOT a typical 7:45-2:45 teaching job, and these teachers need to be compensated for this extra work.

Second, removing this promised compensation would result in loss of teachers in difficult to staff positions. During this time of working in a pandemic, many teachers are questioning their safety at work. Moreso, for SpEd teachers who have students of varying needs that require one-on-one instruction and support that may put teachers at risk as they are unable to social distance and do not have the appropriate PPE (plexiglass partitions, etc.). Without compensation, these teachers would prefer to work in a regular ed classroom where they don't have to work so closely with students and put their safety in further danger. In addition, teachers will not want to stay in a position where they would not be compensated for the extra work that they are required to put in as I mentioned in the paragraph above. For the last two years, the SpEd teacher that I worked with in the inclusion classroom has been out on extended maternity leave. Her position has been unable to be filled, resulting in the use of emergency hires (who are not trained) or the assignment of educational assistant support, which does not take the place of a certified SpEd teacher. Recently, a SpEd

certified teacher who was teaching in a regular ed classroom decided to take the position in my inclusion classroom - ONLY because of this promised compensation. I imagine that she will likely return to teaching regular ed students if this compensation is taken away. I also know of quite a few SpEd certified teachers who currently teach in a regular ed classroom that had been considering moving back to the SpEd classroom with this promised compensation. Imagine how many positions that could potentially be filled that YOU will be responsible for leaving vacant with this decision.

I could continue with reasons - there are many! This compensation will encourage more teachers to become SpEd certified and will attract more teachers to fill these many vacant positions. This compensation will also bring in qualified teachers for our students with disabilities as opposed to the emergency hires who are not trained. Our keiki deserve better!

Please reconsider your position on item G. We need to retain our SpEd teachers.

**Thank you,
Summer Holwegner**

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Testimony BOE

From: Maria Rossman <mrs.mariarossman@gmail.com> on behalf of Maria Rossman
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:13 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony SCHOOL REOPENING

RE: H.BOARD ACTION ON MEMORANDUM BOE/HSTA COVID RESPONSE /SCHOOL REOPENING

I just wanted to make you aware how many teachers feel about school reopenings.

We value your leadership and know that you have the best interests of our keiki at heart.

The school reopening plan is an invitation to tragedy. There will be opportunities for children and staff to get COVID.

Teachers are being **required to work on site** as opposed to working from home. Substitutes that are not fully qualified will be asked to do the job with little or no training in either health or educational standards due to teaching shortages.

Currently, the state says that **students will be allowed** to do distance learning 100% of the time. At our school, the entire staff is working constantly. A fund has been made available to pay for distance learning. However, in other parts of Hawaii, parents will have to pay \$250 a month for distance learning. **How is that fair?**

No matter how well intentioned, the schools are **not able to do proper cleaning every day.** It's impossible. Custodial staff will get sick, too! They have to get subs (if available) and some days, there may be no cleaning at all.

Teachers or parents will not be able to have the children wear masks or social distance.

Daily deepcleaning, 6-feet social distancing, wearing masks inside are **NOT BEING MADE MANDATORY.** Even if they were mandatory, they would be impossible to enforce. It's impossible to clean every single thing a child touches throughout the day; and there is no guarantee that parents will agree to let their children wear masks.

Please listen to the scientists and **allow teachers to work from home and require the state to find the money to have students to do 100% distance learning.** If that's not possible, do not be a part of losing one single life for the sake of reopening schools.

Maria Rossman (Public School Teacher in Hawaii since 1986)
Teacher at Holualoa El. since 1990
Kailua Kona, HI



ReplyForward

Testimony BOE

From: Chassidy Kaaihue <chkaaihue@kamaile.org> on behalf of Chassidy Kaaihue
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:15 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha Kakaou,

My name is Chassidy Kaaihue and I am a 2nd grade educator at Kamaile Academy on the Wai'anae Coast of Hawaii. I am writing to testify on Action Item G: [Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.](#)

As a Native Hawaiian and local grown educator in the Waianae community, it is imperative to continue to provide effective and quality educators to the keiki of Waianae. As a product of Waianae, I have experienced first-hand the effects of quality educators in my community. With my personal experience of having effective educators, I have been impacted to become an educator and give back to my community. Receiving this differential has helped me as an educator to sustain a living in Hawaii while empowering the keiki of Waianae. The retraction of these differentials will heavily impact my family and the community as it will deter teachers from working at hard to staff schools, specifically in my community. The impact it will have will affect the keiki as effective and qualified teachers may have to reconsider their current position. By eliminating these funds, we will start to see a heavy decrease of teachers in the profesion.

Therefore, I highly urge board members to reject the proposal.

Mahalo,

Chassidy Kaaihue

Testimony BOE

From: Gerald Garcia <gerald@hawaiidocumentservice.com> on behalf of Gerald Garcia
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:15 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony; H. Board action on Memo of Understanding between BOE & HSTA

7/22/2020

Board and staff:

I am opposed to opening of schools for in-school attendance in Fall 2020. My grandchildren come to our house for supervision after school. I am 70 years old with health issues.

I also have 3 daughters who are teachers.

1. There is no vaccine or proven treatment.
2. Students who show no signs can quickly spread the virus among other students and teachers.
3. Many students live with grandparents or with parents who have compromised health. Illness will spread.
4. Many teachers also have compromised health issues, or live with family who have health issues.
5. We have seen what is happening around the country when people go to restaurants, bars and
congregate in rooms. School classrooms have many people in one room. The virus is spiking all over the country.
Hospitals are filling. People are dying. Mayors and Governors are closing establishments where people gather.
6. Teachers cannot keep children away from each other. Young children, especially, have their hands in their
mouths, and wiping noses, etc, all the time; then touching desks, door knobs, each other, etc.
7. So many of the new cases are travel related and Hawaii plans to open up air travel.

This is a bad combination for a deadly crisis.

8. You have a legal and moral obligation to keep staff and students, and their families safe.

9. Please do not open the schools this year except for online learning.

Thank you.

Gerald A. Garcia, Kona

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Note: we have a new Suite Number: "108", because we moved downstairs in the same building.

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Testimony BOE

From: Joshua Hoppe <hoshjoppe@gmail.com> on behalf of Joshua Hoppe
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:16 AM
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 Responses): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

My name is Joshua Hoppe.

I am an autism consulting teacher with the Leeward District. I service the Nānākuli/Waiʻanae Complex.

I am submitting testimony to request that the State delay the opening of schools until; 1) community transmission of COVID-19 is under control, and 2) suitable alternative plans (including teacher training) are in place so that if schools need to be shut down, the department can provide consistent access to distance learning for all students.

The Ohana bubble model makes a lot of assumptions. It assumes that the community is taking responsibility for minimizing close contacts of students with others, following social distancing guidelines, and complying with other CDC health guidelines when not in school. As we see consistent community transmission, we can see this is a problem. The "bubble" also makes assumptions about student behavior that are unrealistic. That students will sit facing forward and not turn to a classmate that is 3 feet away on their left or right. That students will not mix and interact with others when passing and outside of class. That students will consistently wear face coverings and use appropriate hygiene. I have noticed in recent meetings with colleagues that some adults do not comply with these kinds of expectations. It is not a stretch to see that many students will not.

Rushing to open based on a date rather than data does not seem aligned with an effective response to a pandemic. When schools were initially shut down, the spread was coming due to travelers, so travel was reduced and the stay at home order was enacted. That appeared to be successful. Initially, the plan was to get new cases down to zero before opening up schools again. The rules were relaxed a bit and the community at large seemed to start getting complacent. Some people I've talked to say that we are overreacting, it's a hoax, or it's just like a cold. Because some people are not concerned and do not follow guidelines, we now have community spread. New cases are staying in the double digits on a daily basis. Instead of addressing that issue, and working back toward the goal of zero new cases, we are talking about reopening anyway and then reopening tourism in a month. Why has the focus shifted this way? Do we not see what is happening in the States who opened everything up too soon?

I understand the economy is important. I really want students back in classrooms and learning! But, if we are going to reopen, only to shut down again without being really ready to implement full distance learning for all students, are we ready to open? If we can anticipate that opening schools puts our most vulnerable teachers and students at risk, should we do it? What if a student or teacher dies because of COVID-19 acquired in school? Is access to classrooms and education worth even a few lives?

I think the State has done a great job so far, but unfortunately the guidance coming from the continental U.S. is "science should not stand in the way" of schools opening. Can we please agree to disagree? Schools could potentially be a place where community spread increases rapidly. I am sure that you have considered this, but I think that message is worth repeating.

Thank you very much for considering my input.

Joshua Hoppe

Testimony BOE

From: Nicole Do <nicolenakamura@gmail.com> on behalf of Nicole Do
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:16 AM
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): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

Good Afternoon,

My daughter is entering first grade at Nuuanu Elementary. The school applied for the 3ft waiver but they sound as if they don't have hope for the waiver passing. As a parent, please consider the waiver. Parents are now being given the option to 100% distance learn if they're not comfortable. For parents that work full time, going to school only 2 days a week is not feasible. My daughter has been left by herself during the day while my husband and I work. For the younger grades, it's not realistic for them to distance learn by themselves. Distance learning only works if the child can actually operate a computer, read instructions, and work independently. I don't think it's unreasonable that three grades (K-2) operate under 3 ft of distancing, especially if the school applied for a waiver.

I understand there is concern about covid. However something else to consider is that many parents will be forced to find alternate care and programs to supplement the week on a blended model. We will do this if the school is forced to switch from all face to face to blended. This will potentially expose everyone to more people. On Monday my child may attend school but on Tuesday she may attend a daycare like the Y with 20-50 different people and then on Wednesday be back in school. Is the exposure to so many different people really better than 3 ft distancing?

I'm sure you're getting tons of emails and calls. Thank you for your consideration.

Nicole Do

Testimony BOE

From: Jen A <jyasuncion@gmail.com> on behalf of Jen A
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:16 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: We need the differentials!

Happy Wednesday!

I hope your day has been going well, as I'm sure you have been reading through lots of emails! I am a Special Education teacher for 13 years at King Kekaulike High School. I have been through many changes, but this year seems to be - well - crazy!!!

When we got our differentials at the beginning of the year, I was ECSTATIC!!! I had been working with a blind student the past 5 years and have spent countless hours on IEPs, phone calls, emails, etc and rarely got to sleep. The differential made me feel like at least SOME of those hours were made up for...

I checked my bank account in the beginning of June and was surprised to see kind of a huge pay cut. I know that during the summer our pay goes down a little, but I've never seen it go down by the hundreds. A coworker told me that Governor Ige had taken away our differentials for the rest of the year. The state had no money, we had gotten paid for half the year, so let's call it good. This really is NO GOOD!!!

Since the differential was taken out of my paycheck since June, I was forced to get another job in order to pay my bills. Once we return to school next week, I'll have to quit that job and return to the classroom. My income will now decrease again due to going back to school.

School returning is another issue since I have one child who is a first year college student and another who is a first year Kindergartener (I know, huge gap!). This will be a demanding year for both of them, and I am struggling with sending my younger one to school full time. I live in a community where we spend a lot of time with our parents and grandparents, and I fear putting them at risk because my children and I are returning to school. I know school needs to get back to "normal" as much as it can, but in good time.

I guess what I don't understand is that schools were shut down when cases weren't that bad, but schools are now expected to reopen when cases are at the worst it's been? There will be so many lawsuits if people get sick... People are already talking...

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony - I hope you have a great rest of your day!

Testimony BOE

From: Hillery Taylor-Young <hillery_taylor-young@baldwin.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Hillery Taylor-Young
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:17 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Fwd: Testimony

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

From: **Hillery Taylor-Young** <hillery_taylor-young@baldwin.k12.hi.us>
Date: Wed, Jul 22, 2020 at 9:13 AM
Subject: Testimony
To: <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

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

I taught Special Needs at Chicago Public Schools for 16 years upon leaving that position I was making \$70 an hour close to \$100,000 a year. When deciding to relocate to Hawaii and take a position as a Special Needs teacher at the Hawaii D. O.E salary was a major factor. **The Hawaii DOE started me off with a salary of \$53,000 a year, half of what I was paid in Chicago to essentially do the same job I did in Chicago.**

In order to get good qualified Special Needs teachers you must stick to the promise you made of increasing salaries as an incentive to recruit more teachers. Teachers in general have a difficult job as it is **not making enough money to survive in Hawaii should not be a huge part of that equation.** I know teachers who are constantly moving from apartment to apartment to accommodate DOE's low salary. When the DOE pledged to give a \$10,000 raise to increase incentive **alot of teachers felt that they were finally able to make enough money to settle down in one residential place for a long term.** **Bottomline the low salaries just add onto an already stressful situation. After 4 school years I am beginning to wonder if it is worth it at all.**

Most people look at me and wonder first of all why would you leave a 6 figure salary to move to one of the most expensive places in the world for half the salary to just struggle and worry about making ends meet.

Moreover, I feel if you want to recruit new teachers from abroad and from the mainland remembering this involves packing up your life and relocating to an unknown place the least you could do is pay them a decent salary that would relieve stress not cause it!

Hillery Taylor Young
Special Needs Teacher
Baldwin High School Maui

Testimony BOE

From: Kari Laba <10123536@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Kari Laba
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:17 AM
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.

Sincerely,
Kari Laba
Kailua High School

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Testimony BOE

From: Chelsie Omo <chelsieomo@gmail.com> on behalf of Chelsie Omo
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:17 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

I am a mom of a child who will be entering 4th grade. My husband and I have gone back and forth on whether or not we should keep her home to do DL. After much thought we felt that she needed to go back to school.

Was this an easy decision? No! Are we scared? Yes!

The other night before my daughter went to bed she said "I don't think I can go back mommy, I'm too scared."

I immediately thought, how will she be able to learn and concentrate if she is fearful of catching this virus.

I have many teacher friends, who feel ill prepared to begin this year. Their number one priority will be keeping themselves safe and keeping the children safe. How will they be able to teach with such fear?

Mental health has been such a huge issue through this pandemic, we can not afford our teachers to battle anxiety and stress While caring for our most prize possessions.

Please please reconsider the reopening date. Our teachers and our keiki deserve to feel safe at school.

Thank you,

A concerned mama

Testimony BOE

From: Monica Belding <monica.belding@campbell.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Monica Belding
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:18 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha 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-10 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

I urge you to please push back the start date for student return to in person learning. Currently, we are slated to go back with students on August 4th. As a high school teacher at the largest school in the state, I do not feel adequately prepared to deliver face to face learning in addition to online learning for my students. I need time to learn the new platforms and to troubleshoot everything in order to make sure it is a smooth transition for myself and students. I haven't had any training or time to look at these things.

In addition, I am very concerned about the health and safety protocols in place. I have many questions about what will actually happen should a staff member or student contract COVID-19. I am also concerned about having to enforce masks and other protocols as some students may not want to abide by these rules. In addition, I am in the high-risk category so I am worried about the impact this could have on my own health and safety.

My suggestion is to delay the reopening of school campuses and to instead do a phased approach so that we have more time to plan and prepare. I look forward to the day when we can be face to face, but for now please consider delaying the reopening of school campuses so that we can return back safely.

I appreciate your time and attention to this matter.

Mahalo,

Monica Belding
Teacher
James Campbell High School

Testimony BOE

From: Lila Lelepali <kuupuni001@yahoo.com> on behalf of Lila Lelepali
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:18 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha BOE members,

My name is Lila Lelepali and I am a Hawaiian Language Immersion teacher at Kahuku High and Intermediate. 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 in the Hawaiian Language Immersion Program (HLIP) at Kahuku High and Intermediate school since 2008. There has always been a teacher shortage in our HLIP program with three secondary teachers teaching six grade levels (7 -12). In the school year 2018-2019, the Department of Hawaiian Education help recruit two new teachers into our HLIP program. So for ten years we have been teaching with a teacher shortage but have provided native Hawaiian keikis in the Koolauloa district, a secondary education in the Hawaiian medium, to achieve a Hawai'i DOE diploma. It is challenging to teach several contents in the same school year due to teacher shortage. To have new teachers in the program has many benefits for students as well as teacher effectiveness.

To retract the shortage differential at this time will have a detrimental impact on recruitment and retention in our program especially since some of us will be preparing to retire. I understand that the Covid-19 crisis has jeopardized this funding to balance the budget. However, I urge the BOE to continue funding the shortage differential for teacher recruitment and retention and student instructional services.

Mahalo nui,

Kumu Lelepali

Lila Lelepali ph: 780-2391 kuupuni001@yahoo.com Kahuku High School work: 293-8950 ext.255
lila_lelepali@notes.k12.hi.us "He ali'i ka 'aina, he kauwa ke kanaka"

Testimony BOE

From: Paula Quartero <paulzq808@gmail.com> on behalf of Paula Quartero
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:19 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

My name is Paula Quartero and I am a former preschool assistant. I am concerned about the health and safety of family and friends who are educators in the state of 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.](#)

Mahalo!

Testimony BOE

From: 8085422900@mms.att.net
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:20 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I believe that students should go back to school. We can do a hybrid system

Testimony BOE

From: Geoff Baker <grsbaker@gmail.com> on behalf of Geoff Baker
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:21 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha, My name is Geoff Baker and I'm a social studies teacher at Keaau High School on the big island. I'm writing on behalf of Action Item H. specifically the reopening of our school campuses Aug 4. My main concern is the utter lack of protocols when it comes to a student or faculty member who tests positive for covid. I have tried inquiring with administrators that unfortunately have no solid plan except to "send them to the health room". I believe it is in the best interest of our community to have more outlined plans, especially some kind of contact tracing protocols in place before school reopens. Therefore I believe the BOE should do everything in their power to delay the opening of school and start off the year with virtual learning.

Sincerely,

Geoff Baker

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Danielle Foley <daniellephants@gmail.com> on behalf of Danielle Foley
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:22 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To Whom it May Concern,

As a teacher and parent, I do not feel we are adequately prepared to move into in-person schools in August. I feel there has been little guidance on how to teach using a hybrid model (many schools are choosing this model). It feels like we are all just winging it and that is NOT a safe practice during a pandemic. I feel uncomfortable teaching in person as well as online (hybrid model) and feel that my lack of knowledge on how to do this effectively will be a huge disservice for the students, and another point of stress for me in an already stressful situation. Teachers need professional development to effectively teach online. This is ensure that they are prepared for hybrid models, and for what might come in the near future (all online learning\$ and not left to figure it out as we did in March.

I also carry great concern for if and when I do get sick (covid 19 or otherwise) What will the procedure for sick pay usage, covid testing, and substitute teacher coverage be? I have asthma which puts me at a greater risk. My two year old son who is a twin, was born very small for his age and has been hospitalized twice with breathing problems and pneumonia. I am risking my health, and more importantly his, by returning to work. I also fear getting sick and not being able to work and losing pay because of it. My husband is laid off due to covid, and we can not risk me getting sick and not being able to work.

I feel campuses need more personnel to help clean and disinfect rooms everyday. We need more supplies to ensure that students have what they need to be successful as class sets of supplies simply won't work anymore. We need an abundance of soap, sanitizer and wipes. We need sanitizers mounted around campus for students to use as they come and go from every room.

There are teachers, myself included, who are willing and able to teach effectively online and should be given the choice to do this. If students had a highly effective online curriculum to choose from, more families might opt to keep their students home to prevent risk of infection and spread.

Thank you for your time,
Danielle Russell
Konawaena Middle School

Testimony BOE

From: Kristen Faford <kris10faford@gmail.com> on behalf of Kristen Faford
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:22 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha BOE,

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 Kristen Faford, a special education teacher at Waiakeawaena Elementary School in Hilo, on the Big Island. I have a concern regarding the return to school on August 4, 2020. At this time, we have very awesome and supportive administrators who are taking every action to ensure that our school is in compliance with all CDC and DOH guidelines and that our new schedules are supporting the students. However, we have not had time to have discourse regarding the possibility of school closure due to the spread of COVID-19 on our campus when we return on Aug. 4th. We have also not had time over the summer break to discuss "Plan B" should the school move to distance/online learning.

While having conversations with my grade level and other colleagues from different schools and complexes throughout the state, we feel that we are setting ourselves up to fail if we don't have a "Plan B" in place before the school year starts. With that being said, I would like to propose that we delay the start date so that we can collaborate with all stakeholders on a plan to address distance/online learning should the state reach a point where this pandemic affects us in any way.

I am staying hopeful that we can control and eliminate all cases in Hawaii, however, we need a reality check to make sure we do all in our power now to minimize the effects to our students, teachers, staff, parents, and our community. Our students rely on teachers to help them establish their sense of stability and consistency, and any abrupt changes could cause major setbacks to their learning and state of mind. Not only will this affect regular education students but most of all, our special needs population which I need to advocate for. They are the most vulnerable and I am concerned with their ability to recoup and maintain their skills if another break in their learning occurs.

I thank you in advance for standing with our union in this decision to delay the start date. I know that you have students' best interest at heart and will do all in your power to support this request to support the students. They are why we are all in business and without a plan, we will all fail. Not because we want to, but because we weren't given the simple chance to plan.

If you
fail to plan,
you are planning
to fail.



B. Franklin

jmarkmiller.net

Sincerely,
Kristen Faford

Testimony BOE

From: Michael Richey <michael.richey@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Michael Richey
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:22 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

My name is Michael Richey, I teach English Language Arts at Kailua 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.

As our HSTA president Cory Rosenlee has stated: "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."

Each school in our island state is unique, and faces its own challenges. The policies and measures taken thus far in order to reopen by August 4 are not sufficient for all of us. Yes, some schools are ready. But many others are not, and it is these schools who will most likely suffer the worst impacts from a pandemic that continues to spread between individuals in multiple communities around multiple islands.

Please reconsider the August 4 start date, and focus on the schools with large populations and high percentages of at-risk students and staff. We don't have to be guinea pigs.

Sincerely,

--

Michael Richey
ELA Instructor
Kailua High School
(808)266-7900 ext. 2263

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Testimony BOE

From: Gerald Wong <gerald.wong@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Gerald Wong
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:23 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Cuts and Start of school

Hello my name is Gerald Wong. I am a teacher at Waipahu High School. I am writing in regards to the pay cut differentials. This is going back on a promise that was made to get new teachers and retain veteran teachers in the special education field. If these cuts are passed and made then I can see losing a lot of veteran teachers and new teachers to going into different areas outside of special education or outside of education totally. I think that we can both agree that these positions are hard to fill as it is. Without the pay differential, you can expect an insurmountable shortage of special education teachers. This proposed cut is going back on a promise and is in bad faith.

Also, when the reopening of schools needs to be looked at more closely. There are many older teachers out there who will expose themselves to COVID 19 when they are in a room of 30 students. There is no way that you can fit that many kids in a school with around 2700 students or more while practicing social distancing. This pandemic can reach an all time high if schools are not given more guidelines aligned with official health care standards and protocols.

Thank you,

Gerald Wong

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Testimony BOE

From: Ashley Harris <ashley.harris@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Ashley Harris
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:23 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY

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

I have been a SpEd teacher for 4 going on 5 years now. We do a lot of paperwork, run meetings, and stay late at school sometimes to make sure everything is done. I personally benefit from the differential pay because the amount of money I pay for rent in Hawaii and lots of other bills that I need to pay monthly. Please consider helping us get our differential pay. We all would really appreciate it.

Thank you for your time,
Ashley Harris :)

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Testimony BOE

From: Tami <tamimags@hotmail.com> on behalf of Tami
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:23 AM
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.](#)

My name is Tamara Brilhante. I am testifying as a teacher at Hilo Intermediate School and a parent of students who attend (and have attended) a public high school here on the island. I am concerned about the safety of our students, teachers and staff if we reopen schools on August 4. It's very concerning that HIDOE has still not fulfilled their side of the MOU agreement. (Why not?) It's concerning that we still have not received clear written guidance from the State Department of Health and HIDOE on the reopening of schools. (Why not?) We have been waiting for this guidance all summer. Although teachers do not get paid during the summer, we (some volunteer teachers and our Principal) have been working tirelessly on our own and to the best of our abilities to prepare for the reopening of our school. However, this lack of guidance has hindered and frustrated our efforts. It is concerning that we have so many unanswered questions regarding standard practices and protocols to the reopening of our school during a pandemic. It is extremely concerning that we have not been provided the training that the Superintendent claims to have provided to all teachers. It is also concerning that we are still unclear about the distance learning curriculum that we need to provide for our students. Please understand that I would like for schools to reopen because I do believe it is in the best interest of our students to return to school. However, it would be unwise, unsafe and irresponsible to hastily reopen schools if we are unprepared to do so. It is our responsibility to provide ALL students a quality education AND a safe learning environment. For these and many other reasons, I feel it would be best to delay the opening of our schools until we can fulfill this responsibility.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Tamara Brilhante

Testimony BOE

From: Cecilia J <ceciliarjacinto@gmail.com> on behalf of Cecilia J
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:24 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Hello BOE,

I am Cecilia Jacinto and I teach fourth grade at Kahului Elementary in Maui. 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 the need to reopen. However, it is crucial for the children and the community to open safely! We are assured of having funds to protect us. However, have these protections been ordered and delivered to logistically open on Aug 4? Also, I am highly concerned at the lack of specifics of what to do if a student, teacher, staff member, or family member tests positive for COVID-19. We are to report it to the DOH; however, what happens after that. What will happen to each of us? How will we prevent the spread? What happens if multiple schools have cases? Will the DOH be able to keep up with the public needing their support? Teachers want to support family and students; however, we need to know the specifics of how we will be supported. Please help us, help you and the community!

Sincerely,
Cecilia Jacinto
ceciliarjacinto@gmail.com

Testimony BOE

From: Amanda Kaahanui <kolohegai@hawaii.rr.com> on behalf of Amanda Kaahanui
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:24 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

July 22, 2020

To: The Honorable Catherine Payne
Chairperson, Board of Education

From: Amanda Kaahanui, Parent
Kaneohe Resident

Subject: Delay of School Re-opening

Aloha,

I am a parent and am very concerned about schools reopening. Its too soon and they don't have a good plan yet. It's been thrown together by people who don't work in the classroom. The "survey data" that Dr. Kishimoto refers to when saying parents want kids to go back to school in person is from late May when numbers were very low. I bet there would be a different survey result if they asked now, but they have not asked. I would ask you to delay the start of school for 2 weeks, to allow for teachers and staff to be ready for students to return to school safely. Giving teachers only a few days to plan and prepare for a completely different style of teaching, and doing it while they are also teaching our children, is too much. Give them two weeks to train, discuss plans, and get ready. I'm ok with them extending 2 weeks in June to make up for the lost time.

I am also concerned about the required 180 days of instruction. Lets assume that 180 divided by 4 quarters is 45 days. My son attends Kalaheo HS. The first quarter bell schedule has them attending 14 in-person full days, 5 days in-person 1/2 days and 19 days of virtual learning. that's only 38 days. And the 19 virtual days is not with a teacher teaching them in a zoom class. The students will be on their own. So no formal instruction. To me, that does not count as an instruction day. The teachers will be busy teaching the B group when A group is virtual. No time for office hours, questions, or instruction. So really, we are down to 19 days of teacher instruction, out of 45. Less than 1/2. And this is ok with the Superintendent? If we continue to follow this rule for the whole school year, we are only getting 76 days of teacher instruction in a year. That's 104 days less than the 180 required. It comes down to instructional days vs learning days.

Schools are telling us there is a 100% online-only option, but it's vague and there is no info for parents about curriculum, supports or requirements. Are these zoom classes 5 days a week, 6 hours a day? Or are they self-directed assignments? I asked our VP about putting in cameras to zoom with the teacher who could be teaching in person, and zoom at the same time and having an aid monitor the zoom feed, but was told that teachers don't want to do this. But teachers are not back working yet, so how do they know? Where is the data? Some schools are doing this. Some did it during the shutdown. If my child does 100% Online, he will loose out on his CTE courses and other electives that are part of his IDEA transition plan. Plus there has been no information on how a student with an IEP can access E-school or Acellus with appropriate modifications and accommodations. I am

told I must decide this week if we do 100% online, and if we don't decide, we will be in the AB Rotation model. I cannot make an informed decision for my child's education without information

I've heard the Superintendent say a few times, that the students need to go to school now so they can build a relationship with their teachers, which is needed to do virtual learning. Is there a plan that if numbers continue to spike, schools will close again? They have not said so. Are they planning to move to a teacher-instructed virtual teaching model later in the year?

My last concern is for those parents with young children or kids with disabilities who cannot stay home alone when they are on their "virtual" days at home. If a parent has to work, what are they to do with their 8 year old or their autistic child? Poor planning all around. I know there are no easy answers here. But we need community discussions between the DOE and families. And we need time to plan and prepare.

The Department needs to do another community survey to see where we are now, not where we were in May when numbers were almost nil. All schools need to have community meetings and reach out to their families. The DOE should delay starting until we are better prepared.

Mahalo,

Amanda Kaahanui

Kaneohe, HI

Testimony BOE

From: Lindsay De La Cruz <delacruzlindsay00@gmail.com> on behalf of Lindsay De La Cruz
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:24 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha, My name is Lindsay De La Cruz, 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 the Bargaining 5 employees.

My son attends Leilehua High School in Wahiawa, this is my sons senior year in High school, my husband and I have struggled with what is the best and safest way for our boys to go back to school, with having one son that might be high risk. We decided to have both our children do 100% distant learning. With that being said, we are very upset with Leilehua High for posting such unfair conditions for students and their families who decide for distance learning.

Below I copied and pasted the flyer that is posted on the leilehua High school website about Distant learning-

DISTANCE LEARNING » Parents who are reluctant to send their children to school while Hawaii continues to deal with the community spread of COVID-19 have the option to keep their children home 100% of the time, which means they will have a distance learning experience only.- If parents and students choose a 100% distance option, students will only be enrolled in classes necessary to progress toward meeting graduation requirements. This may mean that the student does not take elective courses if they are not needed for graduation. This also means that the student may need to switch elective courses.- Students will be enrolled in an online learning platform and will not be receiving any personalized teacher support.- Students will not be allowed to participate in any school-related activities. (including but not limited to: sports, proms, clubs, graduation, etc.) -The decision for the student to be 100% distance learning will be a semester commitment and must be renewed at the end of the first semester. » If you would like your child to be 100% distance learning, please fill out this form (<https://tinyurl.com/yahxqgm5>). - Participation in the distance learning module will be based on: * A mandatory meeting with the grade level vice principal, counselor, parent, and student. * Student's likelihood of being successful in a distance learning environment.- The deadline to fill out this form for 100% distance learning for Semester 1 is Friday, July 24, 2020. Mandatory meetings will be held during the week of July 27, 2020 to August 1, 2020.- The deadline to fill out this form for 100% distance learning for Semester 2 is Friday, December 11, 2020. Mandatory meetings will be held during the week of December 14, 2020 to December 18, 2020.- Students who are unsuccessful in the distance learning model will be required to attend face-to-face classes.

HOMESCHOOLING » Parents who do not want their children to participate in the distance learning options available may choose to homeschool their children. Homeschooling is a parentinitiated educational alternative to compulsory school attendance. An Exceptions to Compulsory Education form (Form 4140) (<https://tinyurl.com/y9rn9m1>) or a letter of intent to homeschool must be sent to the principal. Please see the HDOE website for more information on the requirements for homeschooling. We do not accept any credits from schools or programs who are not accredited by the six regional accrediting agencies that operate in the United States. (6 Regional Accrediting

This is so upsetting, I think putting conditions on distant learning is so unfair for the students, also Not having support of a teacher for distant learning is going to be hard for the students, they have gotten so much already taken from them, so why would Leilehua High want to take all those special memorable moments from

students, and not supply the appropriate support for students. This should be a choice made from each family, not one already made for them! It sounds kind of like bribery, there taking all these important things away saying you can't have this stuff unless you come to school and do what we want you to do. I'm so upset, this is the last thing I thought we would be dealing with right now as a family . Its obvious the school is not ready to open, I really don't think they thought this through, and how important distant learning is during these difficult times. It will help in the over crowding in class rooms, so students will be able to social distance easier. Honestly I think every student should be doing 100% distant learning, this is a virus that's killing people at a rapid pace, now there seeing after effects in children. Why take the risk in our kids . It's just not worth it!! I hope this information helps thank you for your time , stay safe and healthy.

Aloha, Lindsay

Testimony BOE

From: FFINCH@twc.com
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:24 AM
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 Flordelisa Finch and I am the Student Services Coordinator at Koloa Elementary School. I have three children. My children attend Kauai High School, Chiefess Kamakahalei Middle School, and Koloa Elementary School.

As a parent, I am urging the Board of Education to delay the return of students to campus. As a household with two working parents, I have no choice but to send my children to school. I will be putting my family at risk as I have three children at three different schools, therefore putting my family at higher risk. Our bubbles will be bigger and may create a domino effect should one of us in the family become infected or related to someone who may be infected. My husband, who is a contractor, may not be able to work or bring home income if he should be required to quarantine or isolate if one of our children becomes infected with COVID-19 from someone at school. My family will be exposed to potentially hundreds of people with the return of students to campus. I am concerned that schools are not prepared to have students return to campus because equipment (PPE, sanitizing stations) have not arrived and no clear procedures/protocols are written and in place.

As an educator, I am urging the Board of Education to delay the return of students to campus for the following reason:

Teachers need more time to plan (paid time) to prepare for distance learning.
Equipment ordered (plexi glass, sanitizing stations) have not arrived on campus.
No clear procedures/protocols are written and in place.

As a parent and educator, I am urging the Board of Education to delay the return of students to campus. The health and safety of our children and my colleagues is important in any decision making. We must take every precaution before students are brought back on campus.

Respectfully submitted,
Flordelisa Finch
Mother of 3 and educator

Testimony BOE

From: Skye Costelloe <skye.a.costelloe@gmail.com> on behalf of Skye Costelloe
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:24 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: School reopening and teacher workload issues

My good friend is a middle school teacher working in Ewa Beach and I have been incredibly concerned and increasingly upset hearing about some of the decisions being made about the upcoming school year.

There is ample data demonstrating without a shadow of a doubt that reopening will lead to student, staff, and community deaths. Not to mention the permanent disability that many COVID survivors suffer. Betsy Devos herself dismissively acknowledged that reopening at this point will lead to deaths.

Children cannot fully comprehend the gravity of the situation and will not be able to fully comply with mask usage and social distancing, especially when the adults in their lives are not prioritizing public health themselves. The only major way to enforce compliance is through punishment, which is something that happens after the fact. They will spread the virus and it will not be their fault.

The decision to reopen is a cruel and cynical decision to throw away the lives of countless community members. There is no denying that a certain amount of community members will become infected if schools reopen now. A percentage of those infected will suffer permanent disability or death. Hawai'i has not yet seen apocalyptic infection rates but there is absolutely no sane reason to think it couldn't happen here. Prematurely reopening our schools could absolutely be the trigger for a worst-case-scenario like that.

If the board decides to reopen despite the lives they are willingly and knowingly sacrificing then that brings up a secondary issue that needs to be addressed: If the school implements a dual online and in-person classroom policy you are asking teachers to double their daily workload with no additional support or compensation. If you insist on opening the schools each classroom needs an additional staff member to handle students who are learning remotely. There is no way our already overworked teachers can handle a double workload without working countless additional unpaid hours and taking on an incredible amount of stress and hardship. This is absolutely appalling to inflict on teachers who are already being forced to risk their lives in order to maintain their jobs.

Please make the sane and humanitarian decision to delay reopening until it is proven by independent and accredited researchers to be safe. Are our keiki and kupuna's lives so truly worthless in the board's eyes?

Lastly, if human lives are not enough of an incentive please consider the huge amount of lawsuits that will be launched against the district as a result of this decision. This could cost the district potentially millions of dollars.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Skye Costelloe
Makiki resident

Testimony BOE

From: Sharon Weeks <10028435@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Sharon Weeks
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:24 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Delay opening schools

Dear BOE,

I am writing asking to delay the opening of schools. I don't mind reporting next week, but I need time to fix my class to ensure there is enough space which means decluttering years of things from the previous teacher whose class I inherited.

I am still unsure how I am going to keep brand new preschoolers who have difficulty just sitting in a chair, 6 feet apart. Close proximity is key for managing behavior and for attentiveness.

I don't know how I am going to have them wear a mask the entire time and a majority of my pre-k students don't understand the concept of spreading germs. I don't feel it is fair to anyone in my class to go without a mask and expose themselves and their families if someone has the virus. That's like asking the medical team who screen for Covid to not wear a mask. It's Russian roulette.

I don't feel safe just wearing a face shield because my student needs to read my lips.

I have to restructure my entire program and will probably have to do more center time since they have to be 6 feet apart, but I don't know how to adequately sanitize all the materials the kids touch in the centers when they rotate. I don't have enough manpower to make sure the kids are following rules and routines and clean.

If I had a class of typical students it wouldn't be as difficult. If temperature reading actually gave an accurate indication of Covid, it wouldn't be so hard. If I had more manpower, it'd be better. If the overall Covid numbers weren't higher than when we first shut down, it'd be ok.

My anxiety from thinking of a way to teach instead of babysit and ensure safety in my class has been at times debilitating.

Please reconsider opening up. Maybe even pay to see if we have the antibodies. I am upset that wearing a mask is now up to the discretion of the teacher. Why isn't this the case for other businesses? Since kids are often asymptomatic and many teachers are at the at-risk age, you are going to have an even greater of teacher shortage.

Thank you,
Sharon Weeks

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Testimony BOE

From: Brittney Caminos-Kekahuna <brittneycamkek24@gmail.com> on behalf of Brittney Caminos-Kekahuna
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:25 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY

I don't think the school districts are ready to open school up. Within a week their "plan" to reopen schools has been changing. That tells me that the schools don't have a solid plan or the safety measures to open up and keep our keiki's as well as the teachers and staffs safe. For instance, on the school supply list they ask for hand sanitizer.. We hardly ever come across those or hand soap and if we do we'll need for our own house because of the limitations. Now how are the kids suppose to stay sanitize? It will just take ONE child to test positive for the virus to infect over 50% of the school. That one child could possibly infect their classmates who will than have siblings in other grades and so on... Think about the big picture. It doesn't matter how well you guys do things, it will only take ONE positive person to shut the school down. And that's my next question.. Do you guys have a legit solid plan if the schools need to shut down again? By the looks of it, I don't think you guys do. Teachers are given such a short amount of time to make some big changes.

You guys are concentrated on rushing for the schools to reopen that you guys didn't think what will happen if schools need to shut down. You didn't think how badly it will affect the communities. I stand with the teachers on delaying the reopening of the schools. We need to keep everyone safe! Distance learning or virtual learning should've been the first option and not sending our children in an environment where we'll be gambling with their lives.

Testimony BOE

From: 8085422900@mms.att.net
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:25 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I think for at least part of the week, students should be in school. However, they will need more time outside in order to take a break from wearing masks all day. I think the secondary students could be in the building less and have some days working from home, but I do believe they should have 2 or more days at school.

Testimony BOE

From: Robert Strohl <robert.strohl@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Robert Strohl
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:26 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Do not cut teacher pay or remove any of the pay differentials!

Aloha! My name is Robert Strohl and I am a middle school teacher at Lana'i High and Elementary School which is a hard to staff school. It's extremely hard to fill all the positions we have and need.

Living in Hawaii is extremely expensive, but with teachers already underpaid in comparison with teachers in other states makes it really tough to get by. I am barely able to get by from paycheck to paycheck even with the differential pay. If you cut teacher pay or remove the differentials I will not be able to continue being a teacher and will have to look for employment elsewhere, possibly even leaving the state of Hawaii all together.

I am not the only one! Lanai High and Elementary School already has an excessively hard time finding and keeping teachers for more than a year. Throughout the entire state many schools are facing these same issues.

If you cut teacher pay or remove the pay differentials you will see a mass exodus of teachers from the state of Hawaii. Ultimately this will affect students the most! Teachers are already limited on the amount of interaction we have with students and engaging them to continue to learn. Thus the students fall further and further behind where they should and could be.

I know times are tough, but there are ways to keep both the pay cuts and removing the pay differentials as well as not raising taxes which negates the effect of the pay differentials. Do not live in fear! Open the economy up to at least tourists from the mainland, make them adhere to the quarantine. As a state we already have low cases of the Covid-19 virus, but look at all the other data collected as well. With more testing has shown more cases of Covid-19, but it more importantly has shown that the number of those getting sick and dying from Covid-19 have decreased SIGNIFICANTLY!

Use wisdom in making your choices, not fear! Thank you for taking the time to read my what I have to say about not cutting teacher pay and not removing the pay differentials! Mahalo!

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Testimony BOE

From: Clyde Shinsato <c_shinsato@hotmail.com> on behalf of Clyde Shinsato
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:26 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am writing this letter to you as a former special education teacher of 10 years and current general education teacher of 16 years. The reason I had left special education was because of tremendous amount of time required both in and out of the classroom needed for IEP design, coordination of services, meetings, implementation, and review beyond the daily rigors of working with the hardest to teach. There are also strict federal and state timelines and guidelines that must be adhered to. The differential given to special education teachers as well as Hawaiian Immersion and hard to staff teachers finally gave some compensation for these hard to staff/teach positions. To threaten to take this away from teachers is disheartening to all educators and parents who rely on the services that they provide. The loss of the differential may cause many teachers to return to general education, or leave the profession altogether. We already have a great teacher shortage and cannot afford to lose any of our experienced and qualified educators.

Thank you for your time and understanding that this decision affects our entire community.

Sincerely,
Eleanor Shinsato
Kapalama Elementary School

Testimony BOE

From: Happy Happy <meandkaiya@yahoo.com> on behalf of Happy Happy
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:26 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony
Attachments: image1.jpeg; Untitled attachment 02424.txt

To Whom It May Concern,

Here is my testimony 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 contract modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

When July 29 approaches and all the teachers need to report back to school, I feel as though I am being transported back in time to my first day of teaching 9 years ago...nervous and unsure of what to expect. The only difference is that I NEVER felt unsafe, worried about the safety of the students, my fellow staff members and the community.

I want to return to school and teach the students but I NEED it to be SAFE for them and for every stakeholder. Our keiki deserve that!!!

Please reconsider reopening schools on August 4.

Thank you,
Alicia Mochizuki
Teacher
Mokapu Elementary

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Cindy Allen <cindy@hawaiidocumentservice.com> on behalf of Cindy Allen
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:26 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: PLEASE DELAY REOPENING SCHOOLS

7.22.20

Aloha,

As a member of the Kona community, I am asking that you please delay the re-opening of our schools. There is no reasonable way to protect children & teachers from infecting one another. If we go ahead with re-opening right now, I believe this will dramatically increase infections throughout our community and have terrible effects on our population. Our hospitals will quickly be overwhelmed, and it will devastate our kupuna population. As a state, up to now, I have felt a sense of relief and pride at how well our local and state government and members of our community have been able to keep our numbers at a manageable level, but if you go forward with putting children and teachers back in the classroom, all of our great achievements will be erased.

I implore you to please delay the reopening of schools.

Mahalo,

Cindy Allen

Legal Assistant

GERALD A. GARCIA, Attorney at Law
dba HAWAII DOCUMENT SERVICE
75-5722 Kuakini Hwy., Suite 108
Kailua-Kona, HI 96740
888-628-9555 toll-free
1-808-331-1313 local / 1-808-331-1393 fax
cindy@hawaiidocumentservice.com
www.hawaiidocumentservice.com

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Testimony BOE

From: Debbie Yamamoto <debbie.yamamoto@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Debbie Yamamoto
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:27 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Delay the opening of school

As a 6th grade teacher at Waipahu Elementary School and a parent of a senior at Pearl City High School I beg you to **delay the opening of schools until we, teachers are given clear guidance and training on the safe reopening of schools.** I have so many unanswered questions and am scrabbling to prepare and equip myself with protection to start the year. I am using my own money to purchase face shields, masks, and sneeze guards to protect my students, my EA, and myself.

Please prepare us for a smooth and safe reopening instead of one that is currently filled with fear and unanswered questions!

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Testimony BOE

From: Kariane Park Toyama <karianep@hotmail.com> on behalf of Kariane Park Toyama
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:27 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Greetings,

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 Kari Park Toyama. I am a 20+ year teacher and currently the STEM teacher at Waihe'e Elementary on the island of Maui. I also have a daughter that attends 'Iao School.

One of the most exciting things, to me, is the start of a new school year. Deciding on a theme to decorate my room, arranging the furniture to create a nurturing learning environment, purchasing new supplies to share with the students, and of course welcoming everyone back.

Normally I would have started all of this by now. Normally I would have been going in to work- even though I'm technically still on vacation. Normally I'd know exactly what to do and when to do it by. Normally.....

But this school year is anything but normal. It gives me anxiety that there are so many unanswered questions and unknown variables. The uncertainty of everything makes it nearly impossible for me to focus on safely starting the school year. And almost all teachers are very skilled with dealing with the unpredictable. We know how to handle bathroom accidents, broken copy machines, no wi-fi, forgotten passwords, etc. But to expect us to handle opening schools in the next couple of weeks without completely explaining the details, guidelines, and proper procedures is dangerous and irresponsible.

As a teacher and a parent, I am asking you to please consider allowing more time for our public schools to properly prepare for the upcoming year. There are still so many unanswered questions like these:

- Will there be enough time to properly train teachers & staff on COVID-19 safety procedures and protocol before the start of school?
- Will we have enough PPE and sanitizing tools for the entire year?
- Will there be adequate training on distance learning/teaching for teachers since most schedules include it?
- What is the state's distance learning curriculum?
- As a science teacher many of my lessons include materials and supplies that the students/classes share. Will I have enough supplies to provide each student with their own as they learn from a distance?
- What about substitutes? We are already in a teacher shortage. And I'm sure our list of reliable substitutes is much smaller now as many of our subs may choose not to work because it's unsafe. Who will cover our classes if a teacher is ill (COVID-19 related or not)?
- What if someone in my household tests positive? As a responsible human, I'd get tested also and quarantine as needed. Does my class need to quarantine and/or get tested? Will I have to use my sick leave?

I could keep on going, but it's pretty clear that there are too many tasks that need to be completed before schools can open safely and successfully. I know that many teachers are eager to welcome their students back with air hugs and smiley eyes, but it is unfair to assume that we are willing to put our (and our students') health at risk to do so.

We need more time. We need to continue working together to create a plan to keep our schools, communities, and our state healthy and safe.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Kari Park Toyama

Makawao, Hawai'i

(808) 280-6808

Testimony BOE

From: Ruth Silva <ruthsilva0109@gmail.com> on behalf of Ruth Silva
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:27 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Good morning,

I am testifying on Action Item U.

I strongly urge you to consider delaying the opening of schools for the near future. The lives of our most vulnerable and cherished are at stake. We need a firm plan with adequate training of teachers, parents and children before we even contemplate such an action.

Our teachers and other educators have been put in the terrible position of having to choose between their (and their family's) safety and their jobs. No teacher wants to deny children the opportunity to learn - if they could, they would teach. But they have been woefully let down by their state, which insists on putting the burden of a difficult decision on schools and teachers. Why has more not been done to support teachers and communities in distance learning?

And why are the real health concerns of the community not being considered? In the countries that have reopened schools, there have been alarming increases in COVID cases.

Please, consider that many families in Hawaii have elderly caretakers or grandparents who are part of the fabric of their families lives. How do families continue to function if they have to quarantine from each other in their own houses? How are teachers meant to teach effectively in a way that children can learn and maintain all of the necessary precautions required to keep everyone safe? How do children make it to school safely on buses?

You cannot send the community back to school whilst you try to find the answers and with only vague plans that force people into dangerous circumstances. By refusing to answer you are putting the burden on schools and teachers. If you are meant to support schools and teachers, then please, support them.

Many thanks for your kind consideration.

R. Silva

Testimony BOE

From: Erin Allan <erinallan@yahoo.com> on behalf of Erin Allan
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:27 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony (Delay school reopening)

To Whom It May concern,

I am emailing today to support the HSTA notion to delay the start of school. It has been brought to my attention that there are clear violations to the Memorandum that was agreed upon between BOE and HSTA. This is unacceptable. Teachers and students lives are being put in danger and this simply not okay. Until these matters are rectified and a better school reopening plan is put into place schools should not be reopening.

Thank you
Erin Allan
Special Education Teacher
Voyager PCS

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Melissa Mills <melissa.mills@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Melissa Mills
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:27 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony
Attachments: Mills-Written Testimony.docx

Good Morning BOE,

Please see my attached 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.

Thank you!
Melissa Mills
Hearing Itinerant Resource Teacher
Maui School District

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

July 20, 2020

Dear Hawaii Board of Education,

I am writing today to urge you to reject the proposal to discontinue the extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year. Thank you for taking the time to hear from teachers across the state regarding this issue.

I am a Hearing Itinerant Resource Teacher for all of Maui District. I am trained in both Special Education and Deaf Education. In my current itinerant position, I meet the diverse needs of students with hearing loss across the continuum. I provide both direct and consultative service to multiple students, across multiple islands (Maui, Molokai, and Lanai), schools, grade levels, and languages. I service students included in general education as their LRE, as well as those in special education classrooms, SPED preschools, and charter schools. I provide resources and trainings to staff, teachers, administrators, and state level personnel as few have the expertise in the area of hearing loss. I also handle all the ordering and distribution of all the hearing assistive technology for these students. My responsibilities often require additional hours, resources, and face to face time with teams across the district.

The state differential that was accepted last year helped me tremendously. I was able to cut back my hours at my second job. I spent less time worrying about my finances. I had more time for myself and family, to take care of my physical and mental health. This allowed me to give my students my best self every day. I also had more time for professional development, lesson planning, and volunteering and networking within my community. I built relationships with the local Rotary Club and Lions Club, which are now aware of the needs of my students, and are able to support in many ways.

Now the district is proposing to discontinue the extra compensation this upcoming school year. The differential has a big impact on mine and others ability to continue to be effective educators to our students. With the reality of the financial pressures of teaching and living in Hawaii, and the difficulty, both currently and historically, in filling positions that are specialized and require more training and education, I hope the Board of Education will see the value and benefit of retaining their current team of teachers versus the cost, quality, and effectiveness of the children's education.

The reasons that the differential was originally approved are still important today. In fact, with the Covid 19 pandemic, the need to retain highly qualified teachers is even more challenging, yet critical. Please help support the hard working teachers by fighting to continue the teacher shortage differential.

Sincerely,
Melissa Mills
Hearing Itinerant Resource Teacher
Maui School District

Testimony BOE

From: Scott Kiyono <shkiyono@icloud.com> on behalf of Scott Kiyono
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:28 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Delay school opening

I teach first graders and I do not feel it is in the children's or teacher's best interests to open schools so soon with a pandemic. It feels like they just want to open to have a place to send children so that people/parents can go back to work and get the economy going. They know covid cases WILL happen, but they are willing to risk our health and the children's health to force normalcy.

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Jennifer Beruan <jenniferberuan1@hotmail.com> on behalf of Jennifer Beruan
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:28 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony From a DOE Educator

Hi, my name is Jennifer Baltero. I am 41 years old. I have been teaching Grade 6 at Pearl City Elementary for the past 12 years. My son is in the 4th grade, and my daughter is in the 1st grade, at Pearl City Elementary. I highly believe the start of the new school year should be pushed back until schools have an approved safety plan in place and staff members are trained and educated on all the policies and procedures regarding the “new” safety measures. In addition, school should be pushed backed until teachers have an adequate distance learning platform in place with appropriate curriculum resources available to all students. We can’t open safety without these things in place. When I say this, I am thinking of my students, my elderly parents who have underlying medical conditions, my kids, my husband, my extended family, my friends, my community, and myself. We are all in this together. This deadly illness should not be taken lightly. All the scientific evidence show the devastating impact it can have on a community with no strict enforcements.

Testimony BOE

From: Kalamaku Freitas <kameron.freitas@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Kalamaku Freitas
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:28 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Continue Teacher Shortage Differentials

Aloha nui kākou e ka BOE,

My name is Kalamakūno‘eau Freitas. I am a Hawaiian medium educator, also known as a kumu kaia‘ōlelo Hawai‘i at the secondary education level. I urge you to continue the teacher shortage differentials. The amount of work that goes into not only becoming a qualified kumu kaia‘ōlelo Hawai‘i but also creating curriculum is substantial, which is one reason why teachers have begun to get worn out, and potential teachers are hesitant to pursue this profession. There is no curriculum that is "ready to go" for our Hawaiian immersion/medium education schools, teachers, and students. This means that we must create our own curriculum out of nothing, which demands many hours of work from our personal time. Old Hawaiian language stories and historical accounts often need to be modernized from the old newspaper text/documents, textbooks need to be translated from English to Hawaiian, assignments need to be created or adapted to be culturally appropriate and relevant, and so forth. Our teachers DO work harder than the English program teachers, because we literally have almost nothing to use or work off of. The amount of curriculum available to the English program for all subjects (including electives) are too many to count; however, for kula kaia‘ōlelo Hawai‘i, there may be two elementary math programs translated (and outdated), and maybe one science program. We do not have the luxury of selecting from a list of options, which is why we are always investing our time and energy into producing quality and relevant material for our students. The amount of work we put in surpasses the English program teachers, it is evident, and to be paid the same as those who have been blessed with hundreds of options is a significant factor in why there is such a great shortage of teachers in our program. If we value our teachers and want our society to value teachers, then we must show that teachers are valuable. We are the pillars of education, and we shape the minds of our society. When will we finally treat our teachers as valuable contributors to our society and to our future leaders?

Na‘u nō me ka mahalo i kou heluhelu ‘ana,
na Kalamakūno‘eau Freitas

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Testimony BOE

From: Alicia Alcaraz <berthaaa2018@gmail.com> on behalf of Alicia Alcaraz
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:28 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

My name is Bertha Alcaraz, I am a school counselor at Keaau 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 imploring for learning to be 100% virtually, until the HBOE, HIDOE, DOH, and HSTA agree to make face coverings mandatory and that schools are prepared to help minimize the risk of COVID-19.

More efforts and resources should be focused on virtual learning than on reopening the schools for children. Since virtual learning is the safest model.

As a counselor, I am concern for the keiki's mental health and safety, as their social skills will be altered to mimic a new temporary reality.

Students with Trauma

I am concern that students with trauma who have fewer coping skills, trouble forming relationships with teachers, poor self-regulation, negative thinking, hypervigilant, and poor executive functioning will not benefit from attending a more structured environment (i.e., washing hands constantly for 20 minutes each time, keeping face covering on, respecting others' personal space/property, staying in their seats for long periods of time, and running out of the classroom due to their perception of being in danger. Thus, endangering self and others.

Masks/Faceshields Required

Masks and/or face shields to be mandatory for everyone to wear (students, staff, visitors, etc...) while on campus. Schools where masks are mandatory have fewer virus outbreaks than schools that are relaxed on mask-wearing requirements. "China, South Korea, Japan, and Vietnam all safely reopened schools after reducing the rate of infection in the community. All four countries required near-universal mask wearing on campus...Israel sees rise in campus infection Israel reopened schools last spring with a variety of protections, including use of masks and frequent testing...In roughly two months, they found infections among 503 students and 167 staff after temporary closures of 355 schools...Several of those outbreaks occurred after school officials relaxed mask-wearing requirements after sweltering hot weather made the masks uncomfortable" (Aleshire, p. "Studies look at the risks of reopening schools", 2020, https://www.paysonroundup.com/covid-19/studies-look-at-the-risks-of-reopening-schools/article_d315bac5-6290-5d8f-b815-ccf6db61b42e.html).

I am humbly advocating for the health and safety of our keiki, staff and our community. Please make face coverings mandatory to follow the State's emergency order requiring everyone to wear face masks and offer 100% virtual learning as an option. The fate of the health of our keiki and our community is in your hands.

Mahalo nui loa,
Bertha Alcaraz

Testimony BOE

From: Carol Uyeda <cuyedahi@icloud.com> on behalf of Carol Uyeda
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:29 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Carol Uyeda
Special Education teacher
Pearl City High

Special Education teachers are in high demand and there are many vacancies. Why would you discontinue the pay differentiation when it's been proven to be a successful way to recruit more Sped teachers. The average life of a Sped teacher is only 5 years because it's a highly demanding job. We also do a lot of extra work in data collection, charting and making quarterly summaries for Autistic students. It is a strong consideration to retire if you cut our pay especially the differentiation. If the governor wants to cut the pay of Teachers, he should cut everyone at the same percentage rate and start from the top.

Also we are not ready to open our schools. PPEs which are essential is on order and has not come in to all schools. There is no specified plan for dealing with COVID. There are too many unanswered questions. One death of a student or teacher is unacceptable. Who is going to clean the classroom daily? Are the custodians going to spray the room daily with a disinfectant? What are the protocols of a person is showing symptoms? What if someone refuses or forgets to wear a mask? Will teachers be provided adequate sick leave if they come down with COVID? Symptoms vary and the degree of severity is also varied from person to person. Are the schools going to do any testing for safety on campus? Why not? I love teaching I am not willing to die on the job.

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Kimura, Darren S. <dkimura1@honolulu.gov> on behalf of Kimura, Darren S.
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:29 AM
To: 'testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov'
Subject: FW: Testimony

To whom it may concern:

I'm a concern parent and also a government employee so I have firsthand experience as how unprepared we (State & City) are dealing with this Covid-19 pandemic and strongly feel it might be best interest to push back the start of the school year until our nation has a vaccine to address the coronavirus. One of my concerns is if our daughter should test positive for the coronavirus, she isn't able to take care of herself and even with PPE's could result in affecting us (her parents) and relatives that live in the same house hold. It could become a domino effect and spread this virus outside our household to our communities and to the rest of our State since adults work in different occupations.

For your Teachers and school staff, besides their health and safety (because I understand government is mostly concern about the bottom-line), DOE will be faced with a never seen before workman's comp cases where individual claims could be for a month since the virus will remain with the affected person for at least a month or more. At this time, no one knows when it would be safe for an employee to return to work after being tested positive for the coronavirus only until they test negative. Also do we have enough qualified (able to do distance learning, teach without sub-plans, etc.) substitute teachers available and willing to come to work during this covid-19 pandemic (Pearl City Nursing Home situation). I haven't seen the State or BOE address these concerns in the news media.

In my opinion the risk outweighs the benefits of opening our schools at this time, we should wait until a vaccine is available to hopefully avoid the increase community spread of this virus. Please consider allowing **ALL** the students and teachers to do distance learning until the end of the calendar year 2020 or until a vaccine is able to be administered to the general public.

Sincerely

Darren Kimura

Testimony BOE

From: Nina Rista <10123530@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Nina Pathammavong
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:30 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I'm testifying against item: Board Action on Temporary Discontinuance of Extra Compensation for Classroom Teachers in Special Education, Hard-to-Staff Geographical Locations, and Hawaiian Language Immersion Programs for the 2020-2021 School Year.

"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.**"

We must continue to provide extra compensation for teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and hawaiian language immersion programs in order to have qualified teachers to support our students and to battle with a severe problem we've been facing from year to year in teacher shortage in Hawaii.

Nina Rista
Kailua High School

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Testimony BOE

From: Jean <jklgma@aol.com> on behalf of Jean
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:30 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Return to school

Teachers, especially K-2 teachers are understandably stressing about returning to classrooms with so many unanswered questions as pointed out by the HSTA.

It's easy for the superintendent to state "that The Dept. of Health will take the lead if any student or adult is diagnosed with COVID-19..." The safety of the students and teachers is an after thought?

Then BOE should "walk the talk" and go into the classrooms to build teacher relationships and get hands on knowledge of the different classroom situations that can and cannot be controlled by the teachers.

PPE and back-up classroom cleansers? Of course, leave it to the teachers.

Testimony BOE

From: Noelani Isoda <noelani.isoda@gmail.com> on behalf of Noelani Isoda
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:30 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I work in a school office and we deal with students and the public. My concern is how do I protect myself from covid 19? I am over 60 years old, have asthma and I am currently going thru cancer treatment. My school is doing everything they can to protect us with their limited funds and I have purchased additional ppe for myself. I am very concerned and stressed out about this.

Testimony BOE

From: Cindy Deuz <04decin@gmail.com> on behalf of Cindy Deuz
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:30 AM
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

Dear Board of Education Chairperson Catherine Payne and fellow board members,

My name is Cindy Deuz and I teach at Red Hill Elementary. I am submitting testimony in favor of delaying the reopening of schools. There have been many factors that have not been addressed and no clear plan or guidance has been shared for how we will proceed when situations arise. The DOH and HIDOE have been very vague about how they will handle positive cases and the impacts of that on students, teachers, and their school. How will the first death of a student, teacher, staff, or family member affect the social emotional aspect of children and their families as well as teachers and staff? If it is traced back to them contracting it at school, are they ready for potential lawsuits that will be filed against the school? HIDOE? The state? We cannot reopen and take a "Let's wait and see..." or "We'll cross that bridge when we get to it..." approach. This decision will affect hundreds of lives and to leave it up to chance is very irresponsible and negligent on the part of those in charge.

Teachers have always done more than what is being asked of them because we care about our keikis. That is why we became teachers. But in a situation where there is already a drastic shortage of teachers, what the state is planning will further drive current and future teachers towards another state or field. We implore you to consider teachers, not as babysitters, but as professionals who are educating the future of society. We cannot be expected to do the things that we are doing with a pay cut looming or the risks of COVID lurking. We will be buying supplies and needed educational resources out of our own pockets to ensure that students are able to learn and are safe while they are in our care. But we cannot do that if we do not feel valued, which is what the message has been. Dr. Anderson to lawmakers last week - "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." This is as blatant as saying that we are going to put teachers at risk and basically, it sucks to be you. Kids may be at lower risks for complications but they will be interacting with people who are not in their bubbles while outside of the classroom, family members at home, while playing outside with their friends, and those people who they come into contact with are older people who will be just at risk as teachers.

Schools may have plans in place for distance learning but for it to be effective, we NEED time to plan and prepare for that. Otherwise, it will be a fruitless effort and many will be left frustrated and further behind. The 4 days that we are given before the start of school is not enough time to prepare a prolonged online educational year. We can, at best, plan for the first few weeks of school. However, we are not only planning the curriculum but we must also plan for the day to day specifics of how to keep our keiki safe. We must consider the restroom breaks/usage, addressing what the new norm would look like in a classroom full of students, how to ensure students are socially distanced before, during and after school, to name a few. We will also need to have all faculty on the same page in regards to health procedures and policies so families and teachers can be assured that appropriate measures are in place to welcome them/us back. If we need to go close schools again, we need time to plan and prepare for that. There has been NO training provided over the summer and the lack of

planning is quite obvious as the HIDOE and DOH are unable to answer many of the questions. Why is a task force only now being assembled to discuss the reopening of schools? How will that help us as we are 2 weeks away and have to field questions from concerned parents? We have no answers for them. We DO NOT want to be the model of school reopening failure. Additionally, if schools reopen without appropriate guidance about how health protocols should be handled, we will see an increase in the number of cases faster than our hospitals can handle them. This will put the state in an economic hardship again as we cannot tout that we are a COVID-safe state as they had intended to advertise to reopen tourism.

Please delay the reopening of schools to give everyone time to plan and prepare. We do NOT want to be a model of catastrophe. We do NOT want countless people to be afflicted with something that can be contained if we had more time to put appropriate measures in place. Please consider putting lives first.

Respectfully,
Cindy Deuz

Testimony BOE

From: John Alexander <jetzaalexander@yahoo.com> on behalf of John Alexander
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:31 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Covid training for return to school

To whom it may concern,

Let me first say, I understand we are all under tremendous stress personally and professionally. I in no way expect there to be a perfect plan since nothing is perfect.

My concerns are as follows:

Who is ultimately responsible for implementing plans that I have not been trained on?

How do I do my job when my child's schedule has not been given to my wife and I?
Are schools providing meal when school is let out at 12:15?

How do we plan for meals if we have no way of knowing who is actually coming to school?

Who provides PPE for myself and staff? I don't see an approved bid to purchase these items. I don't work during breaks but I have spent days looking into and trying to follow up with changing info.

How do we handle cases at our campus and how will that affect on site work or activities?

This list can literally go on for pages. My wife and I are looking at a potential loss of \$800 to \$1200 per week because we have NO IDEA what day our daughter is going to actual school. I work for the school system and will be required to work 5 days a week or strand my employees to worry about how to feed the students. On the other hand my wife will have to cancel days of clients. She is a mental health and trauma therapist so you can understand the importance of her business.

No information is worse than bad information!! We may all be in the same storm but we are NOT in the same type of boat! We need support and training if we are expected to keep staff and students safe while on campus not to mention resources that will be wasted due to not communication.

Please help us help you!

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Aoi Shinagawa <aishinagawa@gmail.com> on behalf of Aoi Shinagawa
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:31 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To the Board of Education,

I am writing to share my testimony in regard to Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modification and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

My name is Aoi Shinagawa and I am the music and band teacher at Iroquois Point Elementary School in Ewa Beach, Hawaii. I started working in this field quite recently, starting my journey as a full-time educator in January of this year. This was supposed to be a very exciting time for me to experience many firsts, including my first year of teaching, my first classroom, meeting my first set of students, and much more. Instead, I have been faced with many other firsts, including my first purchase of life insurance, my first conversations with my family regarding how to deal with my passing, and my first time choosing between risking my life or risking unemployment.

I love my job. There is nothing I would love more than to go back to my normal routine of waking up, going to work, teaching kids music, and going home to prepare for the next day. This has always been my dream - I worked hard for four and a half years to get the required certifications and knowledge to teach. In January, I believed that all of my dreams were coming true. I was devastated when this was taken from me by the pandemic.

Although I would love to return to my classroom, it has become apparent to me that the DOE is woefully unprepared to safely welcome students back to the classroom. We do not have PPE. We do not have a clear plan of what to do in the case of an outbreak. We do not have the proper training, guidance, or resources to adequately social distance in schools. All it takes for this to spread exponentially is for one student, one teacher, or one staff member to come to campus with the virus. Who will fund contact tracing and testing of possibly infected individuals? Who will pay for leave when teachers and faculty are forced to quarantine? Who will ensure students forced to quarantine are provided adequate materials to keep up with their schoolwork? Who will ensure that our students' mental health is taken care of when they have to deal with the trauma of their friends and teachers suddenly disappearing from school, wondering if COVID will take someone they know? How many cases will trigger the closing of schools again?

I have many fears for my own personal well-being amidst this as well. Although I appear healthy on the outside, in reality, I have an incurable medical condition known as dysautonomia. This is not a well-known disease and affects people in different ways. Simply put, dysautonomia is the dysfunction of automatically regulated bodily functions such as blood pressure, breathing, digestion, and more. I have to be extra careful when going from sitting to standing, as my blood pressure takes a bit of time to adjust. I have to be careful of the things I eat as my body has difficulty digesting certain foods. I have to take extra care not to catch even a simple cold, as my body has difficulty fighting off infections.

I do not feel confident that there are enough measures in place to keep me safe from this virus. I am afraid for my life because the last time I caught a cold my throat swelled up so much that I was unable to swallow food or water. I had to take steroids, antibiotics, and use a local anesthetic just to function. The same cold that left me

incapacitated for a week left my partner sneezing for two days before he went back to living a normal life. Even though I am young, my immune system is not built to handle infections.

Delaying the start of instruction will give teachers the much needed time to adequately prepare for the safe and responsible reopening of the schools. Although I understand the DOE is under immense pressure, it is not worth risking our community. It is far more responsible to be overly cautious than overly optimistic when lives are at stake.

Thank you for your time,

--

Aoi Shinagawa
(808)439-5093

Testimony BOE

From: Jill Murashima <jmurashima@icloud.com> on behalf of Jill Murashima
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:31 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am a teacher at August Ahrens 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](#). The reopening of schools should be delayed given the following facts:

1. There are no clear protocols on what to do if a student tests positive for COVID-19. Does the class shut down, do the other classrooms with students who came in contact with this student get shut down? At what point does the whole school shut down?
2. Everyone's focused on keeping the students safe and how most are not at high risk, but what about the teachers?
3. We did not have any distance learning training during the summer. I will be teaching all day to half of my class on any given day. When am I supposed to have time to check in and help the other half of my students at home in distance learning or those who choose 100% distance learning?

All of these concerns need to be addressed before school starts, not after. Teachers need time to learn, digest, and question new protocols. Therefore, I ask that you delay the reopening of schools.

Respectfully,

Jill Murashima

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Jennifer Beruan <jenniferberuan1@hotmail.com> on behalf of Jennifer Beruan
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:31 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony From a Concerned Educator

Hi, my name is Jennifer Baltero. I am 41 years old. I have been teaching Grade 6 at Pearl City Elementary for the past 12 years. My son is in the 4th grade, and my daughter is in the 1st grade, at Pearl City Elementary. I highly believe the start of the new school year should be pushed back until schools have an approved safety plan in place and staff members are trained and educated on all the policies and procedures regarding safety. In addition, school should be pushed backed until teachers have an adequate distance learning platform in place with appropriate curriculum resources available to all students. We can't open safety and equitably without these things in place. When I say this, I am thinking of my students, my elderly parents who have underlying medical conditions, my kids, my husband, my extended family, my friends, my community, and myself. We are all in this together. This deadly illness should not be taken lightly. All the scientific evidence show the devastating impact it can have on a community with no strict enforcements.

Sent from my iPad

Testimony BOE

From: Kari Laba <10123536@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Kari Laba
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:31 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I'm testifying against item: Board Action on Temporary Discontinuance of Extra Compensation for Classroom Teachers in Special Education, Hard-to-Staff Geographical Locations, and Hawaiian Language Immersion Programs for the 2020-2021 School Year.

"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."

We must continue to provide extra compensation for teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and hawaiian language immersion programs in order to have qualified teachers to support our students and to battle with a severe problem we've been facing from year to year in teacher shortage in Hawaii.

Sincerely,
Kari Laba
Kailua High School

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Testimony BOE

From: Christy Nii <christy.nii@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Christy Nii
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:31 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Schools are NOT ready to reopen

Aloha,

My name is Christy Nii and I have been teaching at Wilcox Elementary School on the island of Kauai for the past 27 years. This year is the first year I don't feel confident setting up and reopening a new school year. There are still so many unknowns and unanswered questions. I am nervous about keeping myself and my students safe from COVID-19. I worry about what will happen if one of us catches it. Who will test us, where will we be tested, and what is the plan for keeping it from spreading to others? I haven't heard of a concrete plan yet that details what the next steps will be. I know the state talks about classroom bubbles but that isn't realistic when students will be on the same playground area, and lunch with the rest of the grade level. They won't just be exposing themselves to their classmates, they will be exposing themselves to their classmates and everyone their classmates have come into contact with. I feel rushed to start up the year, and I think we need more time to have concrete plans in place before opening up. Please consider delaying the start of the school year so we can be better prepared.

Mahalo,
Christy Nii
Wilcox Elementary School

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Testimony BOE

From: Jennifer Davis <jenndavis14@gmail.com> on behalf of Jennifer Davis
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:32 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: DELAY START DATE

Hello,

Please delay the start date of schools by 2+ weeks. Many schools are not at all prepared for the safety measures necessary. Please consider a slow reopening by phases. It would be prudent to see how many states are already planning to ensure proper protocol, AND likely going online first, AND they don't open for another 6 weeks.

Ohana bubbles are not going to work. One cohort of 65 6th graders really means 260 if each person has a family of 4 at home. Now multiply this by grade level, by school, by complex.... the amount of exposure puts the entire island's population at risk.

Delay the start date.
Phase in the openings.
Have teachers attend online trainings about virtual learning.
Give them time.
Give the people of our island TIME.

Mahalo,

Jenn Davis
Teacher, parent, student, mother of asthmatics, asthmatic

Testimony BOE

From: Leilani Johnson-hagmoc <leilani.johnson-hagmoc@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Leilani Johnson-hagmoc
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:32 AM
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 do not have confidence that the Department of

Education and the Department of Health have provided adequate plans for minimizing the risk of COVID-19 when returning to school. Teachers have repeatedly asked for important details, such as written guidance from the state Department of Health (DOH) on the reopening of school buildings.

The Department of Health has not shared a definite plan if any student or faculty member on campus gets infected with COVID-19. Does a whole school building shut down, a specific class, or the entire school? Dr. Park and Dr. Anderson says that they will take it on a case-to-case basis. But that does not provide clarity and reassurance to our teachers and students. Even our Lieutenant governor, Josh Green, who is a medical doctor, stated that teachers deserve a comprehensive health plan before putting our lives at risk. To add on, the 'Ohana Bubble' research has been conducted in New Zealand is rendered useless in the classroom. How can we control our students from mingling with other strangers outside of our classroom?

Secondly, the DOH and DOE is requiring teachers to do 'visual checks' to discern if students are ill. Why do we not have temperature check devices? Other businesses utilize these tools on a daily basis, where they concretely know if a person is sick, therefore making illness visible. HIDOE did not give us adequate training to do 'visual health checks' of students in the classroom. We are not a trained medical staff, and need temperature check devices in the classroom.

Dr. Kishimoto claims that teachers have received training throughout the summer. Although we had several voluntary professional development opportunities, Dr. Kishimoto feels confident that all of her teachers are ready to teach in virtual learning environments. She cites data of parents and teacher surveys in her decision of authoring her 'Ready To Learn' plan to open school. But where is the data that teachers are prepared for teaching in virtual classrooms? As a teacher, I need more time to prepare to research and learn more about virtual learning. I also implore the DOE to provide more professional development training for teachers in a systematic way.

The HIDOE also claims students will have access to a 100-percent distance learning option. If students will have access to this option, why are teachers not allowed to have this option? I understand that our most vulnerable students need access to food and that is understandable. We need systems in place so that students can return to school to pick up food. But, if we teach students strategies and give them the tools to access technology, I believe that the students can learn fully online.

Dr. Kishimoto also sent a video email to teachers urging teachers to return to school on August 4. As stated before, HSTA does not have confidence that we can reopen safely. Dr. Kishimoto's lack of dialogue between teachers is disheartening. I urge Dr. Kishimoto to stop playing 'politics' and do what is right by her largest workforce, her teachers. Listen to us and come to an agreement with safe protocols with us. She cites that summer school data shows that reopening school is successful, but that is at a smaller population than a regular school day. With more students coming back, there is a

higher risk for infection. Especially at the middle school level, where students will be walking around to change classrooms.

Never have I ever questioned my role as an educator. I feel disrespected that I work hard to serve the community and our keiki and the Department of Education and Department of Health systems are failing me. I feel unheard, as I pour my heart and soul out into my career, while these systems have not poured their heart and soul into the teachers that care so deeply about our community.

I urge you to do the right thing, please do not open our schools until these questions are answered. We miss our students, love them, and want to teach again. But, we can only do so if the proper protocols are in place to ensure health and safety. Have empathy. Listen to us.

Aloha,
Leilani Johnson-Hagmoc

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Testimony BOE

From: Jenna Noga <jenna.noga@gmail.com> on behalf of Jenna Noga
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:32 AM
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,

It is my understanding that the Department of Education will request a discontinuance of differential pay for teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs. It is well-known that the State of Hawaii Department of Education has had problems in recent years retaining adequate teachers for our public school students. This action, if taken, would only contribute to that problem. There are children in my family who attend Hawaiian language immersion programs in the public school system. I also have a nephew with special needs who is currently in the public school system. These children in my family deserve quality teachers who should be fairly compensated. I respectfully ask that the Board of Education deny the request to discontinue differential pay as it would affect our most vulnerable Hawaii public school students.

Regards,

Jenna Noga.

--

Jenna Noga.

Testimony BOE

From: brenton corn <brenton15c@gmail.com> on behalf of brenton corn
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:32 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

I am writing to testify on 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](#). As a community member of Waianae and older sibling to a younger brother that attends Nanakuli Elementary School, I am very concerned that the discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers will affect the quality of education that my brother will receive. As an active community and former Nanakuli Elementary School student, I know first hand the quality of teaching that is provided by teachers, specifically in this hard- to- staff community. With a lack of quality and effective educators, it can negatively impact the school community as teachers will become less likely to remain in the profession. Therefore, I highly urge the board members to reject the proposal.

Mahalo,
Brenton Corn

Testimony BOE

From: Emily Hiramā <hirama@hawaii.edu> on behalf of Emily Hiramā
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:33 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: SPED Differentials and Opening of Schools

Aloha Board of Education,

I am a special education teacher here on Oahu and I have been teaching SPED for 8 years. Teaching student with exceptionalities is my passion and I am fortunate to be a teacher here in Hawaii my home. Due to Covid-19, I am the sole bread winner in my household and I my second child is due in August. With the unemployment federal benefit ending this month, finances will be tight for my family of four. I am asking you to please consider not taking away our differentials in this time of need.

With a new baby on the way and a kindergartener, I am having doubts if we sending my child to school would be safe for my family. At this time, I don't think the benefits out way the risks with a newborn in the household. There is just no guarantee that my child will not come home with Covid-19 and with a newborn that could be deadly. I am begging you to reconsider the start date for school or to consider distance learning for our keiki.

Mahalo,
Emily Hiramā
Special Education Teacher
Fully Self-Contained

Testimony BOE

From: Christine Olivera <christine.olivera@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Christine Olivera
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:33 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony
Attachments: Aloha HIDOE.docx

I have attached my testimony for Thursday's meeting:

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.

As a Related Service provider (SLP) in the West Hawai'i School District, I will be a frontline essential worker in this return-to-school experiment. I am not given the option to work online full-time for the safety of myself, my family, or my students, and I have been informed by my union representative that if I do not comply with returning in-person to school without an ADA accommodation, I will likely be written up for insubordination. I am being asked to monitor and maintain my health and my student's health in a work environment that may result in severe sickness or death from a highly infectious disease.

Our community has been somewhat serious about mask-wearing, but Hawai'i County has lost control of the 14-day quarantine situation and our state has seen increasing numbers of cases. I have not heard any information concerning COVID-19 testing or supply of PPE being made available to the schools BEFORE putting numerous individuals together in likely unsafe conditions of buses and classrooms.

Everyone is at risk from infection or worse from contracting COVID-19. I am willing to go back to in-person school if I believed I was safe, and I felt like I could protect my students. I cannot say that right now. My own high school age child will be staying home and educated online.

Best practices for essential frontline workers are still yielding infections. Even if we put every possible precaution in place, we would still be at risk. However, some risk is acceptable if the baseline of restrictions and best practices are followed such as adequate cleaning, mandatory masks, and 6 ft. of distance. With the responsibility for implementation and maintenance of COVID-19 mitigation put on individuals and schools, there is no assurance of a bare minimum of health and safety protocols for me or my students. The CDC has already weakened their critical guidelines due to political pressure. There can be no "interpretation" of procedures when lives are at stake.

This situation is unacceptable and unsustainable. We are putting lives and our economy at significant risk during an on-going global pandemic. We have a solution of online instruction for most students. While not optimal educational instruction for all students, it is the safest option and pushing for in-person instruction creates more crowding in schools which will inevitably increase COVID-19 infections. The option of the hybrid model of student attendance (2 days on, 3 days off) does not appear to offer a significant increase in educational efficacy considering the need for online instruction and the lack of planning/training for the so-called blended model. We should not be advocating for more students in-person. In-person instruction should be allowed only for those students and families who have no other choice due to circumstances such as parents need to work, no access to technology, or inability to learn online.

Speaking to the level of fear among school personnel about going back to school, I know of staff who are preparing or updating their wills, contemplating leaving the profession, taking vacation or sick days, and are agonizing about whether to send their own children back to school.

I believe this situation qualifies as Hazard Pay for frontline workers, and I ask you:
PLEASE DO NOT TAKE AWAY OUR SHORTAGE DIFFERENTIAL PAY INCREASE.

We are being asked to shoulder the largest burden with no assurances, and I am not confident that I can keep COVID-19 infections from affecting myself, my family, or my school community, especially my students. The option of working from home, which has been a successful mode of therapy for many of my students since March, is preferable to losing a life.

Christine Olivera M.S., CCC-SLP
Konawaena Elementary School
Kealakehe Intermediate School

Daughter attends Konawaena High School

Testimony BOE

From: Debbie Anderson <debbievida@gmail.com> on behalf of Debbie Anderson
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:33 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

July 23, 2020

Aloha e Chair Payne and members of the Board,

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

On June 18, 2020, the Board of Education ("Board") approved a resolution "Directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of schools for the 2020-2021 school year... which included "The Board directs the Superintendent to issue clear protocols to Department schools by July 1, 2020—and to deliver the protocols to families and make them publicly available by July 8, 2020. This did not happen adequately yet, for our only freshman at Waiakea High, or for ourselves as a 30 year substitute teacher and a Librarian whose line is being repurposed to support distance learning.

Many unanswered questions continue unaddressed:

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

Hawaii's trajectory is worsening, while worldwide data on school reopening plans is being analyzed: <https://globalhealth.washington.edu/sites/default/files/COVID-19%20Schools%20Summary.pdf> Given all the available data, the wisest current action would be to postpone students returning in person to campuses.

Younger people aged 10 to 19 years old are more likely than other age groups to spread the coronavirus in their household. 18.6% of their contacts contracted the disease, which is more than any other age group. Park YJ, Choe YJ, Park O, Park SY, Kim YM, Kim J, et al. Contact tracing during coronavirus disease outbreak, South Korea, 2020. Emerg Infect Dis. 2020 Oct. <https://doi.org/10.3201/eid2610.201315>

Teachers report back on July 29, Wednesday. Normally teachers get 4 days of student-free prep time at the start of the year. Further, 2 days of teacher meetings take up those 4 days, leaving only the last 2 days for teachers to truly spend time preparing their classrooms and developing quality lesson plans for their students. SURELY a pandemic school year would require MORE? If I am to begin on July 29 supporting almost 200 distance learners, there is not enough time to train, register them, and have them start their classes by August 4.

We are not and will not be prepared sufficiently to re-open by August 4. Please don't rush into re-opening with our lives at stake. Delay the return of students to schools. We only have one chance to do this safely and correctly. Not one teacher or student death is acceptable, when the simple decision to give more time for schools to prepare could prevent illness and death.

China, South Korea and Israel re-opened schools, and had to re-close. In Israel, about half (47%) of the total—were infected by the coronavirus in schools. We saw many confirmed cases of COVID-19 in middle schools. Middle-school children proved to be the most dangerous vectors.
<https://news.yahoo.com/israeli-data-show-school-openings-073608473.html>

We want schools to open, but to do it SAFELY. We want a specific PLAN to give to principals and teachers, as well as our students' parents/guardians. Until we get that, we are asking to delay students' return to school buildings.

Sincerely,
Deb Anderson
Waiakea Intermediate School

Testimony BOE

From: Daniel Inglis <dinglis@myhta.org> on behalf of Daniel Inglis
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:33 AM
To: Testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To whom it may concern,

I have been a special education teacher in Hawaii for 16 years. I love my job but the extra paperwork, stress and low pay have caused me to consider leaving the profession many times.

When we received the pay raise in January it renewed my passion and commitment to my job. I also believe it will attract many new teachers to help sped teacher the crisis. I can testify that both my ex wife and I became sped teachers as a result of a financial incentive program that covered part of our tuition at the University of Hawaii if we committed to teach special education in state for at least 3 years. That has payed off with almost 25 years of services between the both of us.

If this raise is taken away, I am devastated financially right now. I am currently refinancing my condo and will not be able to make payments. I understand that the state is struggling due to the pandemic but taking away this raise is unjust and morally wrong.

Sincery, Daniel Inglis

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Testimony BOE

From: Elizabeth Kaneshiro <etromba@gmail.com> on behalf of Elizabeth Kaneshiro
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:34 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

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

To the members of the Hawaii State Board of Education:

I am an educator at Waipahu Elementary School in the Leeward District of Oahu, and I have been teaching for 22 years. Thank you for the work you have done thus far. Never in my life have I felt so much anxiety in preparing to greet students at the beginning of the school year. On any given summer, we would be preparing our classrooms, eagerly anticipating the arrival of students and finding out what their summers were like. However, with the loom of a still incurable virus in the midst, we are instead wondering if we will make it out of the school year (or quarter) alive. The following points are what have caused my colleagues and I such trepidation in returning to work:

- Lack of direction from the State Department of Health. Our administrators fielding our many questions on re-opening have been coming back to us teachers stating that they are waiting on guidelines from the DOH. When will we be receiving specific directions?
- If restaurants and bars are being told to close down, why are schools still forced to open?
- Superintendent Kishimoto mentioned that there were Professional Development sessions that teachers were taking part in during the summer. Those were voluntary and provided free of charge by other educators who took the time and their own resources to share tips to help others to navigate their way around distance learning. There were no official DOE training sessions that took place, and usually if there were, we would be paying for those, sometimes out of our own pockets.
- Speaking of paying for things out-of-pocket, all of us are purchasing our own face shields, desk shields, and other items to help keep our students and ourselves safe.
- We are not trained medically. What would happen if there is an outbreak and how do we mitigate this effectively?
- Other states that have opened up school for the remainder of the previous school year had to subsequently close due to COVID19 transmissions. Even the most meticulously clean and fastidious countries such as South Korea and Japan had opened, only to close again due to breakouts.
- I think this bears repeating, but public schools are NOT childcare facilities.
- What is being done to monitor areas that have outbreaks in large clusters? Several have happened in our area of Waipahu, but are people being tested?
- Are you sending your own children to public schools when they open? If you are not (and/or opted for distance learning), why would you insist on having public schools open so soon when the virus is still raging and deaths still happening?

I have long displayed photos that my former students have given me, be it school pictures, ID badges that they give to me when they “graduate” from our school, senior portraits from graduating high school students, etc. at work. Every time I look at those photos, I always hope that those students are protected and safe. I will certainly miss their random visits and catching up with them.

Due to the unknown health conditions and the fact that, despite lacking the certification, I am being placed in a position that I have no experience teaching (and that I am uncertified to teach), I am contemplating on not returning to school. If I continue down the hellish path of teaching something I am not qualified to teach, I may risk being infected and worse, transmit that virus to loved ones (students, colleagues, family), recover but suffer from complications (I have hypertension, catch colds easily, and am the 10th eldest “veteran” at our school), or die. Despite loyally serving the State Department of Education for 22 years, I am also contemplating on resigning, so that I may not be of harm to anyone, including myself. Is this how we are repaid for our loyalty and dedication to the Department?

My sincerest hope is that you will consider opening the schools only if it is safe to do so, no matter when that may be. The advancement of education will not matter if the teaching environment is unsafe and those in that environment fear for their lives. Please do consider that these are human lives you are dealing with, not percentages or numbers.

Thank you for your time and your hard work for the State.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Kaneshiro

Testimony BOE

From: Maryann A <aguimoto2011@gmail.com> on behalf of Maryann A
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:34 AM
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 a mother of 2 toddlers who is considered high risk for covid19. I am also a special education teacher in a middle school. The state's number for positive covid19 cases has been much greater than 4th quarter, yet all teachers and students are expected to return to school in conditions that are not equatable.

When you hold your board meetings, are you all in the same room? As adults are you all practicing what you are asking teachers and students (children) to do for 6 hours a day? I am a co-teacher in a portable. DOE is expecting my co-teacher and I to fit about 12 students (blended model) with 2 adults and sometimes and EA in this space. This will not be possible unless our classroom was outfitted with additional measures such as plexiglass dividers so that we can accommodate the 12 students while keeping ourselves and the students as safe as possible.

Also, I live in the community where I teach. On a daily basis, I see children from my school hanging out with each other, not practicing safety precautions such as social distancing or even wearing a mask. Can you imagine having 400-500 students on campus out for recess or lunch on a relatively small campus. Our school has 4 buildings that are 2 to 3 stories, 6 portables, 1 building w/4 classrooms, a wrestling room, a weight room, a drama room and a band room. We have not more room to build or add unless we go up.

I want to teach. I miss working with my students. For my 2 toddlers and for my students, I want to be well and healthy. For me to become ill with covid19 would be detrimental for my children as well as for the students I work with. I am afraid that I could contract covid19 and not be able be with my babies to love and nurture them during their developmental years if I'm to be quarantine or even hospitalized. No hugs and kisses for at least 2 weeks would break their hearts and mine too. To delay opening the school so adequate safety measures are in place isn't too much to ask for.

Please consider what you are asking our teachers and students to do. Are you currently practicing that model? Would you be able to for 6 hours a day as a kindergartner who never attend preschool, a 3rd grader, a middle schooler that socializing and movement is a needed during these development years?

Thank you for your time.
Maryann Aguinaldo

Testimony BOE

From: Jean <jklgma@aol.com> on behalf of Jean
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:35 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Agenda item: VI-D

Teachers, especially K-2 teachers are understandably stressing about returning to classrooms with so many unanswered questions as pointed out by the HSTA.

It's easy for the superintendent to state "that The Dept. of Health will take the lead if any student or adult is diagnosed with COVID-19..." The safety of the students and teachers is an after thought?

Then BOE should "walk the talk" and go into the classrooms to build teacher relationships and get hands on knowledge of the different classroom situations that can and cannot be controlled by the teachers.

PPE and back-up classroom cleansers? Of course, leave it to the teachers.

Testimony BOE

From: Lacy Chun <l.chun@seariders.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Lacy Chun
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:35 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony: Action Item VI. G.

ITEM VI. G. BOARD ACTION ON TEMPORARY DISCONTINUANCE OF EXTRA COMPENSATION FOR CLASSROOM TEACHERS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION, HARD-TO-STAFF GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATIONS, AND HAWAIIAN LANGUAGE IMMERSION PROGRAMS FOR THE 2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR.

WEDNESDAY JULY 22, 2020

9:30 AM

Aloha e Board of Education,

My name is Lacy Chun. I am a teacher at Waianae High School in the Leeward District on Oahu. I teach in the Waianae/Nanakuli complex. I am submitting testimony against the discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs.

These funds have provided enough funds for my colleagues and I to continue working at Waianae High School. Our current teacher shortage continues to worsen throughout the pandemic, and such funds would encourage and support many families with adequate financial security. We recognize the value of our educators by continuing the extra compensation. Our teachers are worth it as they are important for the future of our keiki.

My experience at Waianae has been drastically supported by this differential pay. I currently live in Kaneohe with my family as the cost of living is difficult here on Oahu. At first I was able to support a small living space with my significant other, but we quickly moved with my family after the pandemic occurred due to financial changes. I have been able to support my family as many of them were unable to work for several months.

Prior to the pandemic, everyday I to drive to Waianae High School from Kaneohe. Along with teaching, I am also obtaining my Masters degree in Educational Leadership at Chaminade University, in order to be a highly competent educator. I understand that I am qualified to teach in any other district, but I continue to teach at Waianae because I care deeply about this community of students and their families. My passion for teaching and improving my practice has been greatly financed through the support of differential pay.

Many of my colleagues continue to show their passion towards helping our students at Waianae, and they deserve to be supported financially to continue to provide their service. Some are also trying to obtain higher education to be better equipped for the sake of their students. The Nanakuli/Waianae complex is a unique community that faces many disparities and hardships. The need for teachers to stay in the community, especially during a health crisis, would best be aided through financial support. I hope that we continue to receive as much financial support, in order to bring a positive climate to our schools and move towards equitable education.

We need your help.

Mahalo,

Lacy Chun, Leeward district, Oahu

--

L. Chun

Biology | Sophomore Academy

Wai'anae High School

l.chun@seariders.k12.hi.us

Testimony BOE

From: Kaelin Tancayo-Spielvogel <20250409@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Kaelin Tancayo-Spielvogel
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:36 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am writing this testimony on behalf of [Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year.](#)

Name: Kaelin Tancayo-Spielvogel
Job Location: Waianae High School

Like many educators, we do this work because we care about our keiki and we want to prepare them to become industrious young men and women. Unfortunately, many educators have second jobs including myself to make living in Hawai'i a possibility. In addition to my full-time teaching job, my second job demands an additional 20 hours a week. With the differential, I was able to cut back on hours worked at my second job so that I could dedicate my time at home to continuing to build a strong, supportive, and enriching curriculum for my students. If our differentials were to be taken away I would truly have to consider leaving the classroom as working 60 hours a week will continue to have negative impact on my social, emotional, mental, and physical well-being.

Respectfully,

Kaelin Tancayo-Spielvogel
Wai'anāe High School
English Language Arts | French Language

"Toutes les grandes personnes ont d'abord été des enfants mais peu d'entre elles s'en souviennent."

"All grown-ups were once children... but only few of them remember it."

- Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, [The Little Prince](#)

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Testimony BOE

From: J Ant <jenniferhawaii3@gmail.com> on behalf of J Ant
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:36 AM
To: TESTIMONY.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for the Delay of School Reopening

Aloha Member of the Board of Education;

My name is Jennifer and I am an elementary school teacher, at a school I preferred to leave unnamed. I am submitting testimony for your consideration of delaying the start of school for the following reasons. I do not wish to submit a ranting explanation of all the things that are going wrong in our setting up of schools; but rather outline gaping holes in our plans to reopen.

1. Schools do not have procedures, plans or protocols put into place to effectively handle multiple scenarios for positive individuals, family members, contacts or suspicions of such for COVID. According to the MOU written guidance was to be provided; we have not been provided with anything. It appears that the top is leaving it up to the schools to handle their site procedure. This should NOT be the case. The DOE should have uniform procedural guidance that has been worked out with the DOH and that guidance should be disseminated to the schools. This should NOT be a school-level decision.

2. Distance learning platforms have not been established. For parents that would like to facilitate their child's distance learning no guidance has been sent out or shared making it difficult for parents to even make this decision. The better understanding parents have of what distance learning looks like the more confident they will be to make that decision; thus allowing schools to have a better grasp of what our actual in-school enrollment numbers will look like and be more effective in setting up a rotational schedule.

Once these two issues are addressed I believe we will much better prepared to open. We should not fool ourselves into thinking we are ready when the reality is staring us right in the face.

In closing, I would like to end with this. Dr. Kishimoto made a statement yesterday saying that teachers need to step up and help their communities through this pandemic. I have not heard more hurtful words come from her throughout this entire ordeal. Teachers want to be back, we want to see our kids, but we want it in the right way. We are here in our classrooms, we are meeting, we are planning, we are collaborating with our colleagues, we are training ourselves on virtual platforms; we are here for our community.

Mahalo for your time consideration and leadership in steering us down the right path.

Respectfully yours,

Jennifer

Testimony BOE

From: Ronald Lake <ronlakegally86@yahoo.com> on behalf of Ronald Lake
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:37 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: Ron Lake
Subject: Cuts to Shortage differentials

I'm Ron Lake and work for the Honolulu district at the Hawaii School for the Deaf and the Blind. Hired in 2003 after teaching a year in Virginia, and four in the state of New Mexico, I was grateful to return home to family and to bring my experiences of teaching in the mainland schools. Fluent in American Sign Language, I take seriously the responsibility of educating Deaf students so that they may become productive and contributing members of our community.

For many years I was the only middle and high school science teacher. I also worked as the English Language coach, art and pottery teacher, as the SSC, and now as a teacher in the Transition School to Career/College program. Currently, I am the second teacher to have the most years at HSDB and had worked under 4 (and soon 5), different administrators. Turnover at HSDB is high, not to mention the challenge of working collectively and collaboratively with new teachers.

As a 5th generation born the year Hawaii became a state, I had the good fortune to secure a job with DOE, and with the support of family was able to purchase a home nine years ago. Having a rental unit, and at times an Airbnb business helped me to make the mortgage payments. Unfortunately, with the elimination of Airbnb last Fall and the rising cost of living, my finances have been tight! In addition, our student population has become more challenging as families work to keep themselves afloat. In recent months as we deal with COVID-19 and in light of our previous success to fill many Special Education and hard-to-fill schools, it is inappropriate to back-down on a promise of a pay increase that initiated a move forward to rectify a system that was broken. This is to say, "Thank you for the fix, but sorry for your consideration and sacrifice." Please, the system need not lose sight of a TRUST we all wish to uphold.

Having the compression fixed, incentives for teachers willing to work in hard to place schools, and Special Education programs will alleviate the stress faced by teachers working in Hawaii. Please help us make this a win, win for teachers, students, and their families.

Thank you for your time and I hope you'll support us in this effort.

Ronald Lake,

Hawaii School for the Deaf and the Blind Transition Teacher.

Testimony BOE

From: Jennie Hancock <mrshancock808@gmail.com> on behalf of Jennie Hancock
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:37 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha Chair Payne and Members of the Board,

I'm writing regarding 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, which you're discussing July 23.

I'm a mother of a public school 6th grader and 11th grader, a 5th grade teacher at Waikoloa Elementary and Middle School, and I'm so, so tired. I'm tired of begging you to pay me for the work I do. I'm tired of begging for you to keep my son and daughter, my students, myself in mind while making decisions that affect thousands and thousands of lives. I'm tired of being let down by you, the Board of Education, the Superintendent, and the state government.

At this point I'm sure you're noticing trends in our collective outrage as teachers. Despite our outrage and our tiredness we come to you again, begging you to NOT take away our shortage differentials. These differentials have kept many of us from leaving Hawaii Public Schools. The differentials brought teachers INTO special education lines and into our most critically understaffed schools. The differential for me meant I didn't have to tell my children we couldn't afford it when they asked for items from Costco that weren't on our list. The differential meant we haven't had to stress about which bills to pay the minimum on so we could pay our rent.

Please, stop kicking us when we're already down. And while I have your attention, our schools are NOT ready to reopen to students, we still don't have the guidelines about what we'll do WHEN one of us gets COVID19, and the only thing worse than taking our pay is sending us to the slaughterhouse with a video about how we need to "do our part" for the state economy.

--

Jennie Hancock

5th Grade Teacher, HSTA Kona Chapter President
Waikoloa Elementary and Middle School

Testimony BOE

From: Kristin Aiona <kristin_aiona@yahoo.com> on behalf of Kristin Aiona
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:38 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

My name is Kristin Aiona, and I live on the Big Island and teach at Hilo High School. I am emailing with testimony regarding delaying the start of school. I am ready to see my students again. I am ready to be with them and to learn from them and to see them grow. I want to be able to laugh with them and to be able to talk with them. When I think about actually being in a classroom, though, logistically speaking, there are so many unanswered questions still.

I am trying to get a plexiglass shield for my desk, but I have spent almost \$600.00 already to prepare my classroom. I cannot afford a plexiglass shield right now. Is the DOE providing any kind of shields? I don't know. I don't have any cleaning wipes, I don't have Clorox, I don't have hand sanitizer, I don't have any cleaning solutions. Do I have to sanitize areas between classes? I don't know. Will I have enough time to sanitize between classes? Will I have enough materials to maintain a clean, sanitized environment? I don't know. What happens if a child gets a fever in my classroom? I don't even have a thermometer. How will I know? These questions are just the start.

One might say, why be so negative? One might say, why don't we think about what we can do instead of what we can't? In fact, my principal has said that in response to many questions from the teachers. I can tell you right now that I cannot teach in this COVID-19 age without cleaning protocols, enough PPE, enough cleaning materials, and my desks 6 feet apart (the desks I will get done eventually).

Do I want my students to be in my classroom, ready to learn? YES! Will I be willing to do it even if I don't have the answers to the above questions, or if some of the answers are no, you won't have enough materials to maintain a sanitized environment? I don't know. I have asthma, my elderly parents are caring for my children when I have to be at work. I want to be in my classroom with my students. They are amazing people, but my family, my family's health, and my health come first.

The question becomes then, why can't we delay the opening of the school year for 1 week? 2 weeks? Two days of prep time leaves me feeling woefully inadequate. Two days of prep time isn't even enough prep time for a normal year! I am always going into my classroom on the weekends and staying after hours. Now, though, I am told I have to leave at 4:00 and I cannot go into work on the weekends.

Is delaying the start of the school year so bad? Why is it so bad? Why is delaying the start of the school year looked at as such a bad thing? The teachers will be working! Delaying the school year doesn't mean canceling the school year.

Delaying the school year gives EVERYONE more time to get answers, research, and set up the school year for a sanitized, clean, functional school year. Don't feel pressured when people say we have to start on time! Why? Is delaying the school year 1-3 weeks that horrible? No, of course it's not horrible. Delaying the opening of the school year is prudent, sensible, and reasonable considering the responsibilities that will be put on teachers.

Mahalo for your time,
Kristin Aiona

Testimony BOE

From: Janet Trachtman <smilesinhawaii@yahoo.com> on behalf of Janet Trachtman
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:36 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY: Delaying Student Start Date and Cuts to Shortage Differentials

Aloha Board Members,

I am requesting that you delay the student start date for SY 2020-2021. Last spring, it was stated that schools would not reopen until there were 4 consecutive weeks of no new cases of COVID-19. However, we have not had 4 consecutive weeks of no new cases, as of yet.

In my opinion, opening schools on Aug. 4 puts students, teachers, and staff at risk. For example, at my school, teachers were advised not to keep windows or doors open because of the vulnerability of the air-conditioning system. I can vouch that the air-conditioning is anemic because my classroom's air-conditioning system broke twice last school year. However, while the air-conditioning was working, a student in my class had a respiratory infection that spread throughout the class, which convinces me that COVID-19 can spread easily in a closed environment. On the other hand, if air-conditioning was shut down, the extreme heat of August would be a health risk to students with respiratory conditions, such as asthma. Last school year when my air-conditioning broke, one student had a severe reaction to the heat.

Also, the new normal, including but not limited to social distancing, not sharing playground equipment, not having classroom community supplies, and eating in the classroom might become detrimental to students' mental health. Students might be shocked to experience the new normal and to practice constant social distancing.

In regard to cuts to shortage differentials, teachers have been working throughout the summer helping principals decide on how we will begin the school year, preparing A/B groups for blended learning, re-configuring classrooms, etc. I humbly ask, please do not cut teachers' pay.

Sincerely,
Janet Trachtman
Maili Elementary
3rd Grade Chair

Testimony BOE

From: brad silva <bsilva42@yahoo.com> on behalf of brad silva
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:38 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY

Aloha BOE,

Here I am again with ANOTHER email as a teacher fighting for what is right.

I hope your meeting to discuss the matters of pay differential and opening of schools are not done online and done face to face.

Again, if it is safe for children and staff...show us the way!

Show us it is safe to meet with other people outside your family.

While you are at, include some strangers kids that you do not know where they have been in there too.

You all go first, masks optional of course as it is for us teachers and students, and do your thing.

Lt. Gov. Josh Green, who is an emergency room physician, "We owe our teachers a comprehensive health care plan, in writing, before they open themselves up to added risk."

ENOUGH SAID!

DO THE RIGHT THING...NOT THE CONVENIENT THING!

Brad Silva
Middle School Teacher
The Big Island

Testimony BOE

From: Susan Lee <slee@haaspcs.net> on behalf of Susan Lee
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:38 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Teaching in Hawaii

My name is Susan Lee and I am a teacher at Hawaii Academy of Arts and Science in Pahoehoe on the Big Island.

Please do not cut our hard to staff differentials and other staffing incentives that have kept teachers afloat for many years.

We have such a teacher shortage in Hawaii and this will just make it worse. We should be doing everything to retain qualified teachers esp with distance learning on the horizon. We will likely see a big retirement from distance learning, let's not make it worse with this! Please continue this funding.

Sincerely,

Susan Lee
HAAS
Discovery Heights

Testimony BOE

From: Kelsey Ramirez <kelsram808@gmail.com> on behalf of Kelsey Ramirez
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:39 AM
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 an early childhood special education teacher, I do not feel comfortable starting face-to-face learning with students as soon as August 4, 2020. I am not trained in any of our schools' protocols, nor have I seen any written guidelines. I do not know what to do when students get on campus and feel that I am left trying to scramble from ideas on safety protocols. I work with students who are 3 to 5 years old and have special needs. I am sure most, if not all students will not be wearing a mask or social distancing due to their disabilities and/or cognitive abilities. Before COVID-19, we had difficulty maintaining distance, healthy hygiene, and prevention of the spread of illnesses within our grade level. How do I keep my students, their families, and my family safe? What happens when one student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19? Does the classroom stay home? Does the whole school stay home? For how long? Would everyone need to be tested in-order to come back to campus? Whose paying for that? Again, these are basic questions that I need answered before I return to work with my students. I want to be able to reassure parents that there is a solid plan in place.

We need more time to prepare faculty and staff. Without current guidelines, I assume we will receive them last minute before August 4, 2020. This will not give us enough time to make necessary adjustments both with curriculum and classroom set up. The proposed two weeks of half days with students and half days training, is too late. Teachers need to set up routines from day one. We need time.

Lastly, as a high-risk 22 weeks pregnant woman I am extremely concerned. The CDC has found that pregnant women are more likely to be admitted to the intensive care unit and to be put on mechanical ventilators than non-pregnant women. Although I genuinely believe education, especially special education, is my calling, I've definitely considered quitting the profession. I'm starting to become exhausted in how dispensable our DOE makes me feel. They say they understand that there will be risks, but with current DOE guidelines and no current vaccine, I feel that I am not only putting my life at risk, but my unborn child, my husband, my elderly parents, as well as the rest of my family. I care about my students, my school, and the community I serve. I want to keep both ohana's safe. One life lost is not a risk I want to take.

I implore our leaders that they make safety for ALL the priority, and education second, and to let their teachers be a part of the discussion because they know what will work and what won't. We all want our children back in school, but not at the cost of putting them and others at risk.

Sincerely,

Kelsey Komoto

Testimony BOE

From: David K Shizuma <kawikasmail@gmail.com> on behalf of David K Shizuma
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:39 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha kākou,

I am writing to BOE to oppose the proposal to cut compensation pay for SPED, Hawaiian Immersion, and Hard to fill positions.

Teachers this school year will be asked to work twice as hard by putting themselves at risk to teach our children, in these COVID times. This is a hard situation for teachers physically, mentally, and emotionally. That alone warrants additional pay for all teachers, as being essential to our system!

Hawaiian immersion teachers already start at a disadvantage with less resources (digital and physical) to teach, and they also require an additional skillset to perform their job. SPED teachers have an incredibly difficult job working with some of our most challenging children through some of the most challenging situations and toughest cases. Hard-to-fill positions have their own challenges, which is why they have become hard-to-fill.

These teachers all already face tougher challenges, physically, mentally, and emotionally, than the rest of the teachers. Deferring the differentials they are supposed to make this coming school year will only lead to negative results, including the following; there will be less teachers who will teach; there will be more strain on the teachers who are there; there will be more crowded classrooms as the schools will be forced to condense classrooms; there will be more COVID spread/cases due to the increased density of classes.

This is not a valid solution in these times. I understand that the economy is slow and there may not be funds available. I do, however, suggest other changes to make up the difference:

- Consider a temporary - proportional incremental percent pay cuts for top wage earners in the DOE
 - Revisit when reviewing the budget each year
 - For top wage earners - wage earners tend to go to savings vs revitalizing the economy
 - Increasing wage earnings of these critical teaching roles will help revitalize our economy
- Consider a temporary - proportional incremental percent pay cuts for all staff statewide that are making way above ALICE (Asset Limited Income Constrained) wages or above perhaps \$100,000
 - Revisit when reviewing the budget each year.
- Consider surveying and including the voice of all DOE staff for creation of creative solutions.
 - You will be able to pool together a rich set of alternative ways to weather this storm collectively, in unanticipated but mutually community supported ways

Please do not cut compensation for our teachers in these critical roles.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,
David Shizuma

Testimony BOE

From: Jan <808geminiz@gmail.com> on behalf of Jan
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:39 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY

To the Honorable Board of Education,

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.](#)

My name is Jan Inn and I'm a 4th grade teacher at Pearl Harbor Kai Elementary School. As a teacher, I am asking that you delay the return of students to the campuses to ensure that teachers, administrators, and school staff have adequate time to prepare for the health, safety, and distance learning for our students.

As you know, we have approximately 180,000 public school students in Hawaii. As of July 20, 2020, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) reports that 8% of the COVID 19 cases are children. 319 cases per 100,000 are diagnosed COVID 19 positive. 0.2% end in mortality. The people rushing us to reopen our schools are handing out a death sentence and playing Russian roulette with our children, teachers, and school staff.

Harvard Medical School reports as of July 1, 2020, "the majority of infections in children/teens go undiagnosed because they don't meet the criteria for testing." Therefore, these percentages are lower than what is truly out there in our community and the number of children that are asymptomatic, presymptomatic, or displaying milder symptoms will probably go untested.

We are NOT ready to receive students. Safety protocols at the school level are still being worked out.

"Ohana bubbles" are unrealistic. Ask any teacher. Students catch the bus (and will be sitting two to a seat). Though Dr. Kishimoto stated in her press conference on July 20, 2020, that bus drivers will be another layer of protection. The bus protocols say that no student will be denied access to the bus (even if they are symptomatic). Children will play with each other before school, in the bathroom, after school, on the bus, and any time there is no adult supervision. Children will not social distance. It's against their nature.

Children get sent to school sick. It happens all the time. Even if Governor Ige proclaims that parents must keep their children home if they are sick, this is not reality. Parents will send students to school sick. I have had students vomiting multiple times in my classroom and parents will say their child is fine then refuse to pick up their child from school. The worse thing? The child will cry saying they don't want to go to the health room because their parents will get mad at them. Talk to the teachers. They will tell you that this is our reality.

Teachers have NOT been trained on distance learning (unlike what Dr. Kishimoto had reported to the BOE). We teachers have spent our own money and time to search out our own professional development during the 4th quarter of last school year and during the summer.

Our school has implemented a new curriculum for distance learning for this year and we are having a one hour training prior to school starting due to time constraints. That is not enough training for a new curriculum for all subject areas! We are also required to teach face-to-face with our students on a rotational basis from 7:55 a.m. to 2:10 p.m. We are also required to shepherd along those who are distance learning. How are we supposed to teach face-to-face and also teach those who are distance learning during our contracted hours?

Our motto is students first. As you meet virtually and other workers are doing the same (and teleworking), please put our students first and push back the return of our students to our campuses until it is safe for them and our school staff to return safely.

Sincerely,
Jan Inn
Pearl Harbor Kai Elementary

Grade 4

Testimony BOE

From: Shondria Baynard <shondria.baynard@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Shondria Baynard
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:40 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Delaying student start date and cuts to shortage differentials

Hello, I am a teacher in Pearl City writing to express my concern about starting school next week on August 4th. I am a 3/4 sped teacher who has had no training or direction with how to go about the correct procedures for Covid-19 in my classroom. Some students require close connections or refuse to keep a mask on. What do I do? Also, what about students who require hands on assistance or restraining? I don't believe we teachers are ready to accept students into our care at this time. Please reconsider our opening date.

Also, I would not appreciate a cut in my pay. I am already struggling and would definitely have to consider different employment opportunities in order to survive. It is inconsiderate to take away part of someone's pay that they depend on, work hard for and deserve. You will definitely lose some valuable teachers if you cut shortage differentials. Please don't do that.

I hope you understand where we are coming from on these issues. Teachers want to go back to school but not if we are not safe and not being correctly paid for our services.

Thank you

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Testimony BOE

From: Jiena Marquez <jienamarquez@gmail.com> on behalf of Jiena Marquez
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:40 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY

Please push back the start date to allow teachers to be properly trained and prepared for the changes in our instructional platforms. If we want to do this right, (and safely) we need to be granted the time to learn, prepare.

-Jiena Marquez

Testimony BOE

From: Kaleo Kaluhiokalani <talanoa@hawaii.rr.com> on behalf of Kaleo Kaluhiokalani
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:40 AM
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 am writing to add my testimony as an educator and some of the concerns we have. Firstly, we as educators and a whole system are ill prepared to start school on August 4th. As a teacher, the first meeting we had as a faculty with out administration concerning the starting of the school year was July 8th where we learned the format and design for the new school year. That is only a month away to plan and implement. However, teachers are technically not employed until July 29th and many are working on our Summer to prepare for the this unprecedented new school experience. It would make sense from the teachers perspective, to start teachers on our start date of July 29th and give us a month to plan the physical planning of a new classroom with social distancing, a new curriculum and map for less classroom time and virtual work, time to gather data concerning students/parents needs and wants, time to attain digital platforms and the technology needed to implement distance learning effectively, teacher training time to prepare for virtual teaching, and PLAN. Starting school on August 4th is NOT A GOOD IDEA.

I am also writing concerning the health and wellness of our students and ME and fellow educators. I do not feel there are clear procedures and too many unanswered questions concerning COVID-19 and possible spread and infections. The simple question about what to do if a student does not have a pencil can bloom into a thousand scenario whether we keep providing the pencil and exhausting our resources, disinfecting the pencil which takes up teacher time, etc. I feel the Board of Education and the Department of Health have not come to teachers with a clear plan and I DO NOT FEEL SAFE and my HEALTH IS AT RISK. There are too many unknowns to start school and physically meet in classrooms. There are too many UNANSWERED QUESTIONS To start on August 4th.

My last concern is money. Please do not take money away from the classrooms. Right now money is being spent on supplies concerning minimizing the spread of the virus and money needs to be spent on technology to implement the standards and curriculum in order to educate students. Teachers need tools and resources to implement new curriculum in new styles. teachers need training.

Aloha,

Christine Sina Kaluhiokalani

High School Math Teacher
Kahuku High and Intermediate
25 years experience

Testimony BOE

From: Katrina Karl <katrina.karl@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Katrina Karl
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:41 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha Board of Education members,

My name is Katrina Karl and I am a teacher at Waipahu 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.

If the opening of school cannot be delayed further, at the very least it is imperative to answer many questions before school begins. It is unacceptable to begin school with so many uncertainties. There are so many questions that could be listed, but some of the most pressing questions for me are:

- 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?
- 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?
- How will arrangements for substitute teachers work? As I work at a hybrid school, how are substitutes going to deliver both online and face-to-face instruction simultaneously? What safeguards will be in place for our substitutes, many of whom are at risk due to being elderly as well as working at multiple schools?
- What will happen with students at hybrid schools that still do not have access to devices or internet for online learning? Schools can only be expected to obtain and loan out so many devices, especially at larger schools.

Katrina

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Testimony BOE

From: Emily Brou <emily.brou@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Emily Brou
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:41 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY
Attachments: Testimony.docx

Please find my Testimony attached to this email.

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.

Aloha,

My name is Emily Brou and I am a teacher at Waipahu Intermediate School. I am also a mother of two small children who will be attending daycare upon the resumption of school.

I am emailing my testimony regarding Action Item h. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association: 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

As a teacher and a parent, I implore you to postpone the reopening of physical school buildings. I understand that there is a concern of students losing even more educational growth due to our experiences with the 4th quarter. You need to understand, that if the school year were to begin with Distance Learning, it would NOT be the same as the 4th quarter. The reason why the 4th quarter was such a disappointment is because teachers were NOT allowed to require or grade student work thus, many of our students decided not to participate. Teachers have been having discussion all summer long about how we can implement a better distance learning experience for our children. Many of us have been thinking and planning ALL summer during our BREAK. Keep in mind, the paychecks that we are receiving is money we have already earned! We will not be compensated for all of the time and energy we have spent this summer preparing for our children, but we do it anyways because we LOVE our children!

With the current guidance from the governor's office to not have gatherings of groups larger than 10, I am very concerned about having the 15 students in my classroom that my school is proposing to me. That means, I could have upwards of 75 students in and out of my room throughout the day. We are NOT implementing these "bubbles" that keep being advertised to the public unless you consider 75 children to be a "Ohana Bubble", I certainly do not. I personally went in and moved my classroom furniture around to figure out how to fit 15 students in there AND myself. It uses up every piece of usable space in my room and leaves me NO ROOM to circulate my classroom and stay 6 feet away from the children. Thus, I won't be leaving my desk all day.

How is it better for our children to be 6 feet away from their peers and staff all day long, wearing a mask in the Hawaii heat because guess what, my school does not have A/C. We sweat and have heat issues on a normal basis, let alone when we are going to be wearing masks. On top of that, the water fountains at the school have been turned off and are off limits. That means, we expect students to carry enough water with them to make it through the day. Not sure if you have been in our school and have witnessed this, but many students drink multiple full hydro flask bottles during the day because it is so hot. This situation is genuinely concerning to me because I am afraid for my students. Afraid that they may fall ill of overheating and dehydration. The school will be at fault if this happens. It is beyond insane to expect that children can carry MULTIPLE full hydroflasks with them to school, if they were to refill 3 times on a normal school day, you are implying that you expect them to carry 3 with them at school all day. That's not feasible. Teachers are going to end up spending a lot of money out of pocket to purchase water bottles to keep on hand for students. We cannot imagine sitting there watching our students suffer because they are thirsty so we will end up using our miniscule paychecks to help them. Yet another thing that we do that is outside of our contract terms.

We all want to return to work, and return to our students. I miss the daily hugs from my kids. Yes, intermediate school students still NEED those teacher hugs. They won't be able to get them this year

and that is saddening and unfair to let them see us, want a hug, and know that we can't give that to him. Or, if we do, we are jeopardizing our health and there's. What if we did give a hug and then that student got sick? It would be extremely difficult to trace contact back to that hug, but what if parents try that? What if they demand someone be held liable for their child getting sick? Who will take that responsibility?

I am disappointed in the quality of the writing that I have put forth to you, but it remains as a clear example of my anxiety and frustration with this situation that we are in. Sending children back to brick and mortar buildings in groups of 15 (and larger) is not safe. It's not better for the children. It's not better for teachers. That is where I will leave things for you. Thank you for your time.

Testimony BOE

From: Mandy Kinore <mandyshinoz@gmail.com> on behalf of Mandy Kinore
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:41 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY

Aloha Member of the Board of Education,

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

I am a special education teacher at Makawao Elementary School on Maui. As a special education teacher for the past 7 years I can honestly state I love what I do, I love my job, but it is an intense field to be in. During my time as an educator I have seen many special education teachers come and go due to being under-recognized for the amount of work we do. We are often thrown under the bus with lawsuits for a job in which we strive to do our best as well as have poorly structured trainings and district leaders who can't give us answers for things parents are threatening to take us to court about. This is causing much burnout and stress with special education teachers who work with children with disabilities because they want to make a difference.

By cutting our extra compensation for the 2020-2021 school year it would greatly affect my views of staying within the field. This past school year (2019-2020), having to deal with the distance learning and my increasing caseload, meetings, paper work, and constant parent communication, I was beyond burnt out. I had no time for my two toddlers who were at home with me and spent over 70% of my day on my computer working. If it wasn't for the differential in pay I probably would've thrown my hands up and left this occupation. This job is definitely not easy. I go home praying everyday that a parent won't turn around and put a personal lawsuit on me because of the verbiage in which I need to thoroughly look over for IEPs, PWN, eligibility, etc.

Please reconsider this action and allow for us hard-to-staff educators to have our continued differential pay for the 2020-2021 school year. Not only does this motivate us to stay within our field, but it also allows us to strive to do a better job since we are finally being recognized for our hard work.

Once again as I stated before, I love my job, I love the kids I work with, and I love seeing the difference I can make in their lives... please don't take my joy in my job away by taking away our pay differential. I hope you take into consideration my testimony before making your decision. Mahalo!

Sincerely,
Mandy Kinore

Testimony BOE

From: Tyler Hill <tyler.hill@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Tyler Hill
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:41 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

My name is Tyler Hill and i am a FSC Special education teacher at Waialua High and Intermediate. I am testifying on Action Item G: Board Action on temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year. Please reject the proposal to put a discontinuance on the differential payments this school year. You made promises and you need to keep them. Without the added differential there is a very good chance I will have to resign my position as teacher. This will impact the keiki immensely. I have been with them the past 2 years and they have made huge gains in the time I've been with them. They can't afford for me to lose the differential and all of the keiki will be negatively impacted by the amount of teachers that will leave if you dont reject the propasl. It will be one you! Not the teachers. You have us your word, you can't go back on that. What kind of an example is that showing the keiki? Please reject this offer, Hawaii will be negatively impacted even more if the differential is discontinued.

- Tyler Hill

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Testimony BOE

From: Debra Weisz <10074041@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Debra Weisz
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:42 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Hello,

I have been a school counselor for 17 years on Maui, and have lived here for 34 years; my children grew up in the schools here.

I am 64 years old and have pondered over the summer break, should I just retire? I think this way, because I could retire, I could move on to a great life, I would be relieved of all the anxiety I feel daily due to what I read in the news with COVID.

But, when I think about my students, how I have had the same ones since 6th grade. I think about my relationship with them, the connections I have made, how so many have shared their personal struggles and stories with me. I am their safe place at school, I am the one person they trust, that they know has their back. So, I decided no, I won't retire this year, because of them. I won't let my students down.

However, I feel the DOE, BOE, Superintendent and Hawaii Legislature has let me down (again). They have repeatedly failed to support, to value us. It seems every time they consider giving us raises, or differentials I get my hopes up again. Maybe, this time around, they get it. Come to find out, they eventually want to backtrack and fail us again.

They make decisions and have no clue what is really going on in the school level. I know this because if all of them were former teachers, or in administrative positions, they would KNOW our hearts, how we think and how we care for our students. And their decisions would show this.

I went to my school yesterday to get my keys as I need to rearrange my counseling office for the 6' distance. I spoke with my principal and shared my concerns with him. He in turn shared the state is giving him plexiglass shields...but not enough. So, he said for me to buy my own and DOE would reimburse me.

So, last night I ordered and paid for my own supplies to keep me safe, as I knew I could only trust my HSTA, and nobody else.

Hawaii is paradise for the tourists but for those who live here working, it is a up and down roller coaster.

Please listen to us, please do not let us down, yet again.

Thank you,

Debbie Weisz
8th grade Counselor
Iao Intermediate School

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Testimony BOE

From: gerry K <grryk@yahoo.com> on behalf of gerry K
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:42 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am a 5th grade teacher in the high risk category for the SARS-Cov-2 virus. Please ensure that DOE schools are ready to accept students in as safe a manner as possible, and that proper training is provided to teachers so we can do a fantastic job at distance learning.

Gerald Kalisik
Waiakeawaena Elementary School

Testimony BOE

From: Mary Smith <msmith2@chaminade.edu> on behalf of Mary Smith
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:43 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Do not open schools 8-4-20

Dear BOE,

I do not believe the approach the DOE superintendent has taken during covid19 times is responsible or safe for students or teachers. Schools will become a Petri dish for the coronavirus.

Shame, shame, shame on you for your disregard for human life.

Sincerely,

Dr. Mary E. Smith

Testimony BOE

From: Matthew May <maym@hawaii.edu> on behalf of Matthew May
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:42 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony on Action Item H

Aloha,

My name is Matthew May, I am a new hire SPED teacher at Stevenson Middle School.

I am submitting 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 been having active conversations with other new hires and on the job teachers about this issue, and although we wished that all items would be in place given the month time span we had since reaching an agreement in our MOU with the HDOE on school reopening, its apparent that written protocol to protect the safety of both our students and ourselves has not materialized and there is no clear policy on several key issues that come to mind:

- written detailed guidance from the DOH on school reopening
- uniformity in mask wearing among students and teachers
- exactly how and who accommodates families who require 100-percent distance learning
- clear protocol to follow when student, teachers, or adults associated with a school or their someone in their 'ohana test positive for COVID-19

These weaknesses leave too much to chance and compromise everyone's safety **as well as the overall goal** of providing students with a stable and safe means of continuing their education for the rest of the school year.

Without clear measures in place we leave the door open to any range of drastic measures based on unmeasured decision making. The more we plan now, the better we can anticipate the contingencies and minimize disruptions. **But to plan after students arrive is to invite disaster** as we will already be in a state of intermingling large populations of unrelated students and adults with each other.

In beginning of this pandemic, schools were shutdown first as they posed an immediate danger to the safety of students, staff, and the community. Its in the economic road to recovery that we now realize how essential students and staff at schools truly are in our current economic system, but this does not mitigate the risk to health for those very people.

Health and safety must come first, and we must plan for it. Please act to delay the reopening of schools until we have the necessary details, plans, and necessities to make reopening a safe and stable option for our all.

Mahalo,

Matthew May, Stevenson Middle School, Honolulu

Testimony BOE

From: Rachelle Sparkman <rnsarkman@gmail.com> on behalf of Rachelle Sparkman
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:44 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimonials

Hello to whom it may concern;

As a teacher I know and understand the importance of students being in school. I am excited to meet my new bunch but am apprehensive at the idea of starting school already. Although health for all is the number 1 priority, I feel teachers are not given enough time to plan appropriately for the new school year. We are being asked to teach in the classroom face to face along with providing effective virtual lessons to others. As an inclusion teacher with 4 SPED students my "Wednesday virtual day" which was to be utilized for small groups for my general Ed students online, plan with my team all along while having custodians cleaning I will have those SPED students in class with me. How am I suppose to be in 2 places at once? When asked I was told, if I have time then I plan. How is the effective teaching?? When are we suppose to plan for these kids?? Our time is more valuable more than ever, we only see our kids 2 times a week. Shouldn't we make the most of it??

Why are we rushing to start. Let teachers come back during August; plan, prepare and make best for these kids they deserve that! Students can start back in September. I much rather have 150 days of solid instruction and less teacher burn out than 180 days of instruction that is sub par and teachers quitting before Christmas break.

We are NOT ready!

Many administrators can't even answer simple questions, we need more guidance and time to do the best we can!

Unprepared teacher,
Rachelle Sparkman

--

Rachelle Sparkman
rnsarkman@gmail.com
254-238-1717

Testimony BOE

From: janelle torres <torresjanelle13@gmail.com> on behalf of janelle torres
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:44 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: testimony

Aloha Board of Education,

I'm a teacher at Kaiser High School and I am also a parent of twin fourth graders and a first time kindergartener at Aina Haina Elementary. I have been an educator for over 15 years in the State of Hawaii. I love my job, I love my students and I absolutely love my own children. I want the best for all of them. I believe in public school education and believe that it is very important for children to have a good education. In my own household, academics are first priority. I say all of this because I want the kids to be able to go back to school. I think it is in their best interest to do so... However, only if everything has been done to keep them AND their households safe. And unfortunately, I don't believe we are at that point yet.

Therefore 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.

Coming from the point of view of an educator and also a parent of young keiki, I can tell you right now I am not confident in the opening of the schools in two weeks. I see where Kaiser is currently on readiness to reopen and based on that alone, my husband and I have decided schools are not a safe enough environment yet and we have opted to homeschool our own children in fear. To give you an idea of what I am talking about, I am supposed to open my classroom to over 150 students in two weeks with only ONE spray bottle of disinfectant and a roll of paper towels. We have no refill disinfectant, no hand sanitizer, no lysol, no hand soap, no clorox wipes, no face shields, no masks, no sneeze guards, no kleenex, no extra paper towels... NOTHING. We were told that the state said each school is responsible for obtaining their own supplies and therefore each department at the school needs to purchase their own. Well, that would be great in theory, but the money is not available to us yet. Once it is and we are able to write the PO and then get it processed through the state, it will be too late and school will have started already. Most likely we will be at least a month in before we are able to go to costco to buy supplies we need (seeing that they even have it in stock). I have also asked our administration if I could buy my own supplies and the school reimburse me but I have yet to hear a response on that. As much as I'd love to do it, to supply 150 plus kids on my own would be more than I can afford. Therefore the first major question I have that has yet to be answered by the DOE is how do we go back to the classrooms, teach and keep students safe without the proper resources to do so? The CDC recommends washing your hands and cleaning high touch areas frequently... how are we able to do that without the proper equipment?? That alone would increase the chance of spread. As Bruce Anderson says, most kids are not really threatened by this virus (most being the keyword) but what about their families that they are taking it home to? What if they give it to their parents? or their grandparents? What about the teachers and coaches that interact with them all the time? The virus will affect the people that the students know. That alone is reason to push back the reopening.

My second concern/question is where are the protocols for the various situations that can arise at school. I understand that the situation is fluid, but there needs to be guidelines and protocols set in writing for teachers to follow. For instance, what happens if a child in my class has a fever? Do I

have the other students in that class remain in place because they were possibly exposed? Do I send them to their next teacher (High schools are not in bubbles, there is mixing of students because they are all taking various electives)? Do I have to notify parents? Do I quarantine for 14 days? If I do have to quarantine, how do the other students who were rotating into the school the next day come to class? Will the other teachers that had that student have to quarantine as well? How does the school run at that point with that many teachers out? Do the students of all those teachers have to quarantine as well while we wait for the results? That is the many questions that arise from one situation alone. Yet there are no answers put forward by the DOE. How can we start school when there is no protocol in place for an event like this? Teachers will not know what to do and it opens up the school and state to litigation if we do the wrong thing, not to mention the possibility of increasing the spread if someone is to get sick. At our school alone, the teachers have compiled a google document of questions we have for admin and the state regarding protocol and reopening that is already at 60+ questions. Things like what does lunch look like? Who will enforce social distancing at lunchtime in a high school setting? What happens when we are notified that a students family member is positive? Are students allowed to be dropped off early to school? If so, where do they wait? Is the DOE going to check that all schools/teachers have proper cleaning and protective supplies/devices? Once these questions can be answered then schools have a better chance at reopening successfully. Until they are answered, schools are left to flounder on their own which decreases the chances of keeping our keiki safe. How can we deem that to be ok?

Another main concern/question is that teachers have NOT been trained yet. The superintendent said in her speech that teachers have been trained over the summer in online learning. That is false. Very few teachers were trained over the summer. I'd say 1-2% of our Kaiser staff is now trained in online learning. We were notified that we will have an option tomorrow to do a day long distance learning seminar but that is not nearly enough. I teach three different types of science classes and will need to prep individual things for each class. Each one will need different types of online opportunities because of the type of class they are. This takes time. I need to find programs, vett them, learn how to effectively use them, see how they would be incorporated into different lessons, upload and create the files and rubrics, scaffold learning for various types of students and so forth. Then repeat for two more science classes. I can't do all of this in the short time frame given to us. It took the DOE over two months to come up with 3 models for schools to use. They are giving us teachers two weeks to create a brand new learning system for every class we teach, with minimal to no training at this point. Don't get me wrong, I think online learning can be very effective and I did learn a lot from quarter 4 last year, and I'm actually excited to try the new programs that are out there (I found a few lab simulations over the summer that I want my students to be able to try) but realistically I need more time to get it all together now that the actual schedules are finally set and I know when and how I will be teaching.

My last main concern (I do have a lot others but these are my main four) is that here in Hawaii, we are unique. Our grandparents help out ALOT in the drop off/pick up and watching/caring of our kids. They will have to help out even more with the kids in school at different times and not being able to go to before school and afterschool programs. We need to keep them safe. My own parents would have to help me drop off my children, especially my Kindergartener since she can't walk in by herself yet. This is because both my husband and I work and need to be at work before 8am. We have no other option than to rely on our grandparents. I know a lot of other parents are in the same boat... we need to keep them safe by making sure the schools are completely prepared with resources and protocols in place before we open them to face to face learning. This is another reason why we are choosing to homeschool our own kids. To help keep my parents safe because the schools are not ready yet.

Anyway, I do want to say that I appreciate all that you do for our keiki and I know that you have a tough decision on your plates. I could even understand starting on the specified date with completely online learning and then phasing to blended learning once all protocols and resources in each school have been created and established (this would still be a strain on teachers since we are not properly trained yet but would be a good compromise). I just want what's best for our everyone involved. A well thought out plan that has clear and

established guidelines that we can all follow and the resources to carry out that plan. Once this is done, I would be a lot more confident in teaching at the schools and in sending my own children to school.

Thank you so much for taking the time to read this email and for the consideration in making these decisions. I greatly appreciate it.

Sincerely,

Janelle Torres

Testimony BOE

From: Mary Ann Rarogal <mrarogal77@yahoo.com> on behalf of Mary Ann Rarogal
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:44 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Hello, my name is Mary Ann Rarogal. This year will be my 9th year teaching at Kalihi Kai Elementary. I am dual certified, so I've had positions in both the general education and special education. I am here to testify for:

- 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 SY, 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): 2017-20201 contractual modification and condition of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

Let me start by saying this: Teachers and education have always been #1 during election season, and always #1 to cut funds from when times are hard.

Just like nurses are the frontline health workers, teachers are also on the frontline to teach and help shape our keiki into responsible, caring, innovative life-long learners in our communities. As a Special Education teacher, our students require a more specialized instruction along with specialized tools to support their individual needs. With little to no classroom funds (simply because schools aren't funded enough), we dip into our own personal savings, every year, to get the necessities our students need. I'm talking about sensory items, support equipment, resources and supplies to create learning materials for our students, and even purchasing certain foods/snacks particular to a student when parents do not supply the teacher with. Some of us, Special Education teachers, have our own families to provide for, and we are having to dip into our pockets to provide our students with their needs as well. Let's not get into the cost of living in Hawai'i. Special Education teachers have additional duties that require a lot of work and time. Not only do we need to coordinate and lead IEP meetings, but we also have the role of creating, writing, reviewing, and revising every student's IEP; we have the responsibility of making sure we are in compliance with laws and regulations; we are responsible for high stake paperwork, in contact with other IEP team members (speech therapists, occupational therapists, etc.) and are advocates for our students.

When I first started this career, my salary was about \$41,000. In 9 years, it has increased about \$10,000...9 years! How much has our governor or mayor increased in their pay over 9 years? Much more than \$10,000. Yet, these are the same people that say education is important,

then turn around and cut from education the moment they need money. Why are teachers always first to get cut? Teachers do not feel valued, and it shows. Last semester, when the BOE agreed to fund the differentials, it brought feelings of respect and trust for us. Now that trust has been broken. You want to “suspend” the differentials that you promised. Have you tried to look into other options? Maybe I could possibly help you with that. In preparation for opening this new school year, with unanswered questions and last-minute changes, a colleague of mine reached out to our Special Education Resource District Representative on suggestions for FSC and Resource classrooms to operate when school begins. No suggestions were given, and my colleague was told to refer back our school, our admin, our teachers to problem-solve on our own because “every school is different.” Teachers have been told, time and time again, to problem-solve within our own school and come up with our own plan when we needed support. What is the purpose of having a district representative if teachers need to problem-solve on their own. So, a possible solution is maybe looking into adjusting salaries within district positions that are non-essential. Pay teachers what we deserve.

With that, we need more time to prepare for this coming school year. We are not asking to delay the opening of the school year for a quarter or even a semester. We are simply asking for a couple more days or weeks to prepare for a safe return, to be given training on how to provide online distance learning effectively this time around as we were forced to close schools last quarter and immediately provide distance learning with no knowledge or preparation. And let me tell you, teachers went above and beyond to make do with what we had, the limited skills we had, to provide distance learning for our students the best we could. Special Education teachers even made home visits to drop off materials for our students to be able to learn from home. Now that we see distance learning can and will occur this school year, we need more guidance, more training to provide effective online learning for students when at home, written guidelines and protocols for schools on how to operate in and out of the classroom with social distancing, sanitation, and in the event that a staff or student contracts the virus. I can say that our teachers did not have adequate training during the summer to support online learning for students. Maybe some schools did, but some schools did not. We need to all be on the same page. We all want to return to school. We want to see our students. Unfortunately, the uncertainty of this virus, and the unknown effects to one's body is terrifying. We want to make sure that students, families, and staff are prepared, protected, and safe (that includes being able to check every student's temperature daily!). We need your help to do so. Put yourselves in our shoes. We don't get to hide behind a closed office or cubicle. We will be confined in classroom, with 12+ students every day. We are once again, put in a position where teachers need to problem-solve for our own questions and concerns.

We hope you reconsider suspending our compensation and show teachers that we are still valued even during these difficult times. And please consider giving teachers adequate time, training, and preparation to open schools safely for our keiki. Thank you.

Testimony BOE

From: KC Ahkey <emaliaahkey@gmail.com> on behalf of KC Ahkey
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:45 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Delay Student Start Date

My name is K. Cole I am a teacher at Maui Waena Inter on Maui. Please delay the start date for students and allow schools to prepare safely for opening as well as distancing.

There is so much confusion and unanswered questions about student safety and how to best set up our classrooms physically and distantly. It would also be nice to be more aligned as a district, complex, or school, and not every teacher for themselves. Especially when it comes to safety protocols on campus/in the classroom and teaching resources for blended learning.

I am currently scrambling to buy cleaning sanitizers for my classroom because I cannot get answers and I want myself and students to be safe. As we all know learning and teaching is not effective if we do not feel safe.

Last week I attended a one day 6 hour event of 3 different virtual classes on googleclassroom and other virtual teaching tools. The event was provided by the DOE. I was informed about the class via my state email a week earlier as I assume others were too. Almost 300 educator attended the event on their break. We want to do our best and we want to do it safely but we need time to plan and all be on the same page.

Thank you

Testimony BOE

From: Sara Jelley <sarajelleymusic@gmail.com> on behalf of Sara Jelley
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:45 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Please delay opening of schools

Aloha,

I am a citizen of Maui and I am writing to ask you to please consider strongly delaying opening of Hawaii schools until a plan is established that helps everyone feel safe, teachers especially. In order for the state to open fully to tourists, we have to ensure that schools, which mix the population more than any other industry, are safe for every child, their families, teachers and their families, and anyone that comes in contact with any of these people. Therefore, this matter affects the entire island.

Please take some time in order to treat our citizens like our lives matter to you. Thank you.

--

Sara Jelley
Vocalist, Singer/Songwriter, Performer
Voice Coach, Guitar/Ukulele/Songwriting instructor
970-658-7437
Sarajelleymusic.com

Testimony BOE

From: mmoreau2112 <mmoreau2112@yahoo.com> on behalf of mmoreau2112
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:45 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony to delay opening of schools

Aloha,

I am writing you this email in hopes you will reconsider opening the schools for the upcoming school year. I think it is a very short sighted decision and is putting at risk the children and the teachers. I urge you to delay school openings until proper precautionary measures are safely in place for students and teachers. This pandemic is no joke and putting that many people in a confined space during a time when we know so little about the Coronavirus is just a bad idea.

Sincerely,

Matthew Moreau
Resident of Maui, HI and Citizen of Planet Earth

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

Testimony BOE

From: Cindy Oshiro <cshibao23@gmail.com> on behalf of Cindy Oshiro
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:45 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Differential

Sent from my iPhone

Due to COVID 19 the differentials have been a great help to my family financially. I also know of new education graduates who are dually certified that are choosing to teach SPED due to the differential in pay.

It is a much welcomed addition to our pay especially in these times and there after. We can still pay our bills and be able to help our parents and children.

Please reconsider....

Thank you

Cindy Oshiro

Testimony BOE

From: janinekawazoe <janinekawazoe@gmail.com> on behalf of janinekawazoe
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:48 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: My Concerns about the 2020-21 SY

To Whom It May Concern,

I am a second grade teacher at Naalehu Elementary School. Although I don't live in Ka'u, I have been willing to make my daily two and a half hour, roundtrip ommute from Keaau to teach my students in Naalehu.

My first several years at my school were very tough, as we used to experience the hugest teacher turnover given the fact that Naalehu Elementary School is a rural school more than an hour to go to either Hilo or Kona. Therefore, at the time, most teachers (upon receiving their tenure) would transfer to a school closer to their homes.

In fact, after my first year at my school, at the end of the school year, I was a bit stunned when several of my students asked me if I'd be transferring to another school.

In terms of teachers at my school, this coming school year will be my 22nd year at Naalehu Elementary School. This puts me in the vast minority of "old-timers" as only two other teachers have also been teaching there, besides myself - just to note that my other two colleagues both live in Ka'u, making me the sole teacher who voluntarily chooses to continue teaching at Naalehu Elementary School.

Conversely, when the Hawaii DOE began instituting the Hard to Fill pay differential for Satisfactory teachers, it made such a huge difference in that far less teachers left our school and also, having the possibility of potentially receiving our pay differential at the end of the school year made teachers want to perform at a higher performance level and capacity with that monetary bonus to inspire and motivate them for teaching excellence.

The pay differential is also very important, especially at our rural school, so that our keiki will continue to receive their daily learning from seasoned, highly-effective teachers who voluntarily choose to remain at our school to teach, instead of transferring elsewhere.

This is crucial at my school also so that our school can perform at it's highest capacity ideally at every grade level. Just like students who want to strive towards long-term goals, so do teachers. Although, we're happy when we get a positive teacher rating at year's end, continuing to receive our pay differential would be the ice cream sundae with not just caramel sauce, but also having whipped cream, caramel sauce, confetti candy sprinkles AND a maraschino cherry on top!

If the DOE wants teachers to continue to strive high (no pun intended), as well as continuing to have the highest qualified teachers choosing to remain at rural, Hard to Fill schools, I urge you to please resume the Hard to Fill pay differential for those of us in rural, Hard to Staff schools.

My other concern is that now with only two weeks left before students return to school on August 4th, I feel very strongly that Hawaii DOE schools are definitely not 100% planned for schools to be confidently and successfully reopened.

Although there seems to be an outline of sorts, I feel that not nearly enough thought, reflection and time has been utilized to have an "iron-clad", fool-proof plan for all respective stakeholders. In addition, I also help to care for my 86 year old mom who lives in a separate household (therefore, I absolutely cannot risk potential infection as I am the only child and my dad passed away many years ago making me the only person who can help her. In addition, I am still recovering from cancer that I had two years ago. Although I currently am in remission, my immune system is still not at 100% and I am still taking daily cancer medication to ensure no cancer recurrence.

For all of these above reasons, please take careful reconsideration for discontinuing pay differentials for Hard to Fill schools, as well as spending extra time regarding all COVID-19 scenarios, school systems, etc. before having students return to school - more preferably after the current, slated date of August 4th.

Mahalo for your kind attention,

Janine Kawazoe
Second Grade Teacher
Naalehu Elementary School

Sent via my Samsung Galaxy, an AT&T 4G LTE smartphone

Testimony BOE

From: christine bandsma <shebands@gmail.com> on behalf of christine bandsma
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:45 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: re-opening of schools

Board of Education:

Thank you for receiving my testimony. I have been a teacher for 25 years and I love my job. We are in unprecedented times at this point. I am expected to return to the classroom in two weeks and at this late point in time I am seriously considering not returning to school. Teachers are hard workers and the job we do is extremely essential. So essential in fact that we shouldn't be expected to not only risk the health and safety of ourselves and our family but also those we serve every day, the students. There are too many unknowns for me to feel confident returning to my classroom on August 4th with students.

*Where will I get the PPE and cleaning supplies that my classroom will need, how do I pay for it?

*Once a student is sick in my class and I've noticed it, both of my 'bubbles' and everyone they've interacted with are exposed and then what?

*There are no protections for teachers or supports that are easily accessible if we become sick

*I don't want to be the one enforcing mask wearing in my classroom. I already know that I have a vocal parent who is seen protesting on street corners about civil rights violations in relationship to mask wearing.

*I don't want to be a guinea pig. No other public space on our island is being run the way we are expected to run our classroom in regards to Covid-19 protocols.

*There has been no teacher training of how to teach remotely in case we need to move back to that model. There has been no training on how to teach with a blended model. There has been no training on how to clean, monitor health and what parameters are in place for dealing with the actual virus component. There is no plan on what to do when there is a positive covid case in the school.

We must hold off on the start of the school year to protect our community. We must get training for teachers on how to teach in this new format before returning to school. We must have protocol in place for dealing with illness prevention and reaction once we get it.

Start the year all online and provide the time needed for training, safety and sanitation protocol training and creating plans for what will happen when the school gets a positive case of Covid.

There is too much to do to open safely on August 4th, it is impossible to open safely with solid plans of action on all of these fronts.

I feel sick even thinking about having to choose between the job I love, the students I serve and my own health and civic duty of causing no harm. I will be the vector for all of my students and my own immediate ohana.

Please make the right decision and delay the return of students to school until there are plans and protocols in place and we as teachers have been given the time needed to figure out how to teach in this new time.

Thank you,
Christine

Testimony BOE

From: Anna Harstad <fyaflygirl@icloud.com> on behalf of Anna Harstad
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:46 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

My name is Anna Harstad. I'm a 2nd grade teacher in the Farrington Complex. This is 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.](#)

SCHOOLS ARE NOT READY FOR OPENING.

I don't feel safe knowing there are Covid cases in Hawaii and I'm expected to put my health in danger because other people irrationally insist on physically being back in schools.

I was hoping our leaders would do their jobs and protect the people in our profession.

Teachers haven't been getting the respect or recognition we deserve. We're not valued when our minimal pay is threatened, seen as babysitters, and not the true educators we strive to be.

I'm not asking for an extended summer vacation. During last school year and all summer long I've been thinking about our current situation and how to prepare myself for this school year.

It seems as though our government and people in leadership positions don't know what to do or have consistent answers to our questions.

Also, why are guidelines put out to be followed by the public, but disregarded in schools?

I still do not feel safe being in an enclosed space (even with all my windows and doors open, and the struggle to have my students keep masks on while staying 6 ft. apart) for hours at a time.

By the way, even with my class being divided in half, I will have 15 students on alternating days.

Plus, it makes no sense to me that parents will put their children at risk knowing that they have underlying conditions like asthma, and be excused from wearing a mask in class.

Even though we take precautions and try our best to educate and train our students safety practices in school, there is no guarantee they will be followed when students are outside of school.

Please make smart decisions based on trustworthy information, science, and data. My safety, the people who I care about, and everyone's safety depend on you.

Sincerely,
Anna Harstad

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Dana Shishido <danes1985@gmail.com> on behalf of Dana Shishido
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:45 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

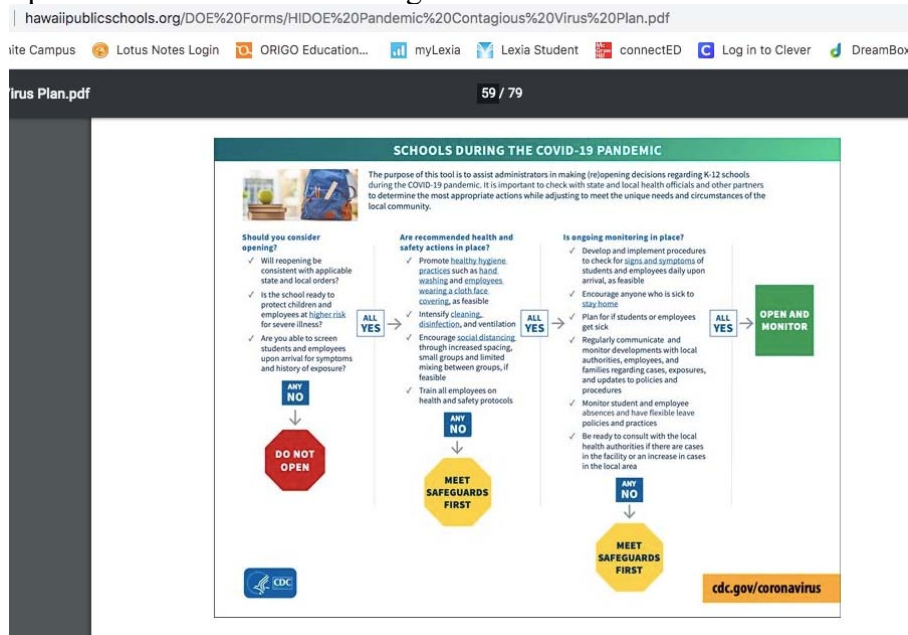
Aloha,

I am testifying on: H.Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding Between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 Contractual Modifications and Conditions of Work Related to COVID-19 Response for Bargaining Unit 5 Employees.

The past four months have been a roller coaster of emotions for me. The worst has been this month, as I waited to hear how our school opening would occur. I must say that I am very apprehensive of going back to school, as there is a lack of direction on the part of leadership.

As an educator, I do my research. I went to the DOE website and read that the opening of schools will follow the DOH and CDC guidelines. However, the DOH has not put out any guidelines to the opening of schools, as of yet.

I perused the "Pandemic Contagious Virus Plan" and discovered a chart provided by the CDC on page 59.



If you look at the first column of this chart: "Should you consider opening?"

1. "Will reopening be consistent with applicable state and local orders?"

Testimony BOE

From: Cassandra Jones <cassandrajones808@gmail.com> on behalf of Cassandra Jones
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:46 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: A PHASED RETURN IS THE ONLY OPTION FOR A SAFE RETURN

Dear Chair Catherine Payne and Members of the Board,

My name is Cassandra Jones. I am a licensed teacher with nearly two decades of experience working in both public and private schools on Oahu and Maui. I currently serve on the board of an independent school where I have been actively involved in creating school opening plans based on CDC and DOH guidance. My husband is also a public high school teacher and we are parents to an elementary school student; we have multiple families with existing health conditions that make them particularly vulnerable to COVID-19.

I believe that both our State and our schools are NOT prepared to resume face-to-face instruction at this time. After months of extensive research and careful consideration, I am certain that the only safe school models during a global pandemic are either small micro-schools held primarily outdoors or online learning. My family is requesting a 100% distance learning option for our child, and are concerned that there may be NO teacher involvement with this option.

My family and nearly every educator I know fully support a "Phased Return." Beginning the year online, with individual family and class meetings would provide sufficient time to implement appropriate risk mitigating strategies and safety protocols needed to keep our students, teachers, staff, families, and communities safe from preventable outbreak and potential mass-death.

Opening schools in early August for face-to-face instruction is putting the cart before the horse. The current approach lacks foresight; if properly prepared, our communities could continue to have low community spread of SARS-CoV-2, allowing schools to remain operational long-term. If face-to-face instruction begins without comprehensive school safety precautions and protocols in place, schools will no doubt contribute significantly to widespread community infection resulting in tragedy. Messaging from State leadership appears to assume school closure is imminent; the lack of preparation in terms of available testing and adequate contact tracing, necessary upgrades and changes to school facilities, staffing related issues, and unclear safety protocols reflect a failure to prioritize sustainable school safety. It is highly irresponsible and risky to welcome students, staff and teachers to campus without first ensuring their safety.

To resume face-to-face instruction SAFELY, we must adhere to the current CDC guidelines. All preventative precautions and risk mitigating strategies must be explored and implemented to the fullest extent possible before bringing large numbers of students, teachers, and staff back to campus, including but not limited to the following:

TETRIS:

- Testing is available for teachers and students; plan is implemented for regular testing of teachers
- Ensure State contact tracing is sufficiently staffed; create and staff dedicated contact tracing positions to monitoring school related outbreak
- Strictly enforced testing/quarantine of all travelers entering the state
- Establish and communicate quarantine requirements for exposed teachers, classes, schools, families and effected community members

STATE-WIDE SCHOOL POLICIES AND PROTOCOL

- Determine metrics for each school district, with clear guidelines regarding when to implement changes in instruction model (limit or end face-to-face instruction), additional safety precautions, and specific thresholds for school closure (number of cases of community spread)
- Implement a state-wide school mask policy (not open to interpretation or varied enforcement by teachers) for teachers, staff, students and visitors
- Implement risk mitigating strategies for age groups for whom masks are developmentally inappropriate (Eg. significant reduction in class sizes, maximizing use of outdoor learning space)
- Create state-wide school health check protocol for all staff, teachers, students and visitors
- Communicate school protocols for reporting of potential and confirmed cases to state agencies and community
- Review bus safety and implement plans to limit exposure on buses (physical distancing, mask policy, hand sanitizer available on entry, staggered arrivals/departures)
- Restrict extracurricular activities (no in-person choir, contact sports, etc.)
- Ensure individual school plans for limiting exposure between classes are fully developed (bathroom use, start/close of school, transitions)
- Initiate a system of regular inspection to ensure school compliance with pandemic safety standards (health check protocol, hand-washing stations, classroom physical distancing, ventilation, etc.)
- Acknowledge that based on current research, students 10-19 pose the greatest risk for community spread of all age groups; require or recommend distance learning for all but the most vulnerable middle and high school students and establish community resource programs at all middle and high school campuses (as reflected in Maui High School's approved plan)

SUPPLIES:

- Adequate supply of PPE is available for teachers, staff, and students
- Hand-washing stations available in close proximity to all classrooms
- Hands free soap/towel dispensers installed
- Sufficient cleaning supplies for each classroom
- Sanitation equipment (fog disinfectant machines) procured for each classroom
- UV light bulbs installed

FACILITIES:

- Outdoor learning spaces are created and/or non-traditional locations secured/prepared to minimize time indoors (Eg. county facilities, college campuses, performance venues, vacant commercial properties)
- Ventilation issues in every classroom are addressed to allow for maximum circulation of outdoor air
- Air conditioning filtration upgraded or alternative ventilation systems put in place
- Individual student desks or work spaces are available

STAFFING:

- Plan implemented to address teacher and substitute teacher shortages; hire and train new personnel
- Additional adult monitors provided to assist with supervision, safety and sanitation
- Questions regarding mandatory teacher quarantine and paid/unpaid leave are addressed
- Modified teaching options provided for teachers who are high-risk or have high-risk household members
- Protocol in place for teachers who display COVID-19 symptoms
- Training provided for teachers and staff in new safety protocols and procedures

COMMUNITY SUPPORT & EDUCATION:

- Plans to address childcare issues created by hybrid schedules for teachers, staff, and community are created and implemented
- Alternative childcare option(s) coordinated for symptomatic students to prevent families sending students to school sick
- Education for families regarding community safety, and new school policies and procedures is provided

Please delay a return to face-to-face instruction and implement a “Phased Return;” it is the only SAFE option.

Sincerely,
Cassandra Jones

Testimony BOE

From: Jennifer Grant <jennifer.grant@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Jennifer Grant
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:46 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony-Differentials

Jennifer Grant
Farrington High School

Today I am testifying in regards to the Department of Educations plan to discontinue the differentials that were promised back in January. In May, the superintendent remarked that differentials would continue to be paid and now is backtracking that promise due to COVID 19 budget issues. This is extremely disappointing and wrong to do. I believe all differentials should still be paid to the qualifying teachers but for today's testimony, I will be addressing the special education differentials.

I am a dual certified special education and history teacher. I taught special education for several years before I switched to a general education line. The roles and responsibilities of special education teachers are above and beyond what a general education teacher is responsible for. At my school, In addition to having your special education class/students to service, you are also responsible for a caseload of IEPs that you must follow time lines for and coordinate meetings to accommodate all parties. Many times these IEPs get cancelled or need to be rescheduled which again falls to the IEP coordinator. After the IEP meeting, the IEP coordinator still needs to write the IEP. As a special education teacher/coordinator, you also need to make sure you are keeping track of your students' objectives throughout the year. In the inclusion setting, this means that you may not even have students on your caseloads in any of your classes but still need to make sure they are getting what they need in all their classes. All this is done while you are still responsible for a class of your own or while co teaching with a general education teacher. This is no easy feat.

These differentials are extremely important to retain special education teachers and are well deserved. I could go back to a special education line and was tempted by the differentials but I decided to stay with my line in general education because I really love what I teach and know that would change. There are many dual certified like myself that did go back to the special education classroom which means we will hopefully have less of a shortage.

Please keep paying the differentials that were promised to the teachers. COVID has hit our economy hard but it should not be an excuse to take away from the teachers.

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer Grant

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: Hello <duke8895@gmail.com> on behalf of Hello
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:46 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

In Hawaii the number of Covid 19 cases are rising! The Governor, the Lieutenant Governor and the mayor continuously tell us how social distancing is the key to decreasing cases and that group gatherings are the number one reason for this new increase in numbers. Why aren't we protecting our most precious resource, our Keiki! We've already seen how easily Covid 19 is spreading in the summer keiki programs and how it only takes one staff member or child to be exposed to spread Covid 19 in the community. In Hawaii, most families live in intergenerational housing situations and this would place everyone in that home at risk of getting Covid 19! Presently the state is seeing a rise in cases due to group gatherings inside and this indicates it is not the time to re-open schools to in person learning! Covid 19 is spreading in Hawaii due to groups gathering inside therefore does opening schools at this time make any sense right now? In fact, when numbers were lower criminals were being let out of jails and prisons because they were in close contact and might catch Covid, but now as numbers rise they want to have our children go back to school. Some of those classrooms do not even have air conditioning. Maybe schools should consider smaller numbers of students in classrooms or maybe even consider outside classrooms using tarps! The CDC has said that distance learning is the lowest risk of spreading the virus. I am asking you as our representative to please reconsider postponing the opening of in class learning for students at this time.

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

Testimony BOE

From: Marlon Domantay <domantaym@knights.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Marlon Domantay
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:46 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

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](#)

Aloha,

The health and safety of our community should be our main priority. The decision to re-open school is an uncomfortable feeling. The guidance from the state and school officials is poor. Masks and face shields are not mandated. I can wear a mask and face shield, but it does not prevent infection if others are not taking the same measures. Even with the proper mask and face shield, face-to-face contact with students is still an unnecessary risk. This is dangerous. Teachers and their families are being asked to make the ultimate sacrifice by returning to schools. I'm a teacher with a pre-existing health condition. The chance of death is a reality when I return to my classroom. I will be in close quarters with hundreds of students throughout the day, and I have to perform this task for 180 days. It is a terrifying reality for me and my family.

The education of our kids is critical in the success of our local communities and our state, but we should not position teachers, students, and their families to make the ultimate sacrifice. Reopening schools places our community in unnecessary risk of Covid-19 transmission

--



Marlon Domantay
Freshman Seminar/Health, Castle High School
School: (808) 305-0815
Room P-1 Box #21
Email: domantaym@knights.k12.hi.us

Testimony BOE

From: Natalie Hepting <nhepting84@gmail.com> on behalf of Natalie Hepting
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:47 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY for Differential pay and school start

Hello BOE,

First of all thank you for reviewing and collecting testimony regarding the differential pay for hard to fill positions for teachers and start date of school. I will be providing testimony for both matters as an educator and parent of school age children.

1. Differential Pay

I am a licensed special education teacher. I am currently in a teaching line that does not receive the differential benefits. However, I strongly believe that it will be a disadvantage to our students and schools if differential pay was discontinued. For my school we were able to hire sped teachers that chose to move into the sped line due to the increased pay. Those teachers have experience and from Hawaii. In the past most of our special education teachers were young, fresh out school, and mainland teachers. Although they stay for 1-3 years they all leave eventually. Last year alone just for our school, we had 3 sped teacher move back to the mainland. This has been a continues pattern over the years. I fear that if the differential is taken some of our mainland teachers that are still here will leave too and those that came into sped from gen we will go back to gen ed lines. We need to build up more stability for our special education teachers and departments.

The pay for teachers as is, is already low. I know of many special education teachers that move here who have to live in a household with other teachers, share rooms, etc. just to be able to afford to stay here. That is why they leave Hawaii. One teacher who left last school year stated to me her reason for leaving was that she would eventually want to be able to afford a home on her own. I personally can speak from my own experience if it was not for my husband's income and health insurance, I would have not been able to live in Hawaii. Plus as a special education teacher, there are always increased expenses for school supplies and materials. Yes that is voluntary that teachers provide and buy that but most of the time school purchases for big things are geared towards general education students (the majority). Another factor that I personally have encountered is an increased cost for childcare for my children due to meetings that often run beyond 4 pm. As you know many parents of our students work and within Special Education we are required to accomadadte parents, so if parents are requesting to meet at 4 pm, you have to figure out to make it work. Although general education teachers are also involved they often only have one or two of those meetings per year as special education students are spread out and distributed among many Gen ed teachers. Also the documentation requirement and all the legal aspects are extremely time consuming. There has to be evidence and prove for everything you do.

2. Reopening of school:

I understand that schools have to reopen and it is best that kids return to school and some sort of normality. However, I do not feel that the DOE is ready. There are so many questions with no answers. Teachers need training and time to be ready. Also my other big concern is that no funding to address COVID 19 was yet given to the schools. This money is essential to purchase materials, PPE, and other supplies. As of right now schools used their regular budget for all those purchases. The superintendent stated that she asked the gov. lge for money (\$57 million I believe) and so far received \$6 million. With that money as per superintendent software platforms and equity devices were primarily purchased, and nurses were hired for the phone lines that the DOE set up. Now what was done for the school level? Nothing. Don't you think that money is needed to handle this crisis. Also principals and schools will need the money to be able to provide for those safety practices before school is reopened and not after. The governor even stated that money has not yet been appropriated to the doe. So everything we are doing is just theory and there aren't any financial supports to implement it. The training opportunities that the superintendent is speaking of are all voluntary. So some teachers who were able to volunteer to log on an brows on the website and watch some videos may have done so without compensation. Money will need to be spend on training as well for teachers. What money is if we did not get any money

yet. The teachers will have to continue to volunteer their time to survive and make their students feel safe. Also what social/emotional training was given to teachers to address this crisis with students? None. What supports are in place for teachers for their own well being?

I personally was already impacted by COVID in my work. A few days ago I had a common cold (I assume). It started with a scratchy throat, cough, etc. I pretty much had all symptoms except fever. My healthcare provider ended up testing me and my result was negative. Personally, I reached out to my administrator asking what policies are in place for staff who feels sick. In the past all teachers including myself would come to work with a cold or cough. Now I did not feel comfortable because I did not want to be responsible for making another person ill. I had to take a full week off to be cleared that I do not have COVID. I was constantly worried at home because the day to day things that I do for my job were not getting done. Also as per my administration there are no protocols in place for when teachers should stay home or not. On average a woman in her 30s can get a common cold up to 4 times a year. Now if that were true, that could total up to 20 days of sick leave. Teachers don't get that many in a year. Also who will be doing the work of the absent teacher? For some positions there are no subs. Especially for special education who have timelines and legal components. Substitutes cannot write an IEP or attend and lead meetings.

For students, there are so many unknowns that I feel that we will be figuring it out on the fly. My middle school age child is afraid to go to school and is begging me to sign him up for distance learning. Although distance learning is not in his best interest because he did really badly during 4th quarter of last school year for which he was attending a private school that actually provided new content and grades. He is to return to public school this school year but he is afraid. Now as a parent I am concerned as the DOE has not rolled out any plans on how they will be addressing this trauma of fear for children. It surely is not through figuring it out on the fly. As a parent will I be entitled to a teacher who volunteered all their summer to those trainings the superintendent is talking about or will my child get a teacher who did not volunteer. The equity in that regard for students will be different. The teacher that did volunteer had time to process and the ones that just received the training did not. We need more time. 100% of teachers should be trained equitably and given time to process and apply this information. If teachers and students are afraid of school that will cause more harm than good in the long run.

I urge to delay the reopening and maybe extend the school year into summer time. Like this there will be still 181 instructional days for students....but allow teachers to come back, compensate them and assure that 100% of teachers are trained and prepared for equity and safety of all students.

Thank you for your considerations and discussions on this matter.

Natalie Hepting

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Shelley Takasato <shellkolele@yahoo.com> on behalf of Shelley Takasato
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:48 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

- Information:
 - Shelley Takasato, Parent of Moanalua Elementary School and Moanalua High School students
 - BOE General Business Meeting
 - Reopening of school
 - Oppose the return of students to school on August 4th
- Please rethink the returning of students and faculty to school on August 4th. Our schools have been very flexible which is very much appreciated, but for the safety of all students and faculty, reconsider the reopening of all public schools. The increase in new cases and active cases is nowhere near as safe as they should be for the reopening of schools.

Testimony BOE

From: Su Teva <sarongshawaii@gmail.com> on behalf of Su Teva
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:48 AM
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.

Aloha,

I cannot see how you are ready to open .. for each school. Protocols are shoddy at best and you don't wing it. We were home for 3 months quarantined, and now it's ok to return.. ? Would be nice to have a uniform idea of the rules and how it works for all schools. . And it's not fair to parents who don't know either ..and who is overseeing anything when the administration is just told... to open ..

My husband is very ill and my daughters is a teacher in the the DOE. Is she expecting to hand sanitize each child upon arrival , clean the class after the period is over, and then hand sanitize the next class ? Seriously? It's not like they are staying in pods, they are changing classes every hour .. a new group of 15, with desks that are not protocol of 6 feet apart .

You are not safely ready to open .. it's a disaster waiting to happen.

Thank you , for listening
Su Var,
Hilo, Hawaii

Namasteॐ

Testimony BOE

From: Liz Wiggans <elizabethmwiggans@gmail.com> on behalf of Liz Wiggans
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:48 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To Whom It May Concern:

Please do not cut SpEd or Hawaiian Immersion teacher differentials. These differentials have demonstrated, in the short time that they have been in effect, that they WORK to keep teachers in the field.

Special Education and Hawaiian Immersion teachers should be the absolute last. These educators are an enormous challenge to staff due to their requisite broad range of skills. If the events this year and this summer have taught us anything, it is that we need to actively demonstrate that we value and care for our socially and economically disadvantaged students. These differentials compensate qualified teachers for their work in these high need areas. Our teachers and keiki are not replaceable, their compensation and education should not be cut.

Thank you,
Liz Wiggans
6th Grade Science Teacher
Konawaena Middle School

Testimony BOE

From: C Teruya <c_teruya@hotmail.com> on behalf of C Teruya
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:49 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: testimony

Dear BOE,

I am a Kindergarten teacher and a mother of two kids who are in middle and high school. I am deeply concerned about returning to the classroom. We have been given no additional training time to address the covid response in the school. We need time to plan our schedules and routines. We need time to plan for the "distance teaching" we will be doing in the class. We will no longer have kids sitting within arms-reach and students will be spread out across the floor. Learning will be hands-off and teachers need time to prep the teaching material that will most likely be digital. The bottom line is that we need more time to prepare for the new classroom.

We need clear guidelines... will kids who are coughing and have runny noses be allowed in school. What do we do if kids refuse or can't wear their masks properly. What happens if a parent does not want their child to wear a mask? Will parents be allowed on campus to pick up their kids? What will we do if someone from our class goes home with symptoms? The questions go on and on and we do not have any clear procedures to address these concerns.

I do not feel comfortable sending my kids to school with these questions up in the air. How will students walk from class to class and maintain social distancing? How will my child enter and exit the classroom and maintain social distancing? How many different teachers and students will my child be exposed to during the day and is this safe? What measures are being taken after my child is released from school? How is the school making sure that the kids maintain social distancing once released from class waiting to be picked up?

Do we have specific answers to these questions that are on the minds of most educators and parents? If the answer is no, then we are not ready to open. Like Corey said, you are treating us like the sacrificial lambs and hoping for the best. Who will be responsible for the one death that could have been prevented?

Yes, we all wish that we could go back to normal and get back into the classroom. We cannot close our eyes and pretend that the pandemic does not exist. Let's be smart and be safe, not sorry. There are lives at stake and we can't get that back once lost. We can however bounce back from losing time in school.

Thank you for your consideration.

Cassie Romero
Kindergarten Teacher at Lanakila Elementary
Parent of students from Stevenson Intermediate and Roosevelt High School

Testimony BOE

From: Sam Richardson <samrichardson808@gmail.com> on behalf of Sam Richardson
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:51 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: WE'RE NOT READY

Aloha,

Please delay the August 4th opening of schools until you have a concrete plan. Teachers and parents are not feeling safe to return due to the lack of communication, safety, no concrete plan. Please delay reopening.

Mahalo,
Sam Richardson

Testimony BOE

From: Jason Yoshida <kealayoshida@msn.com> on behalf of Jason Yoshida
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:49 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Reopening of school

To the Honorable Board of Education,

I am currently a unit 6 member and an Elementary School Principal. I would like to request the Board of Education revisit the start date of school which is August 4, 2020. As a quadruple bypass survivor, I do not feel my employer has addressed my health and safety concerns, provided the necessary training, and a consistent health and safety protocol for reopening of school. I do not feel confident that I can keep my entire school community safe. Therefore, I would like to request that the Board of Education push the reopening of school date back until concerns are addressed and a consistent health and safety message shared to the public.

Sincerely,
Jason Yoshida
Principal

Testimony BOE

From: Haiku Angel <haikuangel555@gmail.com> on behalf of Haiku Angel
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:49 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

From: Naia Haberstroh
Incoming 7th grader at Kalama Intermediate

Testimony for July 23, 2020 Meeting of Finance and Infrastructure Committee on Action Item H.

Aloha,

My name is Naia Haberstroh. I am 12 years old and am entering the 7th grade at Kalama Intermediate. My mom is a 4th grade teacher at Haiku Elementary. My dad is at risk for contracting Covid due to many health conditions he has had.

I am very nervous about going back to school if the teachers don't have time to make it a safe place for learning for us. I am worried for my mom and my dad. I will have lots of exposure to different kids and I want to be sure my family, my teachers, my friends, and all the people who work at school will be safe.

Please give the teachers and staff more time to do the best for all of us so that we can go back to school feeling safe and cared for.

Sincerely,
Naia Haberstroh

Testimony BOE

From: Susan Nakama <hiipoi@me.com> on behalf of Susan Nakama
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:49 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Reopening of schools

Board of Education,

My name is Susan Nakama and I teach at Kalei`opu`u Elementary School. I am one of those teachers that come into school weeks in advance to get ready for my kids. Beginning my 33rd year of teaching has been the most challenging experience of my teaching career.

July 13th, was the first day I was allowed back to my class. I entered with high hopes that I can do this. With the help of my son and husband, I tried multiple times to set up my room for 15 students at 6 feet apart. After 4 days of trying, and with tears running down my face, I still cannot get it done. School begins in less than two weeks and I cannot even set up my room to keep my kids safe.

Many of the questions I asked my school's administrators still go unanswered. I have such a hard time with this situation since I am the type of person that wants to be prepared as possible before starting school. I still haven't received my class list yet which prevents me from making name tags, etc.

The situation I have described above has led me to request my retirement papers from the ERS. Although I love teaching and was not anticipating retirement, the stress of not being ready has caused me to consider retirement. I have to admit I cannot sleep and school is constantly on my mind.

I am asking that you reconsider opening school on August 4th. I am all for the students coming back, but not at the expense of everyone's health and safety. Currently, I do not think schools are ready to start. Why would you start school unprepared, knowing this could most likely lead to schools closing down soon after?

Give us time to keep everyone safe and have peace of mind knowing we did all that we could to prepare schools to start.

Thank you,

Susan Nakama

Testimony BOE

From: Peg McArdle <peg.mcardle19@gmail.com> on behalf of Peg McArdle
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:50 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: HAWAII PUBLIC SCHOOL RE-OPENING

Aloha.

It is totally inconsistent for DOH/DOE to mandate vaccines before school entry, but then open school doors during a pandemic with NO VACCINE available. Really?

Please follow California's lead and institute distance learning until this pandemic is over or until everyone is vaccinated against COVID-19.

Opening schools at this time is reckless and irresponsible. Children are resilient and distance learning will be adequate during this state of emergency.

The lives of our children and teachers are at stake. A life lost would be so very tragic and completely unnecessary. Is the State of Hawaii, BOE, DOH, DOE ready for endless lawsuits due to the reckless and negligent decision making that may affect the long term health and well-being of its students and teachers?

Health and safety first, please.

Margaret McArdle
Kailua Kona, Hawaii

Testimony BOE

From: nadine okazawa <nadineokazawa@gmail.com> on behalf of nadine okazawa
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:50 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Delay Return of Students to Campus

I am a first grade teacher at Princess Victoria Kaiulani Elementary School for more the 27 years.

The Board of Education should not allow the students to return to campus unless all safety precautions and all questions are answered. And with the agreement with HSTA.

We need to be sure the campus safe for everyone and all the time. There are too many unanswered questions like ... What happens if even one person has found to have covid?....Do we immediately shut the whole school down?.. Then do we test everyone?

We need to have set procedures if student loses or damages mask while in school...teachers should have masks on hand provided by school.

Then what if student comes to school without a mask?...The school official who is checking at the entrance should handle it...give student a mask....

Each person should get a temperature check before starts.

We asked our administrator numerous times to enter our classroom but was told we could not enter.

I was on workman's compensation from November 25, 2019 to April 23, 2020 so I wanted to straighten and clean my room.(Many of our classrooms had new air conditioners replace our old ones so there was dust and other things that need to be cleaned first before closing down now my room.)

If school does not have sanitation items..gloves, sprays/wipes available in the classroom to use as accidents happen...then school should not open. We as teachers cannot be expected to purchase (even though the school would reimburse us when we bring the receipts in.).

Teachers are and will be even busier trying to do so many new things and learning how to do distance learning and virtual meetings/lessons.

We all have not been trained to do the above technology as professional development. Especially, not every teacher has been given equal opportunity and access for this professional development during fourth quarter or summer.

It's been a little too late. We need more time to learn and experience what will work with what equipment students will be using at home.

It is pitiful to see that so much could have and should have been done from fourth quarter and during the summer.

The DOE and our administration had all that time and they still have not resolved so many things. I realize things are very difficult but since more has not answered we need to delay opening of school until we have the answers to the questions.

Please understand, we are trying our best to be professional and want the best for the students (their families' health) and adults who are on campus.

Please help us obtain the delay to have answers, procedures and protocols in place before school starts.

Parents and public need to be informed. We need to have your support so that everyone will be on the same page.

Hawaii is the best state in the nation and we should have the best answers for the best understanding.

I appreciate your time and consideration.

Mahalo,
Nadine Okazawa
First Grade Teacher
Princess Victoria Kaiulani Elementary School

Testimony BOE

From: Clyde Shinsato <c_shinsato@hotmail.com> on behalf of Clyde Shinsato
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:50 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

As a an elementary school teacher I am very concerned about the reopening of school on August 4th. We have begun the process of trying to rearrange our classrooms for social distancing, but other than that, we are still awaiting protocols on how to deal with an infection whether it be a child, parent, teacher or staff member at our school. It is extremely unsettling to start school if protocols are not in place soon. I am in a high risk category and do not want to be placing myself at risk just because a start date on the calendar, rather than the date when COVID-19 subsides. The entire community does not want to see the consequence of sickness or even death, and another school closure if we do not reopen our schools safely.

Sincerely,
Eleanor Shinsato
Kapalama Elementary School

Testimony BOE

From: Jodi Kunimitsu <jodikunimitsu@gmail.com> on behalf of Jodi Kunimitsu
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:50 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony - July 23 General Meeting - Item D - oppose

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

My name is Jodi Kunimitsu and I am a teacher at Maui High School. I am writing with serious concerns about the plan to reopen schools to students on August 4th.

Teachers have not been trained on safety protocols at schools or virtual learning platforms. Teachers have not had time to make changes to their curriculum in order to accommodate virtual learning. These are things that should be done BEFORE we even interact with our students. We have not been able to create our syllabus or change classroom procedures to accommodate the new environments that we will be teaching in. To expect teachers to be able to do all of this in the same 4 days that are provided during a "regular" school year is ridiculous. Rushing the reopening of schools to students on August 4th is asking for a lot of chaos and unneeded stress on both school personnel AND families. Parents will expect schools to have this all figured out by the time their child is in our classroom.

It is disheartening and demoralizing to hear Dr. Kishimoto's message in her latest video on the evening of July 21st. The message that came through was "suck it up teachers and do your part". It sounds as though our own Superintendent does not feel teachers have been doing enough to try and make this situation better for all involved. Just FYI - teachers have been stressing and trying to do their part since the middle of March when we left our classrooms. Teachers have been involved more than ever over this summer break, because they are concerned about how this school year is going to go. With this said, teachers are still very unsure about how things will work, because guidance has been vague and/or not dispersed to school employees. There has been a clear lack of communication between schools, families, employees, and the department.

You, the BOE, have the power to say NO, we are not ready to open schools at this time. There needs to be clear protocols for safety in place for BOTH students AND school personnel before we allow students on campus. Furthermore, you need to allow teachers time to determine the necessary changes to their classroom procedures and curriculum in order to accommodate virtual learning in order to ensure a more successful transition into this school year.

Please think reasonably about this situation and don't give in to the pressure to reopen our schools unsafely. Thank you for your time and the opportunity to testify.

Mahalo,
Jodi Kunimitsu
Maui High School

Testimony BOE

From: Lynn Otaguro <lmotaguro@yahoo.com> on behalf of Lynn Otaguro
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:50 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Fw: 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

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.

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: Maria W <mrsmariaow@gmail.com> on behalf of Maria W
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:51 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Dear Board of Education,

I, Maria Wilson, mother of a child at Kapolei Middle School strongly disagree with opening schools by August 4th of 2020!

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.](http://boe.hawaii.gov/Meetings/Notices/Meeting%20Material%20Library/GBM_07232020_Board%20Action%20on%20MOU%20Between%20BOE%20and%20HSTA.pdf)
http://boe.hawaii.gov/Meetings/Notices/Meeting%20Material%20Library/GBM_07232020_Board%20Action%20on%20MOU%20Between%20BOE%20and%20HSTA.pdf

My concerns are based on the following facts:

Social/Physical Distancing: There will be more than 10 children (plus the teaching adult) in a close confined space. How can you space out tables and chairs at least 6 ft apart from another at more than 10 students (on average 25!) in one class room??

Temperature checks: How will that impact the teaching times? Will you even mandate temperature checks?
What about children without symptoms, but with a contracted virus?!
Will teachers be checked as well?

Covid-Tests: Will teachers and all staff be tested before the initial start? How can you guarantee that any of the staff is free of the virus and not get our Keiki sick?
Who will fund these tests?
If a teacher tests positive for Covid-19 are they required to quarantine for two weeks? Is their sick leave covered, paid?
If that teacher has 5 classes a day with 25 students each, do all 125 of those students now have to get tested? Are the tests happening at the school?
Do all of those 125 students need to then be quarantined and who will pay for the medical bills?
What if a student becomes ill?
Many households are multigenerational, with parents working hard and long hours. Before the pandemic, children were sent to school with symptoms of colds, and other illnesses, yet those children still ended up in the classrooms, because their parents could not provide child care as they have to work.

PPEs: Students are to wear face masks and face shields. Who will provide those? What are the instructions, if applicable, for reuse of those items?

Distance learning: The HIDOE 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.
We are fortunate to have the means to provide our child with a computer and a place to study.
Have you considered those students that are less fortunate?
There is not enough hardware to provide every child with a laptop. Many households have more than 1,2, or even 4 children!
What about internet connection?

Here are a few other questions to consider:

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

Maria Wilson

Testimony BOE

From: Nani <naweau@hotmail.com> on behalf of Nani
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:51 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I'm not sure what I'm getting myself into as both a parent and an employee by returning back to work. For the past 4 months as a parent I only knew to keep my ohana and I safe was to stay home and only leave the home for appts. and groceries as needed with our mask, wipes and anti bacterial soap along with social distancing in mind as long as WE stay in our family cluster. Now I'm due to return to work on the 31st with no training and hoping my co workers respect my space. My children will return the following wednesday with I have no clue of their school plans, schedule, safety guidelines, emergency guidelines. Whose to say my children will be kept safe like I have kept them while they are at school. One of my daughters did distance learning 3 days a week through this pandemic and for summer school. To my surprise she did really well. I'm alright with her doing full distance learning at home. But that's not a choice. My older daughter who also did distance learning up until May she struggled. She was then offered summer school on campus 3 days awake and did well. Although I worried if she being asthmatic would get sick but she is fine. Although education is a must in my household, I am not quite comfortable about them returning to campus just yet as well as I returning to work. I'm set to return to work in 9 days with no letter no schedule to tell me what is planned. Both my daughters will be returning to school in 14 days as well with no letter or schedule to what's happening. Me being clueless to how safe campus will be is starting to worry me and makes me think if homeschooling is our best option? I feel DOE is not quite ready to open just yet. From a parent and employee of the DOE. Question? If I catch the virus while at work does DOE still pay for me staying home sick or do I use up my sick leave? I honestly believe the DOE doesn't have a set and concrete plan to open schools so soon. Aloha.

Sent from my T-Mobile 4G LTE Device

Testimony BOE

From: Grant Wilkinson <grant.wilkinson@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Grant Wilkinson
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:51 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony in favor of maintaining differential pay

 **Testimony for 07/23**

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Testimony BOE

From: Greg Davis <gregdavis14@gmail.com> on behalf of Greg Davis
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:51 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Delay of start date for school

Aloha,

As the spouse of an educator, I feel that the protocols that have currently been set are not adequate enough to allow students and teachers back into the classroom. Although, the cases are relatively low compared to the rest of the mainland, putting children together in a closed environment does not consider the implications of spreading Covid to older individuals. Children are prone to not following social distancing rules and keeping masks on. It would also be difficult for kids to have masks on all day long. More planning is needed which would require a later start date for the schools at the least.

Thanks,

Greg Davis

Testimony BOE

From: Darrell1 Samiano <darrell1samiano@gmail.com> on behalf of Darrell1 Samiano
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:51 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I'm really concerned about the safety of everyone, not only my child about attending school so early in the pandemic. Spikes in cases are continuing to rise and although the younger generation has a stronger immune system to fight the virus, how about the faculty, or the bus drivers?... it seems like it will only spread more. Also concerned about my child bringing the virus home. I'm all for the education for our young children but I'm also against opening up the schools so early.

Testimony BOE

From: Dana Shishido <danesh1985@gmail.com> on behalf of Dana Shishido
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:52 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

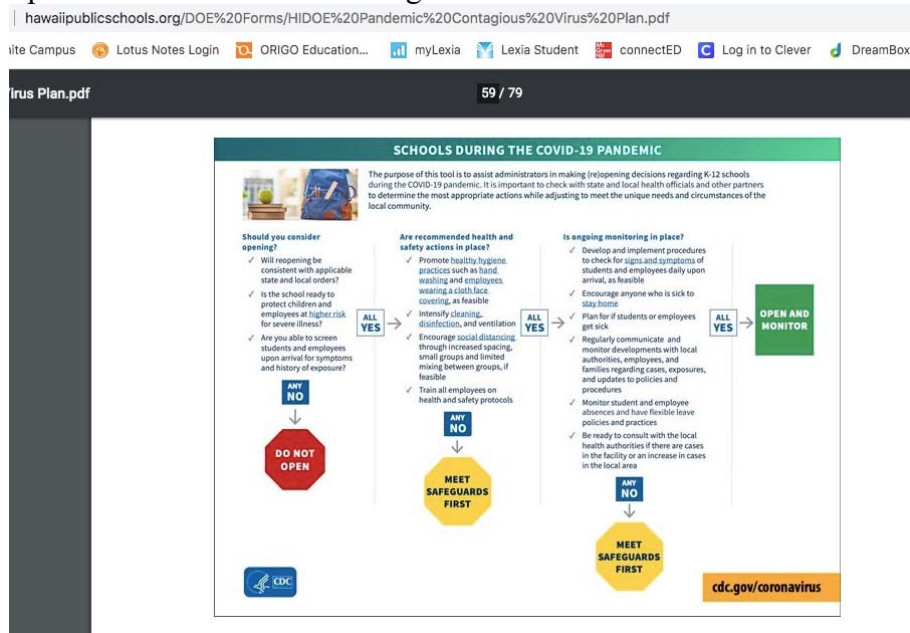
Aloha,

I am testifying on: H.Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding Between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 Contractual Modifications and Conditions of Work Related to COVID-19 Response for Bargaining Unit 5 Employees.

The past four months have been a roller coaster of emotions for me. The worst has been this month, as I waited to hear how our school opening would occur. I must say that I am very apprehensive of going back to school, as there is a lack of direction on the part of leadership.

As an educator, I do my research. I went to the DOE website and read that the opening of schools will follow the DOH and CDC guidelines. However, the DOH has not put out any guidelines to the opening of schools, as of yet.

I perused the "Pandemic Contagious Virus Plan" and discovered a chart provided by the CDC on page 59.



If you look at the first column of this chart: "Should you consider opening?"

1. "Will reopening be consistent with applicable state and local orders?"

My answer - NO, as there are many inconsistencies, at this point.

2. "Is the school ready to protect children and employees at higher risk for severe illness?"

Testimony BOE

From: Mongo Custom Guitar <mongocustomguitar@gmail.com> on behalf of Mongo Custom Guitar
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:52 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Highly Concerned - Students, Teachers, Staff, Hawaii

Aloha - To Whom it Concerns,

- State covid numbers are higher and increasing regularly more than March/April/may/June?
- Virus is MICROSCOPIC not a droplet of breathing/cough moisture coming from inhaling/exhaling with or without a mask?
- Before & after schools start/end children may/may not adhere to wearing masks for protection?
- Asymptomatic individuals may/may not spread without knowing?
- I know many students K - 12 & college live with grandparents who are most vulnerable to the covid virus; it is not just a flu. As statistics/science creates more data it is showing this covid virus is having long term serious effects on all?
- Students/Teachers/Staff that are enclosed in rooms with air conditioning creates a model not safe. Fact based evidence has shown groups with distancing as small as three; 1st Specific Group - Three (3) Arizona teachers performing distance learning with distancing/masks in place in an enclosed room. All contracted covid-19 with serious medical issues One (1) Teacher DIED from the Virus?
- NO DOE; Teacher, Staff, Principal, Custodian, Security, School Nurse? has the proper training and or efficient long term amount of PPE to handle the Health, Safety, Well Being of all in school, coming too and going home after and before school?
- There may/may not be serious issues with school bus transportation to and from schools just like the airline industry (reason why Hawaii has not opened yet). Who will disinfect the buses between each transition? School bus drivers are not medically trained to perform in depth sanitizing for the Health, Safety and Well Being of all students?
- At this point Data/Science; Students here and abroad have not been subjected to the virus due to closing and Stay-At-Home orders and Parents Highly Concerned for the Safety and Well Being of their children; Infant Up too all ages?
- ONE HUMAN LIFE LOST IS TOO MANY???

I am a Parent; PhD., SE/CE FHWA-DOT; My Wife is a Teacher; our two children attend the Hawaii Public school system. ALL FOUR of us are extremely concerned the decisions too rush will destroy OHANA throughout Hawaii. We are proud of strong leadership and decisions that make sense for all. The issue of reopening schools too soon CAN NOT be just about money. We have the technology and federal funds to move forward. Rail or Education pick the one that makes sense for now.

Mahalo for Your Time

Highly Concerned Parent

Testimony BOE

From: Mongo Custom Guitar <tbmphawaii@gmail.com> on behalf of Mongo Custom Guitar
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:52 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Highly Concerned - Students, Teachers, Staff, Hawaii

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Mahalo for Your Time

Highly Concerned Parent

Testimony BOE

From: Jeanne Iwashita <jeanne.iwashita@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Jeanne Iwashita
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:53 AM
To: Testimony BOE
Subject: Testimony BOE School Opening

My name is Jeanne Iwashita. I am a speech language pathologist in Leeward District, Kalei'opu'u Elementary School. I have concerns about the school opening on August 4, 2020.

I have received no information or training about the school opening from my direct supervisors. When I have asked them direct questions multiple times I have been ignored.

We have not been told what distance to maintain with our students or what accommodations we are allowed to take since we need to work physically close to our students at times. Most related service providers (i.e speech pathologists, occupational therapists, and physical therapists) need to be very close to their students to provide services either due to the activity/service, cognitive level of the student, or the age of the student. Six feet away is not a reality. The teachers through HSTA were given the opportunity to apply for an exemption, but this was not an option for non-HSTA members.

Since we have to distance our students, we may not be able to give services in groups or have to make our groups smaller. This adds to our workload since we have to find additional time during our already busy days to schedule more sessions. If our students opt for online only, we have to find time to service those students online, in addition to servicing face to face. Also, not all of our students will be on campus every day. This will also add to our scheduling difficulties.

As far as PPE's: we in Leeward District have been or will be provided with 1 face shield, sneeze guard and a box of disposable masks (50 to share between 2 workers). While we appreciate this, it is not enough for the school year.

We have received no information or training in regards to sanitation of our classrooms. We also have not received supplies to clean our classrooms. Schools may or may not share their supplies with related service providers.

I have concerns when a student or staff member gets Covid19, according to a video that I watched on July 21, 2020. In the video that was sent out to DOE employees, they said that if a student contracted Covid19, the class may not be quarantined because the student got sick at home. We all know that the incubation period is long for this virus and people are contagious up to 2 weeks prior to symptoms. I do not feel safe having only the student quarantining.

We as speech pathologists, do not have substitutes and have not been instructed on who will provide our services when one of us is either sick with Covid19, quarantined due to exposure, or out sick because we no longer can work if we have cold symptoms.

We have been told that we need to meet to determine if our special education students require "compensatory education". We have not received guidance as to what is the criteria for compensatory education or what the compensatory education will be. In addition, who will provide these services and when?

The DOE has not been forthcoming with information for their employees and we usually learn what is expected by listening or reading the news. Few staff have received any training to address Covid19 and the new school year.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

Jeanne Iwashita, CCC-SLP

Speech Language Pathologist

Leeward School District

Kalei'opu'u Elementary School

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Testimony BOE

From: Chock, Lisa <lisa.chock@kalakauamiddle.org> on behalf of Chock, Lisa
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:53 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: testimony

I have listened to superintendent Kishimoto's message to adamantly reopen our schools on August 4th. What resonated to me was her repeated statements of how we teachers need to be COURAGEOUS and SACRIFICE our lives to provide excellent education to our students.

I am not willing to do those things when the D.O.E is so ill prepared and willing to take CHANCES.

This is not the time to compromise our teachers lives with weak protocols to respond to Covid stricken school students and staff. Unfortunately I feel that you are waiting for an antecedent to happen before a safeguarded solution is in place. " Someone needs to get runned over before a crosswalk is added to the street".

Are you staffed with sufficiently trained substitute teachers that will be medically cleared to work at our schools?

Temperature checks are not even required at our schools when other businesses mandate it.

Have you considered hot spot communities and school districts where families and children are densely populated?

Have you any compassion, respect and plans to place high risk teachers of older age and have high risk medical conditions that make teachers such as myself highly vulnerable to contract Covid with less chances to survive.

Teachers matter, lives matter ...sorry education during these unprecedented times need to address integrity and valued moral compasses to not proceed with much more caution and plans to repen our schools on August 4th.

Lisa Chock

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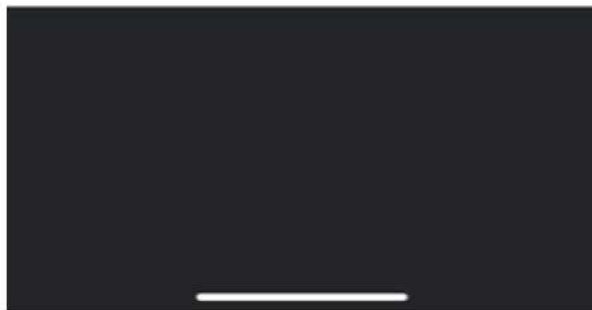
Testimony BOE

From: Caroline Koa <koacaroline@yahoo.com> on behalf of Caroline Koa
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:53 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony
Attachments: IMG_6173.PNG



More should be said about the DAMAGE to the emotional health of children in reopening schools:

- Rigid and developmentally inappropriate behavioral expectations to maintain social distancing for hours at a time
- Restriction of engagement with peers even though those peers are right in front of them
- Constant cleaning rituals that keep community trauma present with them
- Pressure to meet educational standards and the resulting shame, and self-doubt when they reasonably can't function normally
- Being unable to receive age appropriate comfort from teachers and staff thereby experiencing attachment injuries daily
- COVID takes staff members for weeks at a time with no warning while children wonder if that person will die
- Experiencing more deaths around them
- Lack of any predictability; looming threat of going to back into quarantine any random day



Testimony BOE

From: Joanne Mateo <joanne.natividad5@gmail.com> on behalf of Joanne Mateo
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:53 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Hello,

My name is Joanne Mateo, and I am a teacher at James Campbell High School. As you know, we are the biggest school in the state, and my biggest class right now is 31 students (I know that we have classes around the 35 range). We decided on a hybrid model (Model C) for our school. So, even if we had 50% of our students on campus, it'll still be 15+ students in class. On Monday, I went in to set up my classroom and got to fit 8 student desks 6 feet a part. I looked at my roster to see the alpha breakdown, and even with the alpha breakdown and having the students on a once a week basis, my biggest class size is 11. Yesterday, I made another attempt to fit 11, and I can only fit 10 comfortably.

Let me tell you. I miss my students. This past year during term 4, I never got to say a decent proper goodbye to my seniors whom I had since freshman year. I want to be in the classroom and see their faces. But, SAFETY comes first!!!! This school year, I have new students, and obviously I know it's better starting the year teaching them face to face. In fact, I will say it is easier. BUT EASY DOESN'T MEAN IT'S THE BEST SOLUTION!!! SAFETY COMES FIRST. I worry for ALL of us. High school students will come to school sick. They will even go as far as lying to come to school, and if they infect their peers, it'll be detrimental to their mental health, knowing they were the cause of putting others in danger. High school students also SHARE their lunches. We are a big school, and students do look out for each other, so if a friend is hungry, they will share. This is another way the virus can spread. Our students have 4 different classes each day with different sets of classmates per class. That bubble can spread to the entire school rapidly with one student infected. Our students are not safe. Given the social distancing within the classroom, we are not able to make sure 1500 students (still less than half our student population) will follow these rules. I'm sorry, but I can honestly say that I do not trust other people to follow rules, especially since there's so many loopholes to what we're given.

I am a mother of 3 children ages 3 and less. I do not want to risk my life for others who do not feel the virus is a real concern. Also, there are many teachers who do not have a strong immunity system and get sick often, even before the pandemic, so they are definitely at risk when we do not make it a requirement for all students to wear a mask. It doesn't make sense that businesses can require you to wear a mask, and we also had a fine for not wearing one in public before when the number of cases were not as high as today, but a parent can make the decision for their child to not wear one. That is selfish and it puts other people in danger. Why should we risk infection for selfish reasons of other people? I thought we could at least take their temperature, but it's also a violation if a parent refuses. What about our safety?

I'm begging you, please give us more time to have an actual plan in place, not a plan that would work assuming everyone would follow the rules with no consequences. Please value the lives of each of our students and teachers.

Thank you,
Mrs. Joanne Natividad Mateo

"Math is like love- a simple idea but it can get complicated"

Testimony BOE

From: Cheryl Nomiya <cnomiyam@hawaii.edu> on behalf of Cheryl Nomiya
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:53 AM
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.

Mr. Rosenlee commented "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 agree with our Mr. Rosenlee and I hope the Board of Education will address the questions HSTA has been asking.

Please address 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?

Mahalo,
Cheryl Nomiya
Waipahu Elementary School

Testimony BOE

From: Kristiann Endow <ekristiann@gmail.com> on behalf of Kristiann Endow
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:53 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

My name is Kristiann Endow and I am currently a grade 5 teacher at Palisades 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.

Though I am very excited to get back into my classroom and work with my new bunch of students, I can honestly say that I do not feel comfortable with the reopening of school. I am having a lot of anxiety because there is no written plan of proper guidelines and procedures on what needs to be done for the reopening of schools to take place. We need something written to ensure the safety and well-being of students, teachers, and staff within the school. We should all be following the same guidelines as an entire state so that we are able to remain consistent. It is unacceptable to have each school's administrator to come up with their own policy on how they want to reopen their school. Our administrators are not health care professionals and should not have the authority to create their own policies. It is terrifying that many schools conducted temperature checks during the Summer Hub program, while our school did not. You cannot leave it up to the administrators to make difficult decisions like this.

As of today, I still have not received any "training" of any professional development on the utilization of various apps to communicate more effectively with families as other schools have received.

Until then, I believe it is most safe to continue with Distance Learning. Distance Learning will be most effective this time around because now it will be MANDATORY for students to sign in to their proper accounts and complete the assigned lessons, for it will be used to determine grades. Unlike the ending of last school year where it was referred to as "Enrichment Opportunities". It is crucial to have students understand the concept of "accountability". We hold our students accountable for their work and their actions and in return, they do the same for us.

Therefore, I am sad to say that with no written guidelines, I refuse to step foot into a classroom with students until proper protocols and procedures are given to us.

Testimony BOE

From: Ashley Radziwon <lanakaijems@gmail.com> on behalf of Ashley Radziwon
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:54 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Postponing the reopening

Aloha, I am a kindergarten teacher at Konawaena Elementary School. I am a single parent with 3 of my own children. I do not feel comfortable sending my children to school as our numbers continue to rise. I don't think schools are ready to deal with this. We are told not to congregate in large groups because of the spread and yet it's okay for a group of students to meet together in a classroom. (Especially Kindergarten and preschool) That is not right. We are endangering the children as well as the educators.

Being first year in Inclusion, I am extremely uneasy because I know these students wont wear their mask everyday. Kindergarteners carry lots of germs. We can say six feet but will it really happen? These kids are 5.

If we postpone opening or distance learning for the first two quarters while getting more teacher training for it, we will help the spread and feel more comfortable in teaching students.

To walk into this feels like we are intentionally walking into a disaster area. Please reconsider the start date and keep out keiki and educators safe.

Mahalo,
Ashley Radziwon
Konawaena Elementary
Big island of Hawaii

Testimony BOE

From: Jenny Smith <jennysyden@gmail.com> on behalf of Jenny Smith
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:55 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: School Year 2020-2021

I am writing to ask that students not start school on August 4th.

I understand that the fed govt is pushing Hawaii to open. I speculate that is because we are the third largest district in the US (cause we are one lol) and the fed gov wants to prove that we will have low outbreaks. Hawaii's data could be used as a reason to open other schools nationwide. I strongly feel that this is using our children as guinea pigs. I understand that our supt is getting a lot of pressure, but the BOE can say no. I strongly feel that teachers should return and have time to make real and achievable plans for students to return safely. Please don't use our children in a political battle. Hawaii should not be forced to open before the other states in the US! Again let teacher's start work but delay students' return!

Testimony BOE

From: Alima Catellacci <acatellacci@icloud.com> on behalf of Alima Catellacci
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:56 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony on School Reopening

Aloha,

My name is Alima Catellacci and I am a teacher at Kanu o ka Aina Charter school. I am very concerned about the reopening of schools.

Our school has had numerous meetings over the summer and every few days there are more emails with changes in our plan for returning to school. We are still looking to fill positions that are critical for the school, and currently the school is considering reopening K-2 grade for 5 days a week in person learning.

Additionally, Teachers are unclear on what spaces they will be in at the school and we are unclear on the position our school will have in regard to masks. We are being asked to teach extracurriculars such as art that depend on shared supplies. How will we provide students with adequate space and supplies when we are being told that they must provide everything for themselves. How can we support students who need help while maintaining social distance. There are so many unanswered questions and we are supposedly going to see students in a week and a half. This is too soon. Schools need more time to prepare for the school year.

Mahalo,
Alima Catellacci

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Suzanne Dadzie <suzannedadzie@gmail.com> on behalf of Suzanne Dadzie
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:56 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony - shortage differentials & school reopening

Aloha

I am writing to voice my concerns about two issues that are being discussed at this week's BOE meeting: 1) pay differentials for hard to staff areas and positions (special education), and 2) reopening schools on August 4th.

1) The pay differentials for special education teachers and teachers in hard to staff areas need to be continued. Our students with disabilities and the students in these hard to staff areas are among our most vulnerable students. They need highly-qualified teachers to provide them with the education they need. It is very hard given the cost of living and the remoteness of some of these areas to find qualified teachers who are willing to take on the challenge (extra work) of teaching these vulnerable students. I have seen first hand at my school the effects of long-term subs teaching students when a certified teacher can not be found (students stagnating or regressing in reading and math proficiency, English language learners not improving their proficiency in English, etc.). In addition our principal has to spend so much time recruiting teachers given our turnover rate that other important issues get less attention than needed. To get rid of the pay differential for these areas and for special education teachers at this time of economic uncertainty, even if it be temporarily, will surely leave many of our neediest students without qualified teachers. These students have already lost a full quarter of schooling so not having a certified teacher when they return to school will only leave them further behind. I urge the state to keep the teacher shortage pay differentials in place.

2) The leadership team at my school has been working hard all summer to prepare for reopening. But there is so much left to do. Despite all of our efforts, we are far from being ready to safely open for students and teachers on August 4th. We have learned a lot from the successes and failures of the 4th quarter of this past school year. Most importantly we have learned that our teachers need training to be prepared to teach using the blended model our school has adopted. Moreover our teachers need professional development around switching to 100% virtual instruction if the need to do so should arise. Our teachers also need training in the health and safety procedures that will be put in place at our school, especially given how large our school is and thus how complicated the social distancing is going to be. However, many of these procedures still haven't been decided. How can we be ready to open when teachers do not know how they will provide instruction or what procedures they need to follow to keep themselves and their students from contracting COVID-19? In addition, we need more time to communicate with families about the logistics of the blended model and the health and safety measures we need to put in place. It feels like we are rushing this and I fear the results will be detrimental to the health of our students, teachers and the West Hawaii community as a whole. I feel like I am a crew member on the Titanic sailing ahead to disaster. I urge the state to slow down and delay the reopening of schools until the teachers, students and their families know and understand the plan for doing so safely.

Mahalo!

Suzanne Dadzie

Suzanne Dadzie
5th Grade ELL Teacher
Kealakehe Elementary School
Kailua Kona, HI

Testimony BOE

From: nico arihood <nico.arihood@gmail.com> on behalf of nico arihood
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:56 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha Board of Education,

I am a K-5 ELL Coordinator 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.

So basically I have received zero trainings for online course delivery or ELL servicing. My school has provided nothing for me. I don't know what I am doing. My school has not had any webinars nor meetings nor emails nor phone calls or text messages to me regarding how ELL servicing is going to look like the school year for my 85 students. We chose Option B.

I asked direction from my ELL RT's, and they replied with nothing, no direction whatsoever. I have sent emails to my administrators at my school, which have not been replied to in over a week. Anytime a teacher at my school asks administration what support staff positions are going to look like this coming school year, they have a blanket statement saying they will let us know when school starts. School starts in a week for us teachers. How am I going to prepare for my students and my year?

The classroom where I provide servicing to my students is small. It is basically an office. With social distancing mandates I can only put two students in that room at 6 feet apart. That means I cannot do any pull-out servicing unless it is one-on-one high needs servicing or special education servicing if it's pull-out. Will I be asked to teach regular education? Will I be assigned to a HR teacher? Will I be asked to co-teach? Will I be asked to do co-planning? I have no idea and have zero preparation because I have not been told.

It's very concerning to me that students are not required to wear masks inside the classroom. What is the logic behind this?! Also, at my school, it was announced we were doing so many things to keep everyone socially distance and stay in our classroom bubbles... But then at recess each class can have their own recess ball to take outside. Doesn't that mean that every kid in that class is going to be touching the ball during recess? Doesn't that mean that everything we have been preparing for to ensure no one gets sick is now blown apart just from that one recess ball for that 20 minutes?!?! This makes absolutely zero sense to me whatsoever. And what about students on campus from 7 to 7:45am running around and touching everything and sharing snacks without proper supervision in proper areas? Rumor is a document at school says Support staff will be asked to supervise kids starting at 7 AM, which is completely against our contract.

There are so many unknowns and questions that need answered before we start school in one short week. Nobody is ready for this. Everyone is in a state of confusion. Gossip and hearsay is rampant. Parents are texting me asking how I'm going to be servicing their ELL students and I don't have any answers for them. That is complete bulls%#^ in my opinion. My students' parents trust me and see me as a leader. I am not leading them nor my students right now and it feels horrible. I've never felt like this in my 21 years of teaching.

I have a feeling admin is going to be telling us Support staff to be babysitters (“supervision”) every day for homeroom teachers and around campus. This is not my job description. I am a well-educated teacher.

These are just some of the many questions that need answered:

- 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 homes 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 quarantine and get test? 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 terrified?
- 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?

Thank you,
Nicole

Testimony BOE

From: morutra76@gmail.com
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:56 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Writing is in the wall

To whom this may concern,

The writing is on the wall. Right now as a parent teacher and U.S. citizen I want to make it clear that in my opinion, it is NOT the best time to send our kids back to school. Yes we all want to return to work and want some normalcy in our lives, but we must learn from other countries, other states, and other situations in which there have been spikes in virus cases because the RIGHT THING (SMART THING) was not done. I believe in science and humanity and I know that we will soon beat this virus but in the meantime we should do our best as a society to keep everyone safe and returning to school during a resurgence is not safe.

And finally as a teacher in the DOE of the State of Hawaii, I want to return to work with a clear, printed, posted protocol on what will happen when and if the first student and/or teacher test positive at a public school. I do not want to hear "we will follow DOH guidelines". Make the these guidelines clear for faculty, staff parents and students!

Sincerely,
Arturo Morales

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Laura L. Davis <sealauradavis@gmail.com> on behalf of Laura L. Davis
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:56 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY

To whom it may concern,

Please reconsider the re-opening of schools in Hawaii.

Many Teachers do not feel safe, myself included. I am happy to teach from home but not in a crowded environment where there are no windows to open. My school only has 3 stalls for our girls bathroom and it serves the entire community. How will we handle this? Our halls are already so crowded during passing periods.

We have not received training to start the school year, I have done my own research and created my own lessons for distance learning but to assume that all teachers are ready to move forward is not accurate. You are expecting a lot from teachers and have not given us the tools to succeed. Please don't experiment with our lives and the lives of the keiki. These Ohana bubbles are not viable. We have students that live with multiple generations. We also live on an island in the middle of the Pacific, once our resources run out, what will we do?

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.

Sincerely,
Laura L. Davis
Teacher

Testimony BOE

From: Jennifer Travis <jenniferleetravis@me.com> on behalf of Jennifer Travis
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:58 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

re: item H

Teachers have not been trained in any safety protocols and we have not figured out how we will even set up our classrooms.

Please postpone students from returning to school for at least a few days. 4 days is NOT long enough for us to prepare.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jennifer Travis

Aloha from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Heather Aldridge <heather.aldridge@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Heather Aldridge
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:57 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

July 22, 2020

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.

Dear BOE,

I'm respectfully requesting that you delay the attendance of students for another two weeks. Teachers need training on the new protocols and how we will address distance learning effectively. Teachers are already meeting without pay to try and plan for what is ahead. However, we're unable to plan since the DOE doesn't have all protocols in place if an employee or student's health is compromised. So many questions are left unanswered and are not in writing.

Conversations regarding delaying pay differentials is a slap in the face to teachers! We scrambled to adjust to the changing climate in March and many of us worked beyond contract hours to meet the needs of our students. I personally gave up my position as a general education teacher and went into special education because of the differentials. Now, the Board wants to break our agreement and not honor my differential which was the deciding factor in my decision to move positions. An agreement is an agreement! On top of that, the state is still threatening a twenty percent pay cut or furlough. Please don't put the weight of the state's budget on the backs of teachers!

This is my fourth year teaching in Hawaii. I've never thought of leaving because I love my job! However, as a DOE employee, I feel that I'm on an emotional roller coaster as to whether I can afford to stay here long term. You expect me to be an exceptional teacher. I expect you to be a decent employer. Please allow us the time to prepare for the safety of our communities.

Respectfully,

Heather Aldridge
Special Education Teacher
Waikoloa Elementary & Middle School

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Testimony BOE

From: erin noordhoff <huinaluseat4@yahoo.com> on behalf of erin noordhoff
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:59 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: 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 re

Aloha Members of the Board of Education:

I am emailing my testimony regarding Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

I am a 59.8-year-old teacher at Kealakehe High School with several documented health conditions, and live with my 66-year-old husband. As a teacher and parent, I am asking you to delay the return of students to campuses in order to ensure that teachers and administrators have an appropriate amount of time to prepare for distance and/or hybrid learning, which takes much longer to train, prepare and plan for than a usual return to traditional school. Providing quality teaching with attention divided between students who are learning from home and those who are in-person in the classroom with the teacher is, at its best, challenging. Setting up Google Classroom, posting assignments, preparing engaging and clear resources for students to utilize for support when they are learning asynchronously, planning for classroom management for a blended model...teachers must be ready for this year. We are hurtling toward the August 4 start date without the necessary time it will take to have solid, realistic, and distance/hybrid/classroom-ready plans in place.

In addition to the time needed to be well-prepared for instruction is the huge matter of health and safety protocols. Lieutenant Governor Josh Green himself has expressed his concerns over returning keiki to schools. "We owe our teachers a comprehensive healthcare plan, in writing, before they open themselves up to added risk," said Lt. Gov. Josh Green, who is an emergency room physician. He goes on to say "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." Lt. Governor Green also has doubts about claims by state health and education officials that students will remain in so-called ohana bubbles, minimizing any potential spread of the disease. "Bubbles burst. I'm concerned," Green said. "Young children can't adhere to social distancing or staying in a bubble and teens will socialize and be difficult to manage."

While schools may have some plans in place for checking symptoms (mostly reliant on parents) or guidelines for sanitizing, there is still no clear plan about when classes or schools may have to shut down because of coronavirus cases -- how many cases until students, faculty and the families of those affected individuals need to isolate? Teachers will try their best to monitor this, but when we are also being asked to monitor learning, teach, manage the classroom, respond to questions, check our tech equipment, and the multitude of other things requiring our attention throughout any given school day, it is not humanly possible for us to also be "health police officers."

Please, for the health and safety of our keiki and teachers and our families, delay the return of students to schools. We only have one chance to do this safely and correctly. Not one teacher or student death is acceptable when the simple decision to give more time for schools to prepare could prevent illness and death.

As a wife of a retiree living on a fixed income, I also ask that you continue to fund the differentials promised to us.

I humbly thank you for your most serious consideration and support for this matter.

Erin M. Williams
ELA/Sheltered ELA Teacher
Kealakehe High School

Testimony BOE

From: Tanya Valencia <tvkania@gmail.com> on behalf of Tanya Valencia
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:59 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Opening of school

I am concerned about 6 feet distance in a SPED classroom. How will it work? Will students with disabilities be applied to same law. Will it be safe? I don't have training in this area. Thanks Tanya Valencia Deluz Waimea elementary school. Honokaa complex.

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Harrison Kuroda <hkuroda20@yahoo.com> on behalf of Harrison Kuroda
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:59 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Dear Board of Education:

My name is Harrison Kuroda and I am a spouse of a Kindergarten teacher,

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"^[1]. Especially in closed or poorly ventilated spaces such as many of our classrooms, it is absolutely essential to have a mandatory mask requirement for all teachers and students.
2. The current state plan relies on a fictional construct known as "Ohana Bubbles", which especially in the absence of a universal mask mandate, puts a family's health at the mercy of other families. However, no amount of distancing, disinfecting, or use of PPE will be sufficient to keep groups of people in confined, poorly ventilated spaces safe, because behavior of all those individuals outside the classroom cannot be assumed to have been safe.
3. The current DOE plan is to leave masking optional (at teachers' discretion) is unacceptable. Fundamental matters of scientific fact such as masks should not be left to teacher (or even school administrator) discretion. That would allow too many loopholes that will result in poor or no compliance that puts their child's lives at risk. It also puts an undue burden on teachers and/or school administrators to decide and enforce mask rules.
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.

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 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,

Harrison Kuroda

Testimony BOE

From: Christine <christinewolfrum@gmail.com> on behalf of Christine
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:59 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am not in a hard to full position, but I strongly oppose cutting funding for hard to fill areas. What is the DOE thinking? How is this pono???? The state is going to be facing an even more MASSIVE teacher shortage due to the lack of leadership shown in this pandemic and teachers are fearful for their LIVES. Teachers in these areas are ESSENTIAL for student success, and dropping their pay is going to chase them right out of the profession. What are your current salaries? Six figures? Are you willing to sacrifice your lives/families lives and be SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS for these unfilled positions? Will you substitute in Covid positive classrooms and schools? If the answer is no...ask yourself why, and ask what you can do better to ensure the safety and well being of ALL STUDENTS and ALL TEACHERS/STAFF.

We are all used to the continued abhorrent pay and conditions and are ready to be human shields for our students for active shooters. The LEAST the DOE can do is set up a CLEAR ladder plan of steps up and down WHEN cases occur in our schools. Protect us.

I believe in offering solutions, so here's a few:

- Chrome books for all

- Identify areas with no internet connectivity—SET UP HOTSPOTS.

- <https://edsources.org/2020/thousands-of-california-students-to-get-free-wifi-and-chromebooks-for-distance-learning/627823/amp>

- Create a CLEAR WRITTEN PLAN for what to do when 1 case occurs (please refer to WFTDA return to roller derby plan for help with this...based on SCIENCE. Please see below if you need guidance:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScT5e_GWzEoRuNiHYFvNO5rvClO8YjRk_sjAGgbh1_wAMp2Jg/viewform

- have public health nurses on site for morning drop offs for temp checks.

- TRAIN TEACHERS (not optional) on A PLATFORM FOR DISTANCE LEARNING! (PICK ONE..what have you been doing for 4 months?????). We have leadership to LEAD and MAKE DECISIONS! THAT IS WHAT YOU ARE PAID TO DO.

Christine O'Sullivan
Pukalani Elementary
Kindergarten Teacher
11 years in HI DOE

Testimony BOE

From: Pualani McKeen <pualanimckeen@gmail.com> on behalf of Pualani McKeen
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:00 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha e nā luna alakaʻi hoʻonaʻauao,

Hulihia ka mauna, wela i ke ahi. This ʻōlelo noʻeau refers to the state of the mountain when its hot with fire and its landscape changes. It is also indicative of our current worldwide situation where we are all experiencing vast amounts of change and we all are trying to find our new normal. With this said, I know that every situation this Board is being tasked to decide at this point in our lives are unprecedented decisions. ʻO Hope Pualani McKeen koʻu inoa Iʻm a Special Education teacher at Ka ʻUmeke Kāʻeo Hawaiian Immersion School in Hilo, and a mother of a 16-year-old and 12-year old that attends two different schools besides my own school. In my household, we are in contact with 3 different schools daily.

I am heading into my 16th year of teaching which is considered mid-career for most of us. I am at Class VII also receiving the SPED differential pay. The differential has finally helped me to pay ALL my bills in one month. I do not have to pick and choose what gets paid. I think that NO professional should have to worry like that mid-career. That type of worry also distracts a Kumu from performing their best, because they don't know whether they'll have enough money for gas. Yes, I have been in that predicament before the pay differentials. Even with the pay differential I barely break even, but the worry is less because I can pay all the bills and still put gas in my vehicle.

Furthermore, we already have a huge shortage of Hawaiian language immersion educators and teachers leading some classes that CANNOT speak Hawaiian. That means their students aren't being given a proper immersion education. But I worry this shortage will only worsen if we have to endure pay cuts or the shortage differentials end. Please find the funds to give our keiki the immersion education they deserve.

I am also begging you to push back the start date for students from Aug 4th to a later date so that we may properly plan and be prepared to keep them safe while in our care. Our keiki and their safety is always a first and foremost responsibility. That includes my own children, the only bubble that I can safely manage is my home. At school, we have to be safe we have to have adequate procedures in place to manage a large body of people.. Please push back the start date, until we can be truly prepared and safe for our students, teachers, staff, and our own families.

Please support the foundation of Hawaiʻi that has been shaken in this time of hulihia, by supporting fully licensed and skilled Kumu in teaching our keiki by giving them the professional pay they deserve.

Testimony BOE

From: Lisa Espiritu <llespiritu79@gmail.com> on behalf of Lisa Espiritu
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:00 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Agenda Items G and H

My name is Lisa Espiritu and I am a public school teacher and a parent of 3 public school students.

One reason I am writing is to urge the BOE to delay school openings. I, of course, want to get back into the classroom and want my kids back to school. However, we just aren't ready. Schools are scrambling to figure out how to implement safety procedures while also being able to teach. So many things that are being said to the public just aren't true. The DOH and DOE like to talk about bubbles. These bubbles are not happening in reopening plans because students have to mix bubbles for lunch, recess, and in secondary school with each class they go to. The superintendent made it sound as if teachers have been given training to prepare for reopening. We have not!

We need the DOE to address the following:

- The DOE needs to have specific written guidance on what happens when a person gets COVID in our school setting. We cannot keep hearing that it is a case by case scenario.
- The DOE also needs to be firm on face covering guidelines to protect our students and teachers. I will only feel safe if all are wearing masks at all times (except when eating, or taking a mask break outside)
- What is the threshold of cases where we need to shut down schools and move to 100% distance learning?
- If there are instances that students or faculty need to be closer than 6ft, what procedures must be followed to ensure safety?
- Will the DOE ensure that new families have completed a 14 day quarantine prior to starting?
- What guidance is there for 100% distance learning options. As of now schools are all coming up with their own plans. There is a rush to let parents know school procedures and for them to make a decision on if 100% DL is the right choice. In some cases the options given are not great alternatives.

These areas need to be addressed before we can open. Even when they are addressed, I will be nervous about opening knowing that there will be spread in schools.

Another reason I am writing is to urge the BOA against suspending pay differentials. I understand there are financial shortcomings. However, these differentials have helped staff special ed and hard to staff vacancies. It is not fair to those teachers that stepped up to fill these spots to now find out they will not get the pay they were promised for making this move.

Thank you for your consideration.

Lisa Espiritu

Testimony BOE

From: Christine Bryan <christinebryan13@hotmail.com> on behalf of Christine Bryan
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:01 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Delay reopening sy 2020-2021

Good morning ,

I am a school teacher at a middle school here in Hawaii - Dole middle.

I urge the doe to delay school re opening until cases in Hawaii stop going up.

This is not safe for our students , families , teachers and school staff.

Schools will just close right away. It will be a mess.

Train teacher with online teaching while waiting to re open.

This whole year should be online only while waiting to know more about this infection.

Sincerely ,

Christine Matamoros

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Maria Smith <msmith@pichawaii.us> on behalf of Maria Smith
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:01 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Postpone reopening of the DOE School Districts
Importance: High

Aloha e State of Hawaii Board of Education Chairman/Ma'am:

My name is Maria Smith and I am a resident of Hawaii in the Department of Education, District One, **I DO NOT SUPPORT opening all of the school districts in the State of Hawaii.** I urge the officials to consider this as we are sending our precious children who have very limited knowledge of how to protect themselves from this pandemic with little or not enough safety procedures set in place.

Unfortunately, there are no set and clear protocols that are set that the State of Hawaii Department of Health can guarantee the safety of our children, teachers, immediate family and community where they can feel safe therefore, I do not feel the school system at this time is safe to open.

I have a 2nd grade nephew, Nathan Smith, who is in District One who has a grandmother who has stage 4 cancer, whose mother is also a teacher in the same District. The whole family has another 2 kids under the age of 3 who could possible get infected should one of the two contract the covid-19. This could possibly infect my self and their grandmother. See how this can simply wipe out a whole family even a whole generation.

Once again, I do not feel the opening of the DOE School Districts are safe to open.

Thank you for your consideration and your time.

Mahalo nui,

Maria Smith
Project Engineer
Pacific Industrial Coatings, LLC
1725 Kalani Street
Honolulu, HI 96819
Office (808) 441-4020
Fax (808) 312-6360
Mobile (857) 763-8011
Email: msmith@pichawaii.us



Testimony BOE

From: Kathleen Algire <kalgire@hawaii-can.org> on behalf of Kathleen Algire
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:01 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony General Meeting 7/23
Attachments: BOE 7-23-20.pdf

Aloha,

Please find my testimony for the general meeting on July 23.

Thank you,
Kathleen



To: Catherine Payne, Chair
Brian De Lima, Vice Chair
Board of Education

Re: BOE General Business Meeting
Agenda Item VI D and G
1:30 PM, 7/23/2020

Chair Payne, Vice Chair De Lima, and committee members,

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!, we write with comments on Agenda Item VI D-Board Action on metrics to monitor and evaluate the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools for the 2020-2021 School Year, including student access to devices and connectivity; personal protective equipment and sanitation supply needs; student attendance; and student academic status and progress and 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 reopening of our state has been challenging. On July 11th, we saw a record number of covid-19 cases, the highest in Hawai'i since the pandemic began. As of July 22, Hawaii had 131 covid-19 cases in minors age 0-19. At the same time, we understand that we will need to find a way into the new "normal", since the coronavirus will likely be with us for the foreseeable future. We can balance health and safety with reopening but only if we do so with clear instructions, timely reporting and data collection, and centering the needs of children, families, and the education workforce. Additionally, discontinuing of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs undermines equity in education. Students in these programs have the right to be taught by qualified instructors and that does not change because of budget restrictions.

D-Board Action on metrics to monitor and evaluate the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools for the 2020-2021 School Year, including student access to devices and connectivity; personal protective equipment and sanitation supply needs; student attendance; and student academic status and progress

We applaud the Department of Education's plan to collect data using various metrics to measure the reopening schools plan and make the information publically available. Providing the information on a monthly basis gives opportunities for reflection and refocusing, if needed. An important part of data collection is ensuring the information collected matches the desired outcome. It is unclear if all the proposed data points would provide the information necessary to make decisions on the priority areas. Specifically, the data points listed in "Students Most Vulnerable" and "Access to Connectivity and Devices" do not seem to provide the needed information. Additionally, for these items it seems that collecting the data after school has begun would impose a delay in access to education for some students. We encourage the DOE and BOE to ensure that students in these categories have the tools needed to start the school year with the same level of engagement as their peers.

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 budget shortfalls from the coronavirus will impact our state and resources over the next several years. There are certain budget areas we should resist the temptation to reduce and one of the areas is the pay differentials for teachers in certain programs. There was an identified need for qualified instructors in these positions and it was recognized that pay was a reason for the lack of qualified candidates. By offering the pay differentials, students in these programs have access to the same qualified staff their peers do. This is an issue of equity and these budget cuts should not fall on our vulnerable students.

Our world is being reshaped. Education and learning are having to shift their very foundation and we applaud efforts to embrace these changes. We recognize the hard work of the teachers and school staff, as well as the Department. Thank you for the opportunity to share our comments.

Thank you,

Kathleen Algire
Director, Public Policy and Research

Testimony BOE

From: Shakti Brickland <shaktibrickland@yahoo.com> on behalf of Shakti Brickland
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:02 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony re delaying the opening of school

As a community member I wish to express a strong concern about the opening of our Hawaii schools due to the occurrence of covid - 19 in the population.

Admittedly, the virus is not as prevalent here as on the Mainland but we should be doing everything we can to keep it that way. We have only 9 ICU beds on the West side of Hawaii island where I live. Opening up the schools now seems a fairly certain way to increase the virus in our communities and put a lot of people at risk. Scientists tell us the children are not at a great risk, but the teachers and administrators are. This will lead to kids being at school without sufficient staff to cover all the classes and administrators to make all the decisions - what a headache that will be. The children at school will no doubt bring the virus home to more vulnerable people. Why aren't we encouraging distance learning for another quarter at least to keep our covid numbers down?

Please, please put our health before economy for a little longer, to do all we can to save lives. Keep the schools closed and encourage distance learning for another quarter.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Robyn Brickland.

Testimony BOE

From: Layla Rippy <laylavollmer@gmail.com> on behalf of Layla Rippy
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:02 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Funding of Teacher Shortage Differentials

Hello,

I have been teaching with the Hawaiian district for 1 year. This year I felt valued as a special education teacher due to the differential stipend we began to receive in January. Being a special education teacher I do not always feel valued due to the amount of work, patience, and time it takes to make it in this field. Many times others receive pay for coming into the special education field, and everytime teachers in the field of special education receive no recognition for their time on the job and are often overlooked for their dedication and commitment to students. This differential helped me to provide more learning opportunities to my students by being able to purchase items for my classroom, I would have otherwise been not able to afford. This differential also helped my family feel more secure in a difficult cost of living environment. Taking away the differential will impact my family's needs financially. It will also impact my ability to purchase additional items for my classroom.

Thank you,

Layla Rippy

Testimony BOE

From: Cindy <cindy.hutler@hotmail.com> on behalf of Cindy
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:02 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To Hawaii BOE,

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 kindergarten teacher and have grave reservations about returning students to school on August 4. There are still many unanswered questions that the DOE needs to address. The following are some examples:

- 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 am personally also concerned with the potential workload expected of teachers. We will be teaching students 4-5 days per week in person and also responsible for distance learning 4-5 days per week. How and when will teachers have time to pull this off? If I am in class with students, how can I possibly be involved and interacting with distance learning students at the same time?

We have also been told that the first 9 days of school will be half days and should be spent focusing on SEL, testing to determine where students are and training the students in the new safety protocols. Exactly what are these protocols? Teachers should have this information in order to plan lessons accordingly.

Please reconsider reopening of our schools on August 4! I believe if we are given more time, teachers, staff and schools will safely be able to reopen.

Thank you for your consideration,
Cindy Hutler
Kindergarten Teacher
Kihei Elementary

Testimony BOE

From: Madeline Mazzola <m.mazzola@seariders.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Madeline Mazzola
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:02 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony: 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 9th 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,

Madeleine Mazzola

Testimony BOE

From: Lisa Anderson <lisa.anderson@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Lisa Anderson
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:02 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for agenda item H

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 BOE,

I am against reopening schools to students before teachers being trained and many expectations clarified. As it stands now, teachers will have two days to prepare their classrooms "for the new normal" with two days being administrative days, days to cover a lot of information in a short amount of time. I am all for our students returning to campus, however; teachers and staff need to be better prepared to do so. Teachers are scarred, expectations are murky, and many teachers and substitutes are talking of retiring or not returning to school. This is alarming when our state is woefully understaffed with qualified teachers already.

Further, teachers are expected to assess students health upon arrival at school and take the following actions:

- All students will be screened (at least 6 feet apart) by their advisory teacher using the following CDC screening questions: ☐ Do you feel feverish or unusually warm (has flushed cheeks)? ☐ Have you been coughing and/or

sneezing? ☐ Do you have a sore throat? ☐ Do you have any trouble breathing or shortness of breath? ☐ Do you have a headache/stomach ache/nausea? ☐ Do you have muscle pain/unusual fatigue? ☐ Do you have a new loss of taste or smell?

While parents are supposed to also ask these questions before students attending school, it is my experience that students oftentimes come to school ill because parents need to go to work. I would hope this is not the case during a pandemic, but I have seen sick students at school too many times to feel comfortable about it. It has also been reported that many young people are asymptomatic, thus do not present any signs, but are still able to infect others. Finally, I am not a medical professional. I am 58 years old and have underlying medical conditions. I am worried. Even well trained medical professionals are dying.

Additionally, our handbook states, "At the end of every class period staff will sanitize all desks, equipment, materials, and supplies." Here's the list of what I'm expected to clean between classes.

- Electronics such as computers, printers, and devices
- Chairs, desks, and tabletops.
- Light switches and door handles
- Metal and plastic items like pencils sharpeners
- Sink handles and the surrounding countertops.

I am expected to do this within the five or six minutes allotted for passing before the next group of students arrives? This is just not possible.

I appreciate having my job, and I understand the importance of seeing students face to face. I love my students. I would much rather be in the classroom with them. However, should we have to close and teach virtually again, many of our teachers are unprepared. Even preparing the hybrid model is cumbersome, yet our prep time is the same as always. Our Superintendent talked of training that was provided during summer. I was not offered training to prepare for teaching virtually. I paid for my professional development and am still feeling overwhelmed with the amount of work that will take. Teachers are being left to flounder on their own to pull it off.

What teachers need is training and instruction before students arrive in the classroom. Four days to "prepare" in this time of crisis is not adequate.

In conclusion, the loss of any child, teacher, or staff due to COVID is not acceptable. We are in uncharted waters and numbers are on the rise. Honestly, if I had enough years of service, I would be retiring. I did not sign up to be a sacrificial lamb at the altar of education.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Lisa Anderson

lisa.anderson@k12.hi.us

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Testimony BOE

From: Deanne Shimonishi <deanneks@gmail.com> on behalf of Deanne Shimonishi
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:03 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Covid 19 has taught many of us a great deal. One of the most important things many of us have come to terms with is to hold and keep our loved ones close to us because at any time, we could become infected with the virus and never see them again. While there are tragic occurrences that cause us to lose loved ones, such as traffic accidents or health diseases other than covid, contracting and spreading covid can be prevented if we delay reopening school and move to full distance learning until there are better protocols put in place and we have the proper tools needed to protect ourselves, our families, our students, and everyone else we come into contact with.

With a teacher shortage there is no rationale in reopening school this soon. There is a higher probability that more teachers will not be able to complete the school year should they contract covid from returning to the classroom this soon. A long term substitute may not be able to deliver the curriculum in core areas and there is no guarantee that they are willing to come in during this pandemic. The state cannot afford to lose more teachers. We love what we do, so please do not continue to make poor decisions that encourages us to leave this profession. Please delay reopening and move to full distance learning for the time being. Keep our people in Hawaii safe.

Testimony BOE

From: Jonhenry Lee <jonhenry.lee@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Jonhenry Lee
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:03 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony
Attachments: CK BOE Testimony.pdf

Name: Campbell/Kapolei Complex Area Principals

Meeting: General Business Meeting, July 23, 2020 at 1:30pm

Agenda items: VI D & H

Position - Propose delay in starting the school year for two weeks.

Thank you,
Jon Henry Lee
Principal
James Campbell High School
(808)305-3605

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**State of Hawaii
Board of Education**

**Testimony by
Campbell-Kapolei Complex Area**

July 22, 2020

Relating to the Reopening of Schools for SY 2020-21

To Our Honorable Board of Education Members,

It is not common practice for us to provide testimony, as we know it is our place to implement BOE policy and follow directives from DOE Leadership. This is especially important in times of crisis, so it is with great reluctance that we feel compelled to do so now. Out of concern for our students, families, faculty, staff and community members we kindly ask for your consideration to delay the reopening of schools.

As Campbell-Kapolei Complex Area Administrators, we would like to collectively submit testimony pertaining to the following areas of concern:

Safety and Health Concerns:

- Custodians, School Health Aides, Cafeteria Workers and Office Staff have not received appropriate training (from the DOE or DOH) in COVID-19 cleaning and disinfecting protocols. Training has been non-existent or insufficient for new requirements in daily cleaning and disinfecting procedures. Principals are pulling information from the CDC website when the guidance should be coming from the DOE Safety and Security Branch or DOH.
- There is still no guidance on documentation from DOH for the Public Health Nurses or for our School Health Aides. We still have not yet received the DOH document that our department negotiated to help schools prepare for reopening.
- There is a lack of personnel resources for much needed community outreach for vulnerable populations to make sure they are properly informed and are aware of the resources, equipment and supplies that will be provided and are necessary for this school year. Need to revisit the role of the school social worker and MVA personnel.
- To prepare for the worst, we need information on contact tracing process forms, questions, and protocols. This would be used for schools to better prepare and keep track of student and adult “bubbles”(including on the bus) to better assist DOH who will need this information.
 - Procedures need to be developed and shared on what to do should a student or staff member be identified as COVID-19 positive, come in close contact with someone identified as positive or is symptomatic. Guidance is also needed on designating and equipping the proper location(s) on campus to care for these

impacted individuals while keeping others safe. The healthrooms that already exist on campus are generally insufficient to support the number of individuals who likely will be sent in as symptomatic.

Lack of PPE or Supplies

- Schools are not fully equipped with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for all students, faculty and staff and there is still no direction given on what PPE is appropriate/required for each type of employee that we have on campus.
- Schools are not fully equipped with enough hand soap, paper towels, hand sanitizer, hand sanitizer dispensers/stands, walkway and classroom social distancing floor markings, inside/outside signage, etc. Although it was ordered back in March, many schools have not had their supplies come in. These supplies are often backordered or had been ordered only to have the company cancel it because they cannot fulfill.
- Many companies that sell PPE are not vendor compliant with the State of Hawai'i so schools cannot order from them or risk fiscal violations.
- Schools have already cut middle school Art classes to purchase and keep up with costs for disinfectants and other cleaning supplies.

Distance Learning

- Schools lack devices and/or hotspots to ensure equitable internet access for all students. Some schools are still waiting for the arrival of devices ordered in April.
- Data from universal screeners Pre, Mid and Post could be skewed for students whose families choose the virtual-only option.
- Some communities lack access to the internet because they have a large homeless or low income population which struggles with meeting the requirements for distance and/or virtual learning.
- Summer Hub Chromebooks were only provided several days ago at the completion of the Summer Learning Hub and additional time is needed to inventory and distribute.
- Elementary schools were advised they would receive additional devices but have not received any as of yet. When these devices are delivered they still need to be serviced and upload the programs that the individual school will use.
- Schools lack the programs needed for virtual learning as it was not included in the Academic Financial Plan developed at the end of the previous year.
- Schools lack the money to purchase programs for virtual learning.
- Time is needed for teachers to prepare for synchronous virtual instruction
- If distance learning is available at all schools as was shared with the public, it must be available to ALL students. We are still waiting for guidance as to how we address this for students with an IEP.
- Schools are still receiving requests from parents for online distance learning. Schools aren't sure how many families will be requesting this option, but the numbers grow daily. This could impact the teaching lines depending on the amount of requests.
- Additional time needed for Tech PD with teachers of various comfort levels and skill sets.
- Schools need time to provide technology in-service for parents/guardians. Families need time to process the information and have opportunities for follow up. Some of our students' guardians are their grandparents who need greater assistance with technology. Need support for language interpretation for EL students' parents
- Schools need time to collaborate with families to explain their roles with students who are on the virtual-only option. Parents need to understand how to properly support their

child in virtual learning so they have a better opportunity to be successful.

Training

- During the first nine days of school it will be difficult to conduct training on programs and health and safety procedures while students have already returned to campus.
- Proper training is needed for substitutes(certificated, classified, casual hires, etc.) for new school procedures. There needs to be a system that allows them time to be trained and compensated while doing so because learning on the job for these health and safety practices and procedures is not responsible.
- Many elementary schools are still in the process of selecting and procuring new online/virtual learning platforms. The faculty who are expected to implement those programs will need time to be trained.

Guidance

- Personnel issues (Certificated & Classified) Some schools are still waiting for approval to hire for these vacant positions. Positions were bought in June but still haven't been processed for hiring of personnel.
- If essential personnel are granted FFCRA leave for child care purposes and insufficient substitutes are available, it will be difficult to maintain the safe operation of schools. Assistance and guidance is needed to properly plan for the considerable number of employees expected to apply for this type of leave.
- Clarification on discrepancies between multiple HIDOE documents (Principals Handbook, Reopening Plan, MOU with HSTA, etc.)
- "Opt In" form for distance learning option is still not officially available yet
- Waiting for SPED direction on IEP minutes, etc. Also need guidance for families that opt for distance learning and have IEPs. Families will compare schools with different virtual programs and modes of virtual instruction (e.g. synchronous, asynchronous)
- Ch. 19 guidance and training is needed to address student offenses committed during virtual instruction.
- Schools are still developing class lists due to changes in social distancing space and trying to meet the physical capacity of their individual schools.

Food Service

- Serving students who are not on campus - we are doing everything to keep the kids socially distanced, and yet are supposed to bring everyone on campus to feed them in facilities that are not designed for 6 foot separation.
- Ilima Intermediate cafeteria scheduled for construction December 2020-July 2021
- Some schools do not have physical capacity or the personnel to service both populations while maintaining social distancing.
- Is grab and go allowed for students not scheduled to be on campus due to a rotation schedule? If this is allowed, cafeterias need guidance from School Food Services as to how to plan, order, and serve breakfast and lunch every day.
- Schools need time to plan on how to serve and clean between lunch periods with the staff. Some schools are having three lunch times for rotations to follow safety guidelines.
- Grab and go meals must be consumed within two hours. For schools who scheduled lunch at the end of the day during the first two weeks of school, educators are concerned

about students becoming sick for students who don't consume immediately.

Student Transportation

- Busing registration will still not accept payment.
- Families without internet access are unable to complete the online registration.
- Busing for IDEA students may not be in place for the first two weeks.
- For possible contact tracing, there should be a daily record of bus ridership.

Substitute Teachers

- There are limited substitute teachers available and the pool needs to be greatly expanded to meet the anticipated increase in number of teachers taking leave. It will take time to offer the certification classes and register participants.
- Distance Learning PD for substitute teachers - system doesn't allow for substitute teachers to be trained and paid. They can only work if a teacher is absent. Substitute teachers would need to voluntarily be trained without pay.
- Procedures need to be developed for what to do when there are insufficient substitutes to cover classrooms. If that happens on a frequent basis school might need to move to an all online/virtual format.
- Additional devices will be needed for substitutes if the teacher is out due to childcare and takes their device with them. The substitute will need access to the programs the teacher is using, is it expected the teacher will share the login information or are we required to provide the sub their own due to security and FERPA?
- There are already long term substitutes needed for teachers that are out on leave the first week of school. These substitutes aren't paid until the first student day yet it is critical they attend training before school starts.
- Additional substitutes are needed for teachers who are observing the mandatory 14 day quarantine after arriving from out of state. Some are new hires arriving right before the start of school and others are returning faculty members that traveled knowing there was a quarantine period in place.

After School Care

- YMCA A+ has been waiting for schools to share their plans so they can provide appropriate support for after school care with staffing, registration, etc. They need additional time to follow through as well.
- They need to be able to ensure COVID health and safety guidelines are enforced, which may impact the numbers based on facility size, etc.

For all of the reasons above we humbly ask that you consider converting the first nine days of school that would have been student days and making them training days for our certificated, classified and casual employees. This would also provide additional time for the DOE to provide the guidance, clarification and training that we are requesting. These are unheralded times and we have little room for error when health and safety are at stake. We understand that this

impacts the required 180 instructional days but think that the trade off will result in better prepared faculty and staff and peace of mind for our families who entrust their children with us. We appreciate your time and thank you for the opportunity to share our concerns and recommendations regarding reopening our school campuses.

Respectfully Submitted,
Campbell-Kapolei Complex Area Principals

Anela Pia, Principal, Ka'imiloa Elementary School
Bryan Rankie, Principal, Keone'ula Elementary School
Gary Yasui, Principal, Holomua Elementary School
Judith Wong, Principal, Pohakea Elementary School
Ofelia Reed, Principal, Iroquois Point Elementary School
Shayne Greenland, Principal, Ewa Beach Elementary School
Stan Tamashiro, Principal, Ewa Elementary School
Christopher D Bonilla, Principal, Ilima Intermediate School
Kim Sanders, Principal, Ewa Makai Middle School
Jon Henry Lee, Principal, James Campbell High School

Cindy Otsu, Principal, Kapolei Elementary School
Laureen Dunn, Principal, Ho'okele Elementary School
Neil Battad, Principal, Mauka Lani Elementary School
Rae Fabrao, Principal, Makakilo Elementary School
Sandy Calio, Principal, Barbers Point Elementary School
Richard Fajardo, Principal, Kapolei Middle School
Todd Fujimori, Principal, Honouliuli Middle School
Wesley Shinkawa, Principal, Kapolei High School

Testimony BOE

From: hhs hsta <hhs.hsta.messenger@gmail.com> on behalf of hhs hsta
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:03 AM
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.](#)

Dear BOE members,

I am writing to you this morning, shortly after watching Dr. Kishimoto's 4 minute video appeal to teachers to "be at the school door waiting for our students on August 4th". She claims to "understand that people are nervous about reopening". This is a fallacy. Teachers *are* nervous about reopening, but we have good reasons for that, namely, that the DOE and DOH have NOT done their part as outlined by the June 26 MOU. At the top of this list of reasons is the fact that the DOH has not yet provided written guidance on reopening. Without guidance from our state health experts, how can teachers be reassured that protocols will be in place to handle the inevitability of a COVID outbreak in our schools and communities? Furthermore, DOE keeps changing the goalposts. Educators cannot trust the DOE when it goes back on its word. In the April 7 HIDOE long-term guidance on reopening, criteria included "no new cases for four weeks on the island".

Reopening of Schools

Reopening Schools After a Prolonged School Closure

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

For more CDC guidance, click [here](#).

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

1. **There is no recent evidence of community spread.**
 - a. No new cases for 4 weeks (2 incubation periods of the virus) on the island.
 - b. Availability of workforce is sufficient for reopening each school.
 - c. If need to stagger the reopening of schools, the HIDOE will follow the County's lead.
2. **HIDOE follows the CDC Mitigation Recommendations ([LINK](#))- Table 2, by backward mapping the actions for school closure for establishing procedures for reopening school**

The BOE, DOE and Governor Ige are pressuring teachers and administrators to return to work amidst a steady rise in COVID cases. With 40-50 percent of teachers being in a high risk category, this is irresponsible and reckless. Despite many recent attempts by DOE, Governor and DOH to reassure the public that it's safe to send everyone back to school, we know that it isn't. We also know that parents (and their children) are eager to return to a 'normal' schedule and teachers want to do that as well. Remember that MOST teachers are also parents, and a large percentage have young school-age children. My two children miss their friends, activities and being in school, and as much as I want them to have their familiar lives back, this isn't possible right now. Not until we have vaccines, and/or mass availability of cheap, do-it-yourself testing. In the meantime we need to minimize the risk of spread. Maintaining health and safety within our communities is of the utmost importance and schools are a critical part of our communities.

Hawaii has done well up until this point. Let's not waste all this effort and sacrifice by rushing to reopen when we're not ready. The timing of reopening schools should be guided by whether the state has resources in place to implement protocols and precautions to protect students and teachers. Hiring 15 nurses from UH is a good first step, but it's not enough. The DOE and DOH MUST provide written guidance on trigger points for opening and closing schools, as well as protocols for new students entering our school system, and the wearing of face coverings on school campuses, among many other questions and concerns that haven't been sufficiently addressed.

The DOE's reckless and irresponsible stance of prioritizing the needs of parents to go to work over the health and safety of teachers and students is shameful. Simultaneously floating ideas to cut teacher shortage differentials to help balance the state's budget is beyond belief. Live up to your mission to promote "excellence and equity" in our schools. **Delay reopening until teachers are trained, DOH protocols are in place, and HSTA concerns are adequately addressed.**

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Laliberte
Special Education teacher, Hilo High school
Hilo, Hawaii

Testimony BOE

From: Kristen Gagesch <kagagesch@gmail.com> on behalf of Kristen Gagesch
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:03 AM
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 a science teacher at Kailua Intermediate school and I worry about the current rate of COVID-19 cases around the state and around the nation. I fear that, despite the precautions prepared by my administrators to limit student numbers on campus and to social distance, a return to school will cause a surge in our state wide cases. Students or staff may be carriers of COVID before having symptoms and inadvertently spread this virus to others at school. I feel that our cleaning protocols will not be enough to stop the transmission of the virus from student to student or teacher to teacher if we return to school before the number of cases return to single digits.

Please push back reopening schools. Thank you for considering my testimony in this important decision.

Kristen Gagesch

Testimony BOE

From: Heather Tyrrell <hty9@yahoo.com> on behalf of Heather Tyrrell
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:02 AM
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 Whom It May Concern,

I am a special education teacher at Ka'ohao School on the windward side of Oahu. I have twenty years of teaching experience and a Master's Degree from Teacher's College of Columbia University. I am thoroughly invested in my students, their families and my school community. I love what I do, even though I struggle to pay the bills and have to work side jobs to get by. I am also a two time cancer survivor. I received life saving medications that have long term side effects on my heart and lungs. I worked hard over the years to counter that by living a healthy lifestyle and running marathons/triathlons. I never thought what might trigger those long term side effects would be going into the classroom.

I have spent the summer worried and confused and scared. Scared for my life. I wrote a living will in anticipation of the start of the school year. For weeks I have been asking myself- should I risk my life for a job? A job that doesn't pay the bills? It's hard to say yes to that question without being provided the basic framework of safety protocols promised to the HSTA teachers by the HIBOE in the Memorandum of Understanding. Given my personal situation, because of the DOE's lack of clarity, transparency and ability to provide the needed time, materials, trainings and protocols for safety (especially when there's a positive COVID test), I continue to question my return to the classroom by the August 4 mandated DOE start date. I do not find it safe or fair to rush into a start date before the agreed upon conditions of work are met. Please consider pushing back the start date until all of the conditions of work in the MOU are met and when you can be sure you are providing a safe situation for students and teachers.

Sincerely,
Heather Tyrrell
special education teacher
Ka'ohao School

Testimony BOE

From: S. Y. Im <yonim@ymail.com> on behalf of S. Y. Im
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:04 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Concerning the rush to open schools to our safety and detriment!!

To Whom It May Concern:

I am seriously concerned about the rush to open schools in response to the recent memorandum that has come out in regards to the agreement proposed between the HSTA and the DOE. In regards to the rush to open schools for students on August 4 and leaving the schools to open in the style that administration would like to adhere to and solely at their discretion! As we are all aware of, there is a very dangerous and deadly pandemic going on worldwide. Therefore, there should be more training and state wide protocols in place when it comes to our schools and reopening them in a safe manner, taking into account the well being of all involved including staff, students and the parents.

Yes, we have low COVID infection and death counts as compared to the contiguous US states.

YES, our numbers are going up throughout the easing up of stay at home orders. Do you see the correlation here??

I am a special educator and have now been an educator for 10 years in Oahu. I work on base and teach at one of the DOE schools there.

Do you realize that military and their families personnel can get exemptions from the 14 day quarantine that we require visitors to follow? What is the difference between the military families and the visitors who come to the island for a temporary stay, albeit, a month, 3 years or whatever their orders may be. Why do we allow these exemptions for the families of military personnel? They are not immune to Covid so why are they allowed to skip the mandated quarantine? What makes them exempt from quarantine orders? The perfect scenario is if new students from these families with move orders to Hawaii are enrolled and they are not asymptomatic.

What about the families that are carriers of the virus and do NOT care to regard other people's health or they are not aware that they even have it?! NOW, my life and the other students' lives are put at stake when we are exposed to others who may be exposed to the virus and or may be asymptomatic and so on and so forth.

You are playing with fire. This is a deadly virus and it is not safe to treat as if it isn't so. If you open schools earlier than when it is deemed safe to do so, the teachers and students will be the ones to pay the price for this. I pray that it isn't our lives that we are paying with, ultimately.

Push back the physical opening of schools, classrooms and mandate a state wide protocol as to clear and necessary directives as to virtual learning opportunities, disinfecting and safe cleaning procedures. Every school should be given funding or the necessary equipment for the safety and welfare of their students and teachers such as glass barriers between desks, face coverings and masks, cleaning and disinfecting materials, etc....

PLEASE do not put our lives at stake. I implore you to consider the health and safety of your own children and your families. Opening schools too early is a death sentence waiting to happen.

Thank you for your time!

Y. Im

Testimony BOE

From: Marciana Nishida <marciana.nishida@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Marciana Nishida
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:04 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

I as a parent feel uncomfortable sending my daughter to school. I purchased a lot of items to protect but it is never guaranteed. I have not heard any plans from the school as to how they will keep my child safe. Beside the 6 feet distance and wearing mask.

I am also an office assistant and feel that our health might be in danger. We deal with the public and students. I have purchased items (mask/shield/sanitizer) to keep me safe but again not guaranteed. Our school also has put things in place to keep us safe but it is not enough. What are we to do if we come in contact with someone infected? Do we do the 14 day quarantine? I have my family to think about at home. I think we need more training, safety measures taken, etc.

Mahalo,
Marciana Nishida

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Testimony BOE

From: Liana Steindamm <liana.adt@gmail.com> on behalf of Liana Steindamm
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:04 AM
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'm asking that our schools delay the opening for students. As a nurse working at Kona Community Hospital, I am experiencing first-hand what it takes for staff and patients to be kept safe. We have strict cleaning protocols, adequate personal protective equipment, and policies regarding exposure that are stringently followed. We are in the midst of a thorough facility-wide testing due to three staff members contracting COVID. So, when I see that our schools have no real plan in place to protect students and staff, it is extremely concerning to me.

I am married to a teacher, and have three sisters who are teachers here in Hawaii. All of them tell me that they have had no training whatsoever in teaching a virtual curriculum. This contradicts the superintendent's claims. My husband and sisters also say that they have no confidence that their schools will be prepared to even clean the classrooms in a way that will keep students and staff safe. And it is being left to individual teachers to decide whether masks are required in their classrooms. This sounds like a disaster waiting to happen. Each of these teachers have told me that they feel it will take documented infection spreading through schools, and possibly the death of a teacher, to bring the DOE to its senses.

I also think there should be a viable option for teachers who are at high risk of serious illness due to COVID, or who have household members who are at high risk, to teach the distance-learning curriculum. Hawaii already has an extreme shortage of teachers, and if those that want to teach but feel it is just not safe, are given no other option, I believe they will leave their positions. This will drastically worsen the teacher shortage, and make it impossible for schools to provide high quality education. There must be a solution to match teachers willing to distance-teach with students who need virtual learning.

Because there has been zero safe planning demonstrated by the State, I have decided to take my chances on whatever the 100% distance learning option is for my own children (Grades 2 and 5 at Holualoa School). Again, I have no idea what this curriculum will look like, or if there will even be a qualified teacher guiding my children through it, because there has been no definite plan announced by their school. It makes sense to give the school more time to create a safe plan!

I am asking the BOE to demand that schools have a protocol in place for cleaning, training for teachers in providing effective virtual education, and a protocol for what happens when (inevitably) a student or teacher is exposed or tests positive for COVID. Please give the schools a delayed start date, so staff have the time to adequately prepare for the safe return of students, and to provide a quality virtual learning environment for students not on campus.

Liana Steindamm
Holualoa, Hawaii

Testimony BOE

From: Suzanne Braun <wahinesuzi@me.com> on behalf of Suzanne Braun
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:05 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Fwd: TESTIMONY

Aloha Board of Ed Members,

I'm writing to you as a school counselor at Mokapu Elementary with my concerns about in-person school resuming on August 4th. First of all, we have received NO training even though the Superintendent insists we have. Secondly, there is no written plan in place for when inevitably, a student, teacher/staff or parent gets Covid at school. This is not acceptable, especially for those of us at high risk.

At Mokapu, after all the pleading we did to get 6ft distancing in our classrooms, we now have to request to do 3 ft apart (which I'm strongly against) because even split in half, there isn't enough space in our classrooms to do 6 ft, as all medical guidelines call for. Being on base, we get students from all the high-case states who arrive all throughout the school year. Where do we put all the new students if our classrooms are already full at 3 ft apart? Will we be provided funding to add more classes/teachers? Some have 14 students already which is half their classes, and school hasn't even started!

Why are all BOE and other meetings online because of safety reasons, but students(1,000 in my school's case) are expected to be in class together? Prisons aren't safe so criminals are being released, but starting school is fine? What are our priorities? Children, teachers, other staff, and their families, should not be used as guinea pigs when it is life or death at stake.

As a counselor, I cover about 15 classes, filled to capacity. Am I expected to still go into each classroom and expose myself to hundreds of kids on a daily basis with no protection other than masks?

Dishearteningly, we are being told that if we get Covid at school or need to quarantine, it will come out of our sick leave beyond the fed assistance for the first 2 weeks (possibly). Because of my chronic health issues, I don't have a bank of sick leave so I'd have to use leave without pay. How can I live without being paid each and every time I'm going to have to quarantine through no fault of my own?

Mental health issues and severe anxiety is a crippling factor I'm expecting among staff and students. Our students tend to have anxiety already but the fear we are going to experience returning before we are ready will be staggering. It will not be the school our kids are used to. No playground or social interaction with their peers or teachers. No lunch bunch or center time. No treasure box rewards for good behavior.

Counselors have been given NO guidance on how we will service students. Can we still do small groups, eat lunch with our students, play games to teach social skills, etc? I'm guessing no,

but I don't even know how we can see all our kids when they'll only be on campus twice a week.

Please do what is right and what other states who don't even begin until September are doing. Start online first semester and plan for in-person when it is safe to do so. It sounds like the Superintendent is planning for a full shut down anyway when she says we need to start to build relationships so we can better help when we go fully online. What kind of relationships will form with masks, social distancing and in school just twice a week for a few weeks when, inevitably, cases will rise and we will have to shut down? Why put thousands of kids and adults at risk of sickness and death for that? It makes no sense. Please do what is right.

Thank you for your time and attention. We are depending on you!

Yours Truly,
Suzanne Braun, MSCP
K-3 Counselor
Mokapu Elementary

Sent from my iPad

Testimony BOE

From: Buffy Whiteman <buffywhiteman@gmail.com> on behalf of Buffy Whiteman
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:05 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: delaying start of school

Dear BOE,

As I appreciate the first 9 days of the year are 1/2 days, WHY start those days with the kids? I have been cramming with online tutorials, google & seesaw training but I AM NOT READY TO TAKE KIDS IN! Why are student's social lives more important than the LIVES of my colleagues and my own? This is so frustrating. I miss my students. I want nothing more than to see them, work with them, engage with them...but it must be done with teachers who are PREPARED!! As educators we know the magic happens in the classroom however, we need to be prepared!!!

If you really care for the keiki, offer them prepared teachers!!

Disappointed yet again,
Buffy Whiteman
Grade 1 teacher

Testimony BOE

From: Kathy Tamabayashi <mannakat@hotmail.com> on behalf of Kathy Tamabayashi
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:06 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Before School Reopens

I'm a 1:1 ASD-EA in a FSD classroom at Waipahu Intermediate School. This will be my first year at this school. I live in a multi-generation home. I care for my parents with health issues, their ages are 85 & 90.

1) I would like to receive training before schools open & be prepared with knowledge of how to handle various situations that may occur, rather than learning after seeing the students for 1/2 a day for 2 weeks

2) I want to be protected as much as possible:

- A) Will students riding the bus be required to follow social distancing & wear masks? Will the students temperature be taken daily before getting on the bus?
- B) Where will the students eat breakfast after arriving at school? What will lunchtime look like after the first 2 weeks?
- C) Who cleans whatever student(s) uses/touch while in the classroom? Who provides the cleaning products & PPE?
- D) During Virtual/Afterschool days will staff family/child(ren) be able to be in the classroom?
- E) Will there be a daily check area for ALL students & ALL employees & visitors

3) When a person feels ill, will someone come to the classroom and check everyone in attendance out? Take temperatures etc. and/or take the person away? To be picked up? Will a notice of advisory to parents/guardians be provided for all concerned?

A) Is HIPPA an issue when asking someone to wear a mask?

Thank you for allowing me to express my concerns

Sincerely,
K Tamabayashi

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Lisa McClintock <lisa.mcclintock@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Lisa McClintock
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:06 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for BOE Consideration
Attachments: Signed BOE Testimony.pdf

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**State of Hawaii
Board of Education**

**Testimony by
Kula Elementary School Administration**

July 21, 2020

Relating to the Reopening of Schools for SY 20-21

To our Honorable Board of Education Members,

I am respectfully submitting testimony to the BOE for your consideration. I have grave concerns regarding the reopening of schools on August 4, 2020. My testimony pertains to the following areas of concern:

Health and Safety Concerns

- Custodians, School Health Aides and Cafeteria staff have not received appropriate training in COVID-19 cleaning and disinfecting procedures.
- Our school health aide has not received training on how to respond to COVID-related situations or how to set up her health room to properly respond to a student presenting with COVID symptoms.
- We are not fully equipped with PPE for all students, faculty and staff. We do not have enough hand soap, hand sanitizer, hand sanitizer stations and proper signage for walkways and classrooms.

Preparation and Training for Distance Learning Concerns

- We do not have enough devices and connectivity to ensure internet access for all students for distance learning.
- Teachers and administrators have not been trained to effectively deliver online instruction.
- There is inadequate time to plan and prepare procedures and set up classes for delivery of online instruction.
- There is inadequate time to communicate and provide parents with information regarding delivery of online instruction.

In your BOE resolution, school communities were encouraged to Give Hope, Act with Kindness, and Work Toward Togetherness in reopening our schools. As a school leader, I am making every effort to make this a reality, but I do not feel we can open safely as there has been minimal support and answers to address these concerns.

I thank you for the opportunity to share my concerns. I respectfully request that the reopening of school be postponed to allow for appropriate planning, training and guidance for the numerous questions that have not been answered.

Respectfully,


Lisa McClintock, TA Principal

Testimony BOE

From: Nalani Arciero <narciero@hes.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Nalani Arciero
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:07 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Health and Well-being

Aloha Board Education,

Thank you for your continued support during this unusual time. Covid-19 has disrupted many of our keiki and teachers' way of life and our educational system. In the last two months the numbers have steadily increased in Hawaii which is alarming to parents, teachers, and students. While our state has done a good job of keeping down a widespread virus there is now community spread, which makes this whole situation more concerning. During this unprecedented time, many teachers have stayed resilient and positive.

As the start of school is approaching, I begin to grow extremely worrisome as do parents and students. Although my school has tried to come up with guidelines and plans, there are no clear cut decisions from the state that define what protocols and safety measures need to be in place to return safely to campus. As a resident in Hawaii I am unable to find in our stores items such as: hand sanitizer, gloves, tissues, paper towels, lysol, thermometers and clorox wipes. If our own state does not have these items in stock where do you expect teachers or parents to get these items for their classroom? These are critical resources needed to stop the infection from spreading. Schools are not ready, teachers are not ready, parents are not ready and most importantly students are not ready. I long to teach in the classroom again but with safe and clearly defined guidelines and protocols. For example, if the teacher or student comes down with Covid-19 symptoms do we stay home for 14 days? During these 14-days teachers and students miss out on quality instruction. There are so many unknown's during this time and it is very terrifying to know that creating successful schools during a pandemic falls onto administrators and educators' laps. With many in our school who are vulnerable (health issues, disabilities, etc.), it is reckless and irresponsible to open school when cases are on the rise.

Teachers at the beginning of this pandemic went on spring break and never came back to school. Before spring break was over many teachers had begun their plans for distance learning. I know when I heard school was closing, I immediately began to make videos, and gather resources for my students. I teach special needs preschoolers, this alone was very difficult to make meaningful instruction but teachers never give up. Parents were able to support their child and access content we would be doing if we were in class. I am grateful to have received my full pay during this time as many people had lost their jobs and went on unemployment. Teacher shortages are already a major issue in Hawaii, with our pay being low and the cost of living being high it's almost impossible for many to find quality educators who will stay. I want to stay in education but I do not want to risk the health of myself, my family or my students and their families. Keeping our pay the same will help me to support myself and continue to educate our keiki. If cuts to pay do happen, I will need to find other ways to support myself whether that be a new career or change in location.

I love teaching and I absolutely love my students. I want to give my students the best education I can but I will not sacrifice their or my health to do so. Finding solid and concrete safety protocols and guidelines for reopening need to be done. It should not fall onto administrators and teachers to decide what to do, when we have never been in situations like this. If we work together as a whole we can find safe and healthy ways to return to school, however two weeks time is not enough to figure this out.

Thank you,
Nalani Arciero, MA.Ed.

Testimony BOE

From: Eleyne Fia <hacacefia@gmail.com> on behalf of Eleyne Fia
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:08 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Opening of the school year - delay to plan

Dear BOE members,

I am writing to ask that the opening of schools be modified to delay the onset of students entering campus in person.

I am a school counselor at a high school and I also have two children, one who most recently graduated this past year from high school. I feel as if everything in his senior year - prom, graduation, athletics of which he was a track captain for one week before things went down, celebrations for his accomplishments on campus - all were taken away due to Covid. This was NOT due to our school and its people, who tried to give everything back to our seniors.

I would not want something like this to happen again. Thus I am asking that you give our schools the chance to do things right. Yes, it means that students may have to wait a bit to come on campus. But I think a little bit of sacrificing in the beginning so that safety and academics are done the RIGHT and PREPARED way, is so much of a stronger guarantee that our students will be able to finish out the school year the way they should be allowed to do, versus chaos and the more likelihood that this year's students may yet again see another year interrupted.

My son and the students, teachers, and community all evidenced what happens when we are thrown a wrench that we are not prepared for. Please, let's do what's needed to PREPARE as much as possible so we can move forward.

Thank you,
Eleyne Fia
Parent of a former public high school student
Also a proud school counselor at James Campbell High School

Testimony BOE

From: Elisabeth Dingus <mbnut@aol.com> on behalf of Elisabeth Dingus
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:08 AM
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 Elisabeth Dingus and I work at Kapa'a Elementary School as a teacher as well as have children attending the school. I do not feel that our school system is ready to welcome students back with such vague plans for both the staff and students regarding COVID-19. There are too many "learn as you go" scenarios that potentially have life-threatening implications for both students and staff. I am requesting more time to be trained as well as have more explicit direction on how the safety of students and adults are going to be addressed.

Thank you,
Elisabeth Dingus

Testimony BOE

From: Lynley Hayes <lynleyj@gmail.com> on behalf of Lynley Hayes
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:08 AM
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 Lynley Hayes and my grandchildren attend Holualoa Elementary

I am very concerned about the situation that our schools are sadly underprepared to be able to teach our children with a distant learning program. This absolutely needs to be adequately set up, as the University of Hawaii has done, before schools re-open.

I believe that there will be an exponential amount of spread of COVID19 if the schools were to open, physically, at the proposed time of August 4th 2020. This being said if they wrongly open they will no doubt be shut down by the Department of Health soon after due to spread of the coronavirus so I am proposing that the Board of Education delay the opening until a distant learning program for our children is set up.

I am asking that the HSTA be heard about this extremely important matter of the future of our children and the State of Hawaii.

I am praying for a change in the policy.

Sincerely,
Lynley Hayes



ReplyForward

Testimony BOE

From: Corrie Izumoto <carajadmom@yahoo.com> on behalf of Corrie Izumoto
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:08 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Hello Members of the BOE,

My name is Corrie Izumoto and I am a sixth grade English teacher at Kawananako Middle School. I would like to give testimony for the Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding Between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 Contractual Modifications and Conditions of Work Related to COVID-19 Response for Bargaining Unit 5 Employees.

I would like the board to recognize that teachers are living, breathing, human beings who are not expendable for any amount of money. I feel that I have gone above and beyond during a normal school year and even further during the COVID crisis. Thus, it would be appreciated if the DOE and BOE would recognize that in order to do my job to the fullest I need to be safe and healthy. If basic safety measures given to all other Hawai'i businesses (e.g required wearing of masks, temperature screenings, written guidelines for infection, etc.) can not be made for teachers then you are making a blaring statement that teacher lives do not matter!

I, like many fellow colleagues, would love to be back in classrooms with my students but I would like a plan to be in place that puts the safety and health of everyone in the school first. Right now there is no "plan." We are just supposed to show up, hope, pray and wing it. I ask you, would you want to go to work without a safety plan and minimal safety measures in place? I want you to know I am genuinely afraid for my life. I KNOW students and how easily viruses spread during a normal school year. Especially, when parents are notorious for dropping their children off to school knowingly ill. I beg you to not take a chance with my life OR the lives of my students and their families just because the Governor is in a rush to open the economy.

Again, my name is Corrie Izumoto and I strongly urge the BOE to delay the opening of schools in order to save my life and the lives of others.

Thank your time and consideration,
Corrie Izumoto

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Amy Var <theteachercouple2@gmail.com> on behalf of Amy Var
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:08 AM
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 modification and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 Employees. **I urge you to push back the opening of the school year to allow time to ensure safety measures and optimal learning environments are in place before we open doors to students.**

I am a twenty year veteran teacher in the state of Hawaii and consider Waiakea Intermediate School my second home. My students' safety and well being are of utmost importance. It is our job as teachers to ensure that at every conceivable level. Right now, I cannot say that we have had enough time to ensure even the most simple of tasks like allowing students to use the restroom, how to dismiss and move classrooms, or even how to sharpen a pencil have been lined out in a way that is conducive to best practices regarding COVID-19. I will admit that I am worried- for our students, for myself, for my family that I go home to, for us all.

To paint a better picture, I will have 15 students every hour, 4-5 times a day, four days a week. At minimum I will interact with and have 60 different students in my room per day. Additionally, these students will NOT be in the "bubble" that is so quickly referred to in the media. They will travel their daily schedule, meet with electives which are mixed teams and sometimes even grade levels, and then return back for their given class period with me. There is nothing in place for how we would contact trace in this regard. We have been asked to dispense hand sanitizer to each student coming into class, which violates the 6 foot agreement, and many rooms do not have sinks so this act becomes even more imperative. To add to the debacle, either I as a teacher or my students will have to wipe their desks between classes to ensure there is no cross contamination between class periods. To be honest, this is not something I am comfortable doing and although some students/parents may be ok with it, rigid cleaning protocols will not be adhered to in this context. The sheer volume of students moving around outside the classrooms adds further conflict. Our administrators are working diligently on each obstacle that surfaces, but it seems we still have more questions than answers. We need more time to iron them out.

All of these worries come before a stitch of content has been rolled out. Teachers and schools were accused nation-wide of failing to deliver online content that met the needs of our students. When COVID hit we were in an emergency situation and did the best with what we had. But 4 months later, I fear little has changed. Many of us have taken our own summer vacation (where many normally take a second job to help make ends meet) to dedicate to bettering our online platform. The truth is, our 4 upcoming prep days (some of which are administrative days for other tasks, AND setting up classrooms to ensure 6 feet distance, which is virtually impossible with 15 students in a room) are not enough. To design and refine lessons that represent our best teaching and ones we know will reach all learners, we need more time.

We cannot open our doors to kids in two week's time and expect it to be optimally safe or remotely comprehensive. We can do better. We must do better. I urge you to push back the start day of public schools for students. Give teachers time to make the environment safe and figure out how we are going to make this work. We cannot open doors, usher students in and expect that will work. Not only is this a matter of life and death, which alone should be enough, it is a matter of integrity. Our keiki, our teachers, our schools need us to do better and we CAN do better if you allow us the time to do so.

Thank you,
Amy Var

Testimony BOE

From: Porsche Storm <porschestorm@yahoo.com> on behalf of Porsche Storm
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:09 AM
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 school counselor at Kauluwela Elementary School. I believe schools should not open on August 4. We cannot reopen until we can do so safely, and time is needed to ensure proper plans are in place that will protect our keiki and our school personnel.

As a school counselor I have not been trained on how to handle situations within safe parameters of social distancing. At my elementary school I am often in close contact with students. I work with students who have detachment issues, those who are "runners," and everything in between. How do I protect the student from physical harm while adhering to social distancing guidelines? There are many questions I still have of how to properly adjust in my line of work. I just ask that we have the time and training in place to keep everyone safe.

Thank you,
Porsche Pu'u lei-Storm

Testimony BOE

From: Dana Hudlow <danahudlow@gmail.com> on behalf of Dana Hudlow
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:09 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Please don't open schools. Protect our children and teachers. Do the right thing.

Testimony BOE

From: Cassie B Lamson <cassielams@utexas.edu> on behalf of Cassie B Lamson
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:09 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony: SPED Differentials

To the Hawaii Board of Education,

I am emailing on behalf of my strong opposition to Action item G:

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.**

If the differentials, specifically the special education pay differentials, it would cause great regression in the overall field of special education in Hawaii. Currently, I am a special education 4th grade teachers at Waiakeawaena Elementary School on the Big Island. I have witnessed the change in discourse about the field of special education change with the introduction of the pay differentials. The Board of Education last year passed the pay differential and immediately it made an impact on other certified special education teachers to go back into the field. Many/most special education teachers work numerous hours creating individualized curriculum for their students with disabilities as well as creating curriculum to use for progress monitoring of each student's goals and objectives in their IEPs as well as writing annual IEPs. For special education teachers to do their job with fidelity and ethically, they spend a lot more time on campus than their general education counterparts due to meetings, understanding special education law, changes in practice, trainings, and all of the legal paperwork that is involved in the field. Special education teachers have a special license in a field where they are working with extremely high risk students and it is not a desirable workload when you compare it to general education teachers. I am dually certified and the pay differential has kept me in the field of special education. I have student loans to pay off from my Master's degree and the pay differential has allowed me to pay off larger amounts with less stress in my life of paying my fixed costs.

If the BOE no longer provides the pay differential, it will not only monetarily impact special education teachers who are benefitting from the pay increase, but it sets a very poor precedent as far as bringing new people into the field because incentives can now be taken away. We NEED more qualified special education teachers and what this pay differential has done has created intrigue and other teachers to return to the field. The pay differential is so crucial to get Hawai'i out of the terrible place it has been in; students with disabilities should never be taught by individuals who are emergency hires but yet that is what we do in Hawaii.

Please do not take away the pay differentials.

Cassie Lee
cassielamsonlee@gmail.com

Testimony BOE

From: Karrie Arquette <karriearquette@gmail.com> on behalf of Karrie Arquette
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:10 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY

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 & cuts to teacher shortage differentials.

Point 1:

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.

I am a CTE teacher at Waianae High School, I have twins who attend Ka Waihona o ka Na'auao PCS, a high schooler who attends a private school, and I care for a family member who is 93 years old, who has an increased risk factor for COVID-19.

At this time, no direct information from the school I work at nor my children's charter school has been given to me about the procedures that will take place to begin school or any protocols that will be enacted in case of any out breaks. Too many times, schools are given guidelines that can be interpreted in any way administrators see fit. There has been no teacher training for health & safety procedures as well as for online instruction, if and when we would need to transition again to distance learning. Another question is, what happens if teachers and "bubbled" do get sick? There are too many questions without any concrete answers to restart schools so ill-equipped that to reopen will be detrimental to everyone in Hawai'i. Teachers should not be guilted into returning to school because the entire state is relying on the backs and health of our school communities to shoulder the responsibility of jumpstarting the economy! We are not the babysitters of this nation!

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.

We want schools to open, but do it SAFELY. We want a specific PLAN to give to principals and teachers, as well as our student's parents, and until we get that, we are asking to delay students return to school buildings. That's not asking for a lot when our students and staff safety is at stake.

Point 2:

Whenever the state needs to balance a budget, it is also on the backs of educators! We are treated as a dispensable profession when it suits the state. We are amazing when we serve the community as seen in post about how teachers are "saviors" at the beginning of the state implemented quarantine; but how we need to reassess our finances to "help" save the economy as the state starts reeling in the differentials we have earned for sharing our passion of teaching and caring for our students in areas that others will not teach at or leave because it is too difficult to teach at. I love my community, which is also the community I teach in. Our salary to begin with is a joke, with many having to take on extra jobs to make ends meet. Many also do not take into

consideration the time and effort we put into creating curriculum when we are not in our regular working school hours. Our job never ends!

Teachers should not be the scapegoats for when the state cannot manage a budget they have pledged to their constituents when asking to be voted into their position. Making our economy great is the goal, but cutting teacher pay or differentials should NOT be the solution.

I humbly ask that the reopening of schools should be delayed until policies and training has be enacted and delievered for the safety of our students, teachers/school communities and our communities at large. Also, keep in mind that all of this cannot happen if we lose teachers. So Do NOT cut funding for hard-to-staff teacher differentials!

Me ka ha'aha'a,
K. U'i Arquette

Testimony BOE

From: Carrie Jyo <carriejyo@gmail.com> on behalf of Carrie Jyo
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:10 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am writing 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.](#)

I am a Special Education Teacher at Iliahi Elementary School in Wahiawa.

I have a daughter who attends Leilehua High School.

I totally understand that students need to go back to school BUT....at what cost?

As a parent, I have many concerns as to how the school is going to keep the students safe especially during passing/changing classes. Who is going to clean each classroom during this time? How are they going to control the 6ft distancing during passing? And, what happens when a student gets sick in class, are all the parents going to be notified so we can take the precautions we need before our child gets sick and/or brings home the virus? And, if teachers are doing face to face, who's going to be doing the distance learning on the days that my child doesn't go to school?

As a teacher, our school is planning to bring back all the SPED students everyday from 8:00 - 1:00, who does the distance learning with my students who choose not to come to school? I also heard that "Compensatory" services will happen.....who's responsible to do this? Is it the care coordinator? When are we supposed to do that? We had NO training to prepare us to do any type of distance learning especially for our SPED students who are non-verbal.

With this said, I am asking the board to rethink opening up schools on August 4th. We need answers to all our questions and a better plan in place before we hit the ground running.

Thank you,
Carrie Jyo

Testimony BOE

From: Toni Hall <seniorenglish.thall@gmail.com> on behalf of Toni Hall
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:10 AM
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 Members,

I don't sleep much these days and when I do it is not well. I am plagued by nightmares of losing people in my family. Of them becoming ill and being isolated. Of them being placed in the hospital and me being unable to see them; to encourage them to be strong; to watch over them. Of me and the rest of my family waiting at home for word if the one who was ill survived. Of my grand children going into the hospital one by one and not returning. Of my children following until there was not one else left. Last summer, I spent two weeks in the hospital with my husband - sleeping in a chair, eating meals when there was another family member to sit with him, going home long enough to shower, then returning to that chair day after day. If he or anyone else catches Covid-19, I will not be allowed to do that. If I catch it, they will not be there for me.

As a grandmother who has seven children enrolled in Hawaii schools, I worry about them all. This year, my grandchildren are not going to the hybrid school programs their complexes have chosen to follow. They will be taking classes online on Acellus. Acellus is an online program that is used for remediation. It is a program that consists of taking a pre-test, watching video lessons, doing some exercises, taking a post test, and either moving on or repeating the section again until they pass it. It is everything that the HIDOE says does not work in education.

It is a program which leaves the student isolated at home in his or her socially distanced world. There is no contact with other students in the same program. It is totally independent and impersonal. It is not differentiated for learning disabilities. It is not differentiated for giftedness. It is a one-size-fits-all program used as a stop gap against failure. This is not an education, but my grand children are stuck with Acellus if they and their parents want to keep them safe from exposure to Covid-19. This program was selected to punish students and their families for choosing to place the safety and well-being of their families before education. This is a program that was selected to drive students back into unsafe classrooms. The philosophy of "If we make being out of the classroom unpleasant enough, the students will be forced to return to school out of sheer boredom or out of their inability to monitor their own learning paces." is in play here. It is unfair. It is substandard. It will drive more families into dis-enrolling their students and into seeking their own homeschooling programs. It demonstrates that HIDOE is not prepared to offer a full distance learning option to students who want an education.

Acellus is a boring program. It does not inspire a "Life long love for learning." The student is not encouraged to be a community contributor. The students might be taught to be "an ethical user of technology." This program does not follow most of the general learner outcomes that have been the focus of our education system for the last twenty years. Students hate this program and often have to be "chased" into doing the assignments. They do not receive any help from live teachers if they hit a difficult spot in their programs. There are no tutors to help them in the content they take while on this program - and remember, middle and high school students will be enrolled in multiple courses on

Acellus at the same time. My five-year-old niece will be enrolled in Acellus for Kindergarten. I wonder how this will effect her choices for education in the future. The students are enrolled in their various programs with one teacher to oversee the progress of all of their classes. That teacher is a monitor. He or she generally does not have expertise in more than one discipline. He or she could certainly figure out how to help the students in those content areas but not in all of them. How is this fair? How is it right? The reason for offering this program is to encourage them to come back to campus. Why are they not allowed to take their classes via google classroom in the same way as the students who choose to return for hybrid classes? What difference does one or two days in the classroom make if the rest of the classes are held online anyway? Why are they forced to enroll in Acellus for online instructions, but not allowed online instruction from a certified, licensed, live teacher? What happened to a "fair and equitable free education?" How is Acellus equitable to contact with live classmates and teachers via Zoom or WebEx or the Google classroom? How is it better than that?

As a 27-year veteran teacher who also happens to be a type 2 diabetic, I am terrified of going back into the classroom. When it was announced that our schools were going to reopen, I asked my principal what that meant for someone like me; someone who is at high risk for Covid-19. I asked if I would be able to tele-teach because of my immuno-compromised health condition. My principal stated that I would need to apply for an ADA accommodation - that I would have to have a recommendation from my doctor for that accommodation. And so, I did it. I applied for my disease to be recognized as a disability.

After going through the review process a recommendation was made. It was recommended that I be equipped with an air filter, that masks be worn in my classroom at my discretion, and that hand-washing, social distancing, and disinfecting take place in my classroom. It was even suggested that I or my students should wipe down my classroom between classes. The HIDOE did not take into consideration that people with type 2 diabetes are four times more likely to die from Covid-19 than the average person ⁽¹⁾ when they made their determination. Or maybe they did know that, but discounted it as of little consequence in light of having all teachers in the classroom. Certainly the addition of an air filter will be an adequate solution for my health issue. After all if you filter the air it has to be safe. Right? Actually, there is little evidence to support the idea that an air filter will stop the spread of Covid-19. According to the National Air Filtration Association "Similar to building filtration, there is no direct clinical evidence of the benefit of portable air cleaners for reducing infectious disease risk, but some benefit can be reasonably inferred . . ." ² So, I guess we can infer from the accommodation decision that an air filter in my classroom will help keep me safe from COVID-19, right? Is this the response they will have for all immuno-compromised teachers, staff, and students?

Is this what the HIDOE is doing? Assuming that schools will be safely reopened? Assuming that all teachers, staff, and students will survive this pandemic? On what evidence is this decision being made? Where is the data that proves that reopening schools is safe for students and staff? Are we operating under a wish and a prayer? We wish that this wasn't happening and we pray that we don't fall ill and die so students will go back to school and parents back to work? How does that work? Realistically, how is opening our schools supposed to happen safely?

I've read the reopening plans for both the state and my school. The plans are made based on the assumption that students, staff, and faculty will show symptoms of Covid-19 infection and will take the recommended precautions to not spread the virus. Is the HIDOE aware that a large portion of our student population will probably be asymptomatic? This means they will carry the virus, but will be unaware that they are spreading it to those of us who are vulnerable? Where are the procedures for that situation covered in our reopening handbooks? How will we know if we have been exposed to this virus if the people carrying it are showing no symptoms? We don't even know how many people at a school will have to be ill before a school closes. There is nothing in the handbooks to give an indication for that eventuality.

Here's a possibly inevitable situation. A student is exposed to Covid-19 at home or through some outside contact. He or she is asymptomatic. That person gets on their bus where everyone is masked, sanitized, and socially distanced. They go about their day. They go into this class with its 12-14 students, then on to the next and the next. By the end of the day this person has had contact with at least 40 other people, but more importantly, he or she has had contact with at least 4 to 7 teachers - who each has had contact with 12-14 students and other teachers throughout the day. All of those students, teachers and staff will take the virus home to their families. Many of those families are multi-generational, with grandparents and other kupuna in the home. All of them are unaware that they have been exposed to Covid-19 by an asymptomatic student until two weeks later, when people begin to show symptoms. Not all of them will become ill, but enough of them will. Some of them may die. Some of them may experience long term health disabilities. Some of them will experience brain injuries from their bouts of Covid-19. Some of them will have strokes later after recovery. And some of them will become sick with it again. Who will be responsible for this? Who will help these families with their medical bills and funeral costs? What role will education play in this situation?

There are only nine ventilators on the Big Island. Who will make the choice about which patients will use them? Will we be forced to make triage decisions on who is the more valuable person in our society - the eight-year-old student who caught the infection from his asymptomatic older high school brother or the fireman father who was also exposed and infected by that student. Who's life is more valuable? Because those are some of the decisions now being made in places like Arizona, Florida, and other places in the continental U.S. Those are the decisions we will make if we do not take precautions now. If we are not sure of our safety plans.

A teacher died in Arizona while working in an empty classroom with two colleagues this summer. They were not in contact with their students. They practiced social distancing and mask wearing and all the other CDC recommended precautions. Yet all three became ill. One died. How are our classes safe? What assurances will we as teachers have that our students are safe? That we will not die doing a job that we love? How many of us will have to die on the altar of Education before real safety measures are put in place? A thirteen year old boy in California died alone in his own bedroom, self-isolating due to his Covid-19 diagnosis. How many of our students will have to become ill before it is decided to close the schools? Is this a case of sacrifice a small number for the good of the many? I am one of those small numbers who can potentially become a sacrifice. I cannot teach if I am dead.

You want to know how the decision to open schools affects me? I am terrified and in despair. I have to work hard to hold myself together - to not give in to depression at the knowledge that going back to school is a potential death sentence for me. How can I do my job well if I am constantly on edge for my safety? I have to be on alert all day, every day about breaches in my "safety bubble." How can I help my students to learn if I am constantly distracted? I am distressed and stressed. I am constantly thinking about how to protect myself and my family from this disease. I have to worry about procedures to enter my own home. Questions like, do I shower outside before entering the house in case I have the virus? Will I have to wear a mask constantly at home to avoid exposing my family members to the virus? Will I have to sleep separately from my husband of 30 years because if he is also highly vulnerable to the disease? Do I have to eat in isolation? Do I have to wipe down and disinfect my bathroom every night before bed? How will I go about my daily home chores without infecting my family? Do I have to live a separate life in order to do my job? And what about my students? If I am forced to disinfect my classroom does my chances for infection rise? Do I become even more vulnerable?

While I juggle all of these decisions about my personal life, how do I plan for my classes? How am I supposed to teach, to assess, to give feedback? Which comes first? In this case the HDOE wants me to place the opening of school before my life and my family. Since when are teachers asked to die for their profession? I did not volunteer to give up my life. I chose to teach because I love learning. I

love seeing my students discover the world of the mind. I love it when they can apply what I teach to their lives. I do not choose to die, or get ill, or become mentally or physically debilitated because of a virus but that is the risk I will be taking because of the decision to reopen schools.

I have spent my summer building my courses online. I have researched and taken professional development courses to help me make the most of teaching in a virtual setting. I have actively looked for ways to make my classes interesting and engaging. The learning curve for this is steep, but worth it. There is so much out there that we can use in our classes. Colleges and Universities have been successfully offering online programs for years. Certainly, an online course does not offer everything that a face-to-face classroom does, but it offers more than a pre-packaged, one-size-fits-all program does; and it offers more than a socially distanced classroom does.

"Everyone" keeps saying that online learning does not work. We know that this is not an accurate statement. Let's be more specific. Online learning the way it was rolled out last spring did not work. Teachers were not given time to prepare. They were not given any training in how to put their classes online. They were not taught effective methods for teaching online. Instead, we had the legs cut out from under us when it was announced via the media that nothing would be counted after March - that it would all be enrichment. That message basically told the students that it was summer. It delivered the message it is okay to sit at home and do nothing because nothing will count against them for not learning. Tell me that you would not have done the same had you been in their shoes?

The point is that teachers were unprepared for the move to an online setting. Students did not have access to equipment or WiFi. We need to take the time to fix that. Teachers need training, and students need training as well. We are resilient and our students are resilient. The HDOE and you, the Board of Education, are worried about a learning gap; are worried that our students will fall behind. Well, here's another question for you - if the whole world is experiencing the same thing, who is ahead of us? Students learn, they adapt. Teachers learn and adapt. We even become adept at our new learning. But what we need is time. We need our feet firmly on the ground. We cannot fight a pandemic without direction. We cannot open our schools without clear guidelines that will keep all of us safe. We cannot force hundreds of students into an ineffective online learning program that eliminates all of what is good in education. We cannot open our schools until we have a clear plan on how to keep everyone safe - not most of us safe, but everyone.

Who in the HDOE or on the Board of Education will take the responsibility for even one life lost to this disease? Are any of you willing to say to some teacher's, staff member's, or student's family, "I'm sorry for your loss. I thought the best we could do for our state was to open the schools in the middle of a pandemic."

I have already planned to issue invitations to my possible funeral, because I am a planner and because I am a realist. When I go to school I will become ill, I know this because it has happened many times over the years with exposure to the flu and colds and so on from my students. Only this time, I will become ill with Covid-19 despite all of the precautions I will and have been taking. It is my hope that I will survive it. It is my fear that I will not.

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony.

Aloha,
Toni Hall
English Language Arts Department Head
Honoka'a High and Intermediate School

1 Mastroianni, Brian. "Risk of Death from COVID-19 Four Times Greater for Those with Diabetes." *Healthline*, Healthline Media, 23 Apr. 2020, www.healthline.com/health-news/covid-19-impact-on-diabetes-hospitalizations.

2 "COVID-19 (Corona Virus) and Air Filtration Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)." *National Air Filtration Association*, 2 Apr. 2020, www.nafahq.org/covid-19-corona-virus-and-air-filtration-frequently-asked-questions-faqs/.

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Narrative is the oldest and most compelling method of holding someone's attention; everyone wants to be told a story. --- William Zinsser

Testimony BOE

From: Lina Kellam <linakellam@gmail.com> on behalf of Lina Kellam
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:11 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Questions & Concerns

Name: Lina Kellam

Complex Area: Ka'u-Keaau-Pahoa Complex Area

- What happened to going 4 weeks without any new cases before opening schools up again?
- With numbers still on the rise, how do teachers and staff return to work without feeling uncomfortable, scared, nervous, terrified, paranoid, etc.?
- What about those faculty and staff members who has underlying health issues? Or has someone at home with underlying issues?
- Not everything is opening up due to the spread, what makes it safe for schools to open?
- As an adult, wearing a mask just to go in the store or anytime being in public is long, what about our students? Will they keep it on? What happens when/if they don't want to wear it any longer in class?
- If a teacher tests positive for COVID-19, will there be a substitute? Substitute travels from school to school.. will they be tested/screened? As for our school alone, we already have a difficult time finding substitutes (prior to COVID-19). If so, will the entire class (those that came into contact with teacher) get tested, or have to stay at home and quarantine? Families notified?
- What happens if a student or teacher tests positive?
- Who will be supervising students during meal times?
- How do we safely return to work with **NO** training? And expect staff to be fully ready and properly trained in a week before students return.
- What type of PPE will be provided for all employees and students?
- Who is going to screen for illnesses?
- How do schools plan on screening faculty, staff, and students prior to the start of school?
- Being a small, close, tight-knit community, how do we enforce social distancing to students? Especially if they're mostly related.
- If schools are still holding meeting virtually, what makes it safe to be face to face?
- What happens if a student, teacher, staff member or family member tests positive for COVID-19?
- What are the procedures in case someone contracts the virus?
- Guidance and trainings for all staff? PPE for those that don't bring masks to school? Disinfecting classrooms, bathrooms, and often touched surfaces daily?
- Will teacher and Educational Assistants substitutes be trained also?

...:♥ *Lina Kellam* ♥:...

Testimony BOE

From: Roger Hudlow <hudarog@gmail.com> on behalf of Roger Hudlow
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:12 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Schools

I believe it's imperative that schools are not reopened in August!

The plan that is to be implemented is too flawed, to many possible areas of contamination for students and teachers.

Yes we want to see kids learning, but it needs further tweaking.

The better plan for now would be on line teaching until we see how this plays out as the numbers continue to grow here.

Roger

Testimony BOE

From: Chris Mabuni <cmabuni@gmail.com> on behalf of Chris Mabuni
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:12 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

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.](#)

Testimony BOE

From: Christina <christinah123@gmail.com> on behalf of Christina
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:12 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: To Whom It May Concern:

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this in regards to the opening of schools in the next couple of weeks. Our classrooms are not ready for students to return and I truly feel like a "guinea pig" by putting our keiki and teachers in this position. Our schools don't have a plan or clear protocols on how to keep everyone safe. Teachers need planning time to figure out how distance learning will look like if schools need to shut down again/plan to figure out how to keep everyone as safe as possible. How can we make sure students will keep on masks in the classroom all day? What do we do about behavior? The teachers should have a say and/or vote on how we would like to proceed with the school year. I feel that this process has been unfair and is putting my health at risk.

Sincerely,

Christina Connors

Testimony BOE

From: Alison Gronley <alisongronley@gmail.com> on behalf of Alison Gronley
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:12 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for Action Item G

Aloha,

I am sending testimony for action item G.

Please, please, **do not get rid of the hard to staff bonus for teachers.** Now more than ever reducing teacher pay is not the way to go. Teachers will be having to work harder than ever to have online and in person lessons while constantly cleaning our classrooms and worrying about getting sick - paying us less for more work will not increase teacher retention.

This year is already stressful enough for everyone. Food prices have increased, and staying at home more means electrical bills have increased as well. Getting rid of a hard to staff bonus that many teachers depend upon is not the way to go.

Thank you,
Alison Gronley
Science Dept Head and Environmental Science Teacher
Nanakuli High and Intermediate School
Leeward District

Testimony BOE

From: Jacqueline Cramer <cramerjacqueline99@gmail.com> on behalf of Jacqueline Cramer
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:13 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Our school year safely and with adequate pay

I am writing to advocate for clear guidelines on all aspects of COVID in the schools. There are many details that continue to change, and I witness incomplete addressing of details by administration in the schools. We need guidance, and if clear, consistent guidance is not ready for an early August start, then we need to slow down and address our concerns, start school later.

Additionally, teacher pay needs to retain teachers. The amount of work we perform as teachers, added to the COVID and risk, and our expensive housing market need to be met with decent pay. Retain the pay differentials and increase teacher wages, or our children will be increasingly affected by teacher shortages.

Thank you for your time.

Jacqueline Cramer
Public School Elementary teacher

Testimony BOE

From: James Dingus <dingus4@icloud.com> on behalf of James Dingus
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:13 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony on re-opening of schools

Dear BOE,

My name is James Dingus and I am a stakeholder in public education in Hawaii. I have 2 elementary school age children. I am also an 8th grade Social Studies teacher at Chiefess Kamakahelei Middle School on Kauai.

I am concerned about the pace and preparation for teachers for the upcoming year. Teachers and schools are not prepared. I have received zero training up to this point for how to manage distance learning. With my children's school and the campus I work at having a hybrid plan including distance learning, teachers need time and training to make this work.

I also have concerns about the safety of students (including my children) and school staff with Covid-19 making so many people sick. Phrases like "learn as you go" should not be how safety in schools is approached. Doctors are consistent in saying that when people gather in large numbers, then the disease will spread.

We need more time for training and clearer direction to safely open our schools.

Thank you for your time.

James Dingus

Sent from my iPad

Testimony BOE

From: Celina Wilson <wilson.celina@gmail.com> on behalf of Celina Wilson
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:13 AM
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 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response) for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

I am deeply concerned about the plan to reopen schools as early as August 4th, while we continue to have high numbers of COVID infections. I have attended two reopening meetings for my school and have read through the BOE and DOE reopening guidelines, all of which have raised significant concerns for the health and safety of students and staff. These plans do not go far enough to protect teachers, faculty, staff, students, or their families. We are told that it is when, not if, COVID cases will occur on our campuses. I am deeply concerned about the lack of preparedness for the reopening of our schools in the midst of a global pandemic. I would like to see clarification on the following items.

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 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?

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?

How will we address the ongoing issue of teacher shortages in the midst of a pandemic? Will additional training and protections be available for substitutes?

Without a proper response to these items I do not feel safe returning to the classroom as soon as next week. Our students, families, teachers and faculty members deserve a comprehensive reopening plan. Getting kids back in school is vitally important and needs to be treated as such. Please do right by our teachers, students and their ohana.

Mahalo,
Celina Wilson
6th Grade Teacher
Kapa`a Middle School

Testimony BOE

From: carl kim <rosyscamel@hotmail.com> on behalf of carl kim
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:13 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Start of School Year FY 20/21

It is more apparent each day that our state is not ready/prepared to reopen schools with students in our classrooms. A clear and relevant model, with input from the teachers, is not yet on the table. Basic questions, such as what happens when a student is diagnosed positive?, have yet to be addressed. It is a real outcome that has not been clarified. Would the State, school administrators, supervisors be liable?

More work with all vested parties would provide a higher level of confidence that this can work successfully.

Carl Kim

Testimony BOE

From: Alexa Nelson <20262603@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Alexa Nelson
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:13 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To the Hawaii 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. The August 4 date is too soon and the half days for training do nothing because we will already have students in our classrooms before we receive training and can discuss protocols and concerns.

I am a science teacher at Kauai High School, and I am immunocompromised. My husband is an essential worker on the container ship that brings goods to Hawaii from Long Beach and will be gone for the next four months. If something happens to me I will have no one to care for me.

I will have many questions and concerns about reopening so soon. Who shoulders the blame if a student, family, or school staff member gets infected or dies because of COVID, and it can be traced back to school transmission? Why not invest time up front to allow staff to train and practice procedures before we welcome students to the school? What actually happens if someone tests positive in our school?

I would like to quote the following from the Hawaii State Teachers Association, which supports my concerns:

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.

A few days ago 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.

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. How will these students receive a quality education if all of the teachers are busy teaching the hybrid courses in person and online? The department has provided no guidance for K-5 students’ access to 100-percent distance learning options. I’ve heard other principals have outright stated that they will not be offering ANY at-home learning option.

I would like to further augment with my own questions that I would like the Board and the Superintendent to address:

- 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?
- The DOE has said that schools must contact the Dept of Health if a certain amount of students in a school or classroom get infected, but how many infected students does it take to outright CLOSE a classroom or school? If a single student from my classroom gets COVID-19, will all of my students continue to learn from home immediately and self-isolate? Or will the entire school shut down? Can the state guarantee how quickly other parents will be notified of relevant infections? What if a family member of a teacher or student get infected? Or a co-worker of a student's parent?
- 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? Stress weakens the immune system.
- How many more people are going to die, that otherwise would not have if we had stayed home longer?

What kind of trauma and harm will occur to students who are at school but can not socialize with their peers or teachers?

More importantly, who shoulders the blame if a student, family, or school staff member gets infected or dies because of COVID, and it can be traced back to school transmission?

These are important questions that need to be clearly answered, planned for, and spelled out, in all of their ramifications and consequences, and communicated to both school staff and parents on the front lines, before welcoming students back into school buildings.

Much has been made of comparing school openings to opening a restaurant or grocery store for business however these are different situations. Stores may have things like plexiglass when customers interact, but teachers are not being provided that in classrooms, and limited contact with the same person for only a few minutes, whereas teachers will be with the same group of students for possibly up to 6 or 7 hours a day.

It's true that Dr. Park has brought up the idea of ohana bubbles to avoid transmission, but it's also true that the DOE really hasn't made it clear how to handle closing classrooms or entire schools if those ohana bubbles become infected. Further, ohana bubbles do not really work when considering overlapping bubbles of school buses, secondary schools, extracurricular activities set to start again on Aug 19, etc.

I would like to point out my own experience that, this past summer, I received NO offer of training for the school reopenings from the DOE. I also received no training during Quarter 4 and worked 10+ hours a day to try to make distance learning work. I will further point out that any such training offered would have been optional for 10 month teachers on summer break, and so the implementation of this training would have been inconsistent and not mandatory. I would estimate a marginal fraction of teachers actually volunteered for or provided this training.

Others will point out that teachers get 4 days of student-free prep time at the start of the year. However, this is the normal amount of time given during NORMAL school years, SURELY a pandemic school year would require MORE? Further, 2 days of teacher meetings take up those 4 days, leaving only the last 2 days for teachers to truly spend time outfitting their classroom and developing quality lesson plans for their students. I am just getting access to my classroom today, and dedicating the last week of my summer trying to prep. The last minute plans released by the DOE made it impossible for me to plan curriculum.

They will also say that we have the first 9 days with students to prepare for things such as digital learning, but that is after students ALREADY RETURN to school, which is too late! We need thorough, prep time to adequately plan for our students and our safety BEFORE they come back to our buildings.

We as teachers are being asked to make a choice between our safety and our duty to our students, and that is a false choice to have to make. Fear and uncertainty is forcing the self-interests of teachers and parents to come into conflict, which is all the more ironic, since at the heart of it, teacher and parents both want what is safe and fair for our students. This is gaslighting at its finest.

We want schools to open, but do it SAFELY. We want a specific PLAN to give to principals and teachers, as well as our student's parents, and until we get that, we are asking to delay students return to school buildings. Honestly that's not asking for a lot when our students and staff safety is at stake.

Thank you for your time and I hope we can come together and make the best and safest decision for our keiki, their families, and the staff.

Best,
Alex Nelson

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: Heidi Endow <heidi.endow2017@gmail.com> on behalf of Heidi Endow
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:13 AM
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 teacher at Mililani Uka Elementary School. I am very scared and nervous about going back to school on August 4 with students returning because it is not safe. It's honestly too early to be opening up schools with Covid-19 cases in double digit numbers, with no vaccine still. I have a compromised immune system, therefore my immune system is very weak and can catch a virus very easily. On top of that, I take a longer recovery time due to my immune system attacking itself. I feel like I'm being given an ultimatum to choose between my job and my health. Of course I miss my co-workers and excited to teach my new group of students, but health and safety come first. I understand that parents need to go back to work, but why can't there be a guideline in place about "If someone has a child, 1 parent can work from home due to their child having distance learning if their school is on a blended or hybrid schedule. If they are a single parent, then they should be given that option to work from home also." I understand there are jobs in which people have to go into work, and people might see this idea as "Unfair" but employers need to be more understanding at a time like this.

We did not get any training on Covid-19 on how to screen a child, what symptoms to look for and we do not know about the guidelines if a child or staff member has Covid-19 the procedure of if the whole class will be quarantining or if there will be a school shut down. It's also unreasonable that there is no health guideline of what will happen when there is a Covid-19 case on campus, when every worksite says "Whoever came in contact with the person who had Covid-19 he/she will/is quarantining for 14 days". We are not healthcare workers, there's so much responsibility put on our plate by identifying a "Sick" student with those symptoms. If something happens to that student or they die, there's definitely going to be parents who blames teachers by saying "Why didn't you send my child to the health room earlier, but what if they had NO symptoms? How am I going to live with that guilt?"

With no guidelines of what will happen when a Covid-19 case is on campus and no Covid-19 training, it makes virtual staff meetings very difficult because there are unanswered questions that we have, which makes it stressful. Every school is responsible for coming up with their own guidelines and own plan, which doesn't make sense because it's not consistent and some things are unreasonable. All the responsibility falls on teachers to do temperature checks for students and some schools are not doing temperature checks. That's not safe.

I don't want to contract Covid-19 from school AND bring it home to my family of my aging mom/dad who has a compromised immune system, my sister, and my 1 year old nephew. His immune system is very weak. I would feel awful if someone in my family dies from this virus because I contracted it from school and brought it home. It's harder to see a loved one in pain. Please think about if your loved one contracted Covid-19 from you because you were asymptomatic/showing symptoms and brought it home from work and they died. Please, it is not safe to open schools. I hope it doesn't take a bunch of people to die before guidelines are created.

Thank you,

Heidi Endow

Testimony BOE

From: Leila Maeda-kobayashi <leila.maeda-kobayashi@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Leila Maeda-kobayashi
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:13 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: Jason Kuloloia; kfinn@hgea.org; Paul Zina
Subject: Opening School Concerns

Aloha,

Koloa Elementary School is not ready to open safely on August 4th. As an educator and school leader, I have always strived to provide the best educational experience for my students, families and staff. We are not ready to do that on multiple levels. I have stayed informed (on all sides) regarding the August 4th start date. Everyone has valid reasons to support their stance. My biggest concern is the health and safety of our children and my staff (both physically and mentally). Currently, we are not able to open in a manner that is safe. Our inability to effectively open on August 4th is not because of a lack of effort or work on the part of the people here, we have been working harder than ever.

Input from teachers is critical to our success. Teachers and those with the most contact with students are currently on vacation and cannot be expected to participate in the planning process to open school. It is critical that all voices are heard and that all staff receive the same information. Given the current schedule of 4 teacher workdays before students return, with 2 of those days being Administrative days, there is not enough time to prepare for what is expected by the DOE. At the very least, teachers need professional development on how to effectively implement distance learning both in the blended model we are adapting as well as if we have to go completely online. The DOE's response to HGEAs inquiry about reaching consensus while teachers are on vacation, doesn't clearly answer the question as to how to get teachers to participate while on vacation. I understand the concept of "Give hope, Act with Kindness and Work Toward Togetherness" as a general concept, but do not understand how to use that guidance to get teachers to work during their vacation, without taking advantage of them.

We are planning to provide professional development and training during those first 9 half days of school. While this plan has good intentions, it has one major flaw, which is the fact that the first few hours of training will take place after our first group of students has been on campus. I have adjusted my Administrative opening days as best as I can to allow for more COVID19 planning. However, much of the Professional Development for those two days was planned out way before this pandemic began and cannot be changed. Teachers want to do the best job possible for their children. The current plan for professional development does not allow for that, and the lack of preparedness will be an additional stressor to all.

In addition to teachers being prepared, we need more time to prepare our campus. There is so much to be done. Social distancing markings have to be created, the physical campus needs to be prepared. PPE needs to be available. When this pandemic started in March, we were asked to submit numbers of how many cases of clorox wipes, cleaning products, gloves, masks, etc ... (PPE and Cleaning Supplies) would be needed - I assume that the State ordered that. As of today, those items have not been received. Our school has also independently ordered supplies (Plexiglass, Electrostatic Fogger, Cleaning Supplies, Soap, Sanitizer, Sanitizer dispensers, etc...) but have not received those items yet. Without those items on hand, we are not prepared to provide the safe learning environment that is being promised to our stakeholders by the State/ DOE.

The one resounding question I am being asked by parents and staff is "What happens if there is a positive case on campus?" I understand that this is a rapidly changing situation and that procedures will have to adjust as

needed. I have read through the guidance provided by the DOE and I have made that available to my teachers. Still there is much uncertainty and fear mainly due to the fact that there are so many unanswered questions. With fear and worry present, the learning environment is compromised for all.

I am respectfully asking that the opening of school be delayed for at least 5 days. As stated by the keynote speaker in our ELI (Educational Leadership Institute) yesterday, "There is no more passionate workforce than Educators." This is true. Teachers and schools want to provide the best learning environment possible for our children. With the current opening date of August 4th, that will not be possible.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Leila Kobayashi

Principal, Koloa Elementary School

3223 Poipu Rd.

Koloa, Hawaii 96756

Ph: (808)742-8460

Fax: (808)742-8466

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Testimony BOE

From: Tami Sego <tjsego1@gmail.com> on behalf of Tami Sego
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:14 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for Action Item H- Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between BOE and HSTA (ensuring a safe work place)

To the Honorable Board of Education,

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

I am writing today to submit 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 a safe work environment for Unit 5 employees. I am currently an elementary school teacher on the island of Oahu. Due to the global pandemic and rising cases in Hawaii, I am fearful for the health and safety of all of our students and personnel on our school campuses. I am writing to express my concerns about the rush to reopen our schools to in person learning for students and to request a delayed, phased-in approach.

The safety measures that HSTA advocated for on behalf of our school community and that your board supported are the first step to ensuring student and educator/staff health and safety. With the rising Covid cases on Oahu, I feel more needs to be done to further safeguard our students and staff. Oahu now has more daily cases than when we transitioned to distance learning in March. We are now at 10.4% positivity rate. Many people are asymptomatic and do not experience outward physical symptoms of the virus. I feel we are rushing to reopen our schools to students on campus based on a date that was set prior to any of us knowing anything about a global pandemic. At what cost are we willing to rush the students' return to campus?

I'd like to ask the Board to consider delaying students' start date so teachers can receive proper training on effective distance learning as well as time to plan as a team, so we are well prepared for the changes that are bound to occur this school year with the pandemic. Distance learning training has NOT been provided during the school year. Additionally, there is limited guidance from the state on the reopening. Principals are left to plan their own reopening and there is little consistency across the state. Some schools are denying parents the right to distance learning.

I would also like the Board to consider utilizing a phased-in school reopening plan, similar to other state's school plans. **Phase 1**- distance learning for ALL students. This is appropriate for our current situation, when COVID-19 cases in the teens and twenties are being reported daily (higher than we saw in March) and we are experiencing a 10.4% positivity rate. **Phase 2**- similar to the current plan, a hybrid plan w/ reduced number of students on campus. This would be appropriate once case numbers come down to single digits and are stable across the island. **Phase 3**- full reopening for students. Appropriate for when there is a vaccine or no new cases for several weeks (as originally outlined by the Governor in March). While I agree with Dr. Kishimoto that relationships are vital to learning, I don't feel teachers and students should sacrifice our health and well-being. Relationship building is not something specific to face-to-face learning. Relationships can be built online as well. Perhaps we should look to the online schools that do this effectively. At this time, *distance learning* is the ONLY way to ensure everyone's health and safety on campus. I implore the Board to consider a delayed, phased-in approach to reopening schools. Only then will our plan truly be "A Plan for a Safe Return to School."

Additionally, in order for us to return to face-to-face instruction, there needs to be a transparent plan in place for informing the school community about positive cases, plans for school closures, mandatory mask requirements, and plans for how to return to the classroom. The DOE needs to provide transparency in reporting school COVID-19 cases to parents, school staff and the public. I am fearful that identified cases will not be transparent. Schools have proven this with their policies on cases of head lice, which are not shared with parents of students in the class being impacted. It makes me wonder how cases of Covid will be shared with parents and staff.

With the rising COVID-19 cases on Oahu, I am concerned for the health and safety of my students, my colleagues and my family. Numbers of reported COVID-19 cases are higher now than when this started in March. Why are we rushing back to reopen in the middle of a global pandemic? At what cost? I am appealing to you to please consider a phased-in reopening and a delay to the student start date. Provide teachers time so they can be properly trained and allowed time to plan for distance learning. Many teachers spent their unpaid summer to plan and learn on their own, but now it's time to come together as a school to ensure equity and safety for all students. Only then will our state plan truly be "A Plan for a Safe Return to School."

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

Respectfully,
Tami
Elementary School Teacher, Oahu

Testimony BOE

From: Keene Tanaka <keenetan3@gmail.com> on behalf of Keene Tanaka
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:15 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Students behavior

Are we going to be more stringent on the behavior of student behavior if they do not follow safety guidelines? If not, why? The times have changed and we cannot be so accommodating to bad behavior. We need strict guidelines to follow and do not leave it to the administration to figure this out!

Do we have a protocol for students who are out ill and return to schools? I would have the health/nurse screen these student before they are allowed to return to class or campus! Regardless if they had a simple cold, etc.
Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Aoki Family <aokiohana@gmail.com> on behalf of Aoki Family
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:15 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony
Attachments: 20200723 BOE Testimony.docx

My name is Shanelle Aoki and I am submitting testimony for the 7/23 BOD General Business Meeting. Please see attached, thank you.

This testimony is being submitted for the July 23rd BOE General Business Meeting in regards to the DOE school reopening plan.

I have two children in the public school system, a fifth grader at Mililani Ike Elementary and a seventh grader at Mililani Middle School. I do not agree with school reopening on August 4th. In listening to the HSTA press conference yesterday, I agree that 4 work days is not enough time for teachers to prepare for the modified school year, and for school administration to roll out detailed policies and procedures to adhere to social distancing guidelines. We should not rush to reopen schools at the risk of the health and safety of our teachers, children, and their families. There is a moral obligation to do this right, as the consequences of a rushed reopening will be felt for months to come and is evident in states that have rushed to reopen without clear guidance.

Further, I understand that 6' distancing will now be followed, and that exceptions must be approved by the HSTA, however what is not taken into account is whether children have the ability to maintain social distancing without supervision. Mililani Middle School is planning on having double classrooms accommodate up to 34 students with one teacher and one aide (about 17:1) with 6' distancing which seems semi-reasonable for 6th-8th graders. Mililani Ike, however is planning on reopening to all students full time with a teacher-student ratio as high as 23:1, with 6' distancing. This does not make sense to me at all as it will be harder for younger children to maintain social distancing, and it cannot be reasonably expected that one teacher will be able to have their eyes on up to 23 children 100% of the time. Just because 6' distancing can be accommodated spatially does not mean it is automatically the right decision. Other factors such as the children's reasoning, maturity level, and thus ability to maintain distancing on their own should be taken into account as well. Further, a larger 'ohana bubble' also means exposure to more individuals, in which the risk should also be assessed. It should also be taken into account that school will not be the only 'ohana bubble' these teachers and children are exposed to (children's parents work, immediate families, etc. to name a few).

Thank you for your time and consideration in the matter.

Testimony BOE

From: Randy laea <rkiaea@gmail.com> on behalf of Randy laea
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:16 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Return to school concerns

Continued education is paramount but does it surpass life. My concern is all "in class" distancing as proposed to all of Hawaii is not including other factors / conditions towards exposure:

1. Transportation (school bus) exposure
2. Close proximity walking around on campus between classes or before and after school
3. Availability of face masks and will the schools provide it on a daily basis. A lot of families are struggling financially
4. Will there be pre-check temperature readings of each student prior to entering classrooms and what actions are in place for those exceeding 100.4
5. Bullying is a big problem in Hawaii. Who will be monitoring those that purposely cough or fake sneeze on other students
6. Physical contact of shared classroom books

** Information being provided to the public only describes in class precautions which is the least of the conditions that exposes students to close proximity to each others

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Lani Gokan <marmugs808@gmail.com> on behalf of Lani Gokan
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:16 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: testimony - MOU between Hawaii BOE and HSTA (SY 20-21 Covid-19 response)

Aloha from Lihue, Kauai!

My name is Lani Gokan, I am a teacher at Wilcox Elementary for 26 years and have recently been reassigned to teach Kindergarten.

I am urging you to please consider a DELAY in having students return to campus until ALL faculty and staff can be informed, trained, and have common understanding of new protocols in regards to COVID-19. The reason I am asking for your consideration is based on the following school-wide discussions and actions that need to take place in order to ensure the safety and well-being of ALL students as well as ALL staff members:

- we need time to discuss cleaning and sanitizing protocols in and outside of the classroom (eg: procedures when entering the classroom, how often do common touch areas need to be sanitized)
- we need to figure out how to physically set up classrooms to adhere to physical distance guidelines (floor markers for standing in line, furniture spacing, "flowchart" as students move throughout the room, and more)
- we need to understand what "100% online learning" entails.
- we need time to be informed of what standard practices of PPE should be followed for students, inside and outside of the classroom.
- we need time to be informed of what standard practices of PPE should be followed for teachers, especially when working in small groups.
- we need time to discuss and plan for if (or when) our school needs to be shut down, how will we move to 100% distance learning. What are the protocols?

I, as well as my colleagues, have attended many voluntary WebEx meetings over the summer, so we did "give up" part of our summer because we truly CARE about the health and well-being of students. I have also gone into school to attempt to "set-up" every day for the past week. However, I feel that we need more time to have solid plans in place BEFORE we welcome students back to school.

Please, please reconsider and delay the start of school for students until we are confident and ready to welcome our children back to school safely.

Mahalo for your time,

Lani Gokan

Testimony BOE

From: Lisa Yamagata <Inishizuka@gmail.com> on behalf of Lisa Yamagata
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:16 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To Whom it May Concern:

My name is Lisa Yamagata. I am a 6th/7th grade science teacher at Waimea Canyon Middle 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.](#)

I understand that the issue of when and how to reopen schools is very complex and emotionally-charged. There is no one easy answer for all of this. And no matter what decision is made, there will be people unhappy with the decision. However, these are the reasons why I believe there needs to be more time and energy spent into discussing and planning the reopening of schools. As a teacher, I do not feel personally prepared and ready to receive students. There are so many unanswered questions that are valid and important in keeping EVERYONE safe in our schools and community. The reopening of schools will throw all of us into a situation that many Hawaii residents have been actively trying to avoid since the pandemic began. Bringing so many different households together into a small, enclosed area seems counterintuitive to all the bits of guidance/orders we've had over the last few months. I am not sure if the public understands that in the secondary schools, with students transitioning to different classes/teachers, there will be a huge amount of mixing of households which will make contact tracing very difficult. Even with the modified A/B rotation schedules that many schools are adopting. At an average of 12 students per class, in my first day of teaching I will have had more sustained contact with other households than I have had IN TOTAL since March. We are essentially bringing together half of the households of our entire westside community everyday. That may sound like an exaggeration, but when you factor in to the amount of mixing students will do by switching classes as well as what they choose to do before school, at recess, at lunch, and on the bus - that is A LOT of contact for each individual on campus. It goes against the number one thing we've been taught since the beginning of this pandemic - that having large groups of people for an extended period of time in close quarters is what spreads the disease.

Everything is too nebulous at this point for me to feel confident in reopening schools. The feeling I am getting from DOE and DOH is that they are just being optimistic and hoping that all goes well with schools reopening. And if/when something bad happens, then they will respond to it when it happens. I would rather them be PROactive than REactive. Here are some questions that I don't think we've gotten solid answers on:

- 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 multiple classes a day, do all of those students need to then stay home and quarantine for 14 days?
- Do all 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 person 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 quarantine and get tested? Who is going to pay for that? Same thing with EAs, PPTs.
- When will the DOH provide the written guidance that was assured to us as a requirement for reopening schools?
- What does 100% distance option look like for parents who are requesting it? Are teachers responsible for managing that curriculum AND our regular curriculum?
- What is the threshold for shutting a school down due to a COVID case?
- Why is there not a standard health check protocol being implemented statewide, or at the very least within school districts?

Please believe me when I say that I miss working with my students, I miss being around the other staff members at my school, and I miss the normalcy that being at work brought to my life. But until we get this pandemic under control and/or we understand more about this disease, I would rather play it safe than sorry. I truly believe that the health of our entire COMMUNITY is at risk when schools reopen. No one truly knows what will happen because our schools have not been in full session at any point during this pandemic.

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony.

Lisa Yamagata

Testimony BOE

From: Phyllis Fukami <pfflyersmaui@icloud.com> on behalf of Phyllis Fukami
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:17 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Reopening of schools

I am a retired teacher and I have a daughter who teaches at an elementary school. Her daughter, my granddaughter, will begin first grade this year.

I have concerns for my daughter as the teacher of the many students she will be in contact with and I have grave concerns about in-person instruction for my granddaughter who will be in close proximity with other children. Throughout this pandemic she has not been out in public. We have kept her safe and healthy between our two homes. Now, according to the school schedule, she will be expected to attend school two days a week. I realize that children need in-person instruction, however, during these dire times I truly feel that health and safety of our children is of utmost importance. Please reconsider having children attend school during this time or at least give parents a choice between partial in-person attendance and 100% virtual instruction for those parents who are fearful about sending their children to school.

I appreciate your attention to this matter of vital importance.

A concerned grandparent,
Phyllis Fukami

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Anthony Williams <kamakaeu@gmail.com> on behalf of Anthony Williams
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:17 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Please consider delaying the start of schools

Welina mai me ke aloha,

My name is Anthony Williams and I am a 4th grade teacher at Pā‘ia School on Maui. As a teacher and knowing the recommendations of staying 6 feet apart and maintaining an ‘ohana bubble for our keiki, I am getting concerned that my school is not ready to effectively establish a safe school environment. We do not have a definite plan at our school which will put our kids and our teachers at risk. We need guidance to help us prepare but we have not received much. Please allow the schools more time to effectively create a plan to keep our keiki and kumu safe.

Ke aloha nō,

Anthony Williams
Pā‘ia School

Testimony BOE

From: Landon <cuda316@gmail.com> on behalf of Landon
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:17 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To Whom it May Concern,

My name is Lan 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 classroom teacher in the Leeward district and I am in favor of delaying the return to students on campus.

My school/teachers/classrooms are inadequately prepared for schools to open during this pandemic. My concern is and continues to be of safety. I also understand the need for students to receive an education, but unfortunately there is a give and a take.

In my eyes, the "safest" route is to have full online classes, but I also know that many teachers are not ready or equipped for that and schools need more time to prepare for that.

I know that there is no "right" answer in all of this and I know we're currently pressed for time, but I'd rather be safe than sorry.

Thank you,
Lan

Testimony BOE

From: Cori <cori.nip1@gmail.com> on behalf of Cori
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:18 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Hello Board of Education,

I am a fifth grade teacher, and I am emailing you to share my concerns regarding the opening of our public schools. Our students and teachers have already been put through the ringer this past Spring. Many of us were simply trying to build the plane while flying it. Instead of doing what would be a disservice to these students, we should delay the start of the school year. Yes, there may be issue with contracts. But a delay would allow principals time to regroup and plan for the new approach to this school year. It would also allow teachers time to have the proper training and prepare themselves for new challenges. Let's do what's best for kids.

Questions I Have:

-What type of online resources or training will be provided in the event we go 100% distance learning?

-What types of testing protocols will be in place to ensure the safety of faculty and students?

-If a teacher or student becomes infected, what is the procedure following his or her leave of absence? Will students be placed in quarantine? Will teachers need to use sick leave if a student becomes infected and he/she needs to quarantine?

Thank you,
Cori Nip

Testimony BOE

From: Paul Remington <paul.remington@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Paul Remington
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:18 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: differentials

Aloha,

I do not agree with the proposed idea that special education teachers receive differentials.

If we have any extra funds, I believe that these funds should be used to pay the compression rates to our long term teachers.

Mahalo.

Paul Remington.

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Testimony BOE

From: Samarra Lehman <samarra1024@gmail.com> on behalf of Samarra Lehman
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:18 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony H

Aloha,

I am testifying on an action item H: " Presentation on the Department of Education's contractual agreement 2017-2021 to be modified to allow for the delay of school start in the classroom and continue with distance learning until appropriate safety measures are in place. My name is Samarra Lehman and I have been a teacher for 15 years with the DoE of Hawaii. I have taught both secondary and elementary settings. I currently will be teaching third grade for this upcoming school year at Mauka Lani Elementary School.

I am asking that you pause the return of students until protocols and safety measures are properly established. All staff need to be trained on how to properly social distance, custodians need to know how to properly disinfect classrooms and common areas. My understanding that custodial staff have not received training and are just being told to lysol everything. I am not confident that returning to school at this time will be safe for anyone.

I would be the first to say I miss teaching in my classroom. I missed my students this past quarter and hated not getting to see them on a daily basis. As summer is coming to an end I am eager to meet my students for this coming school year. I am excited to get to know each of them, develop a relationship with their families. I am excited to see them learn and grow. I want to go back to school but I want it to be sure we are properly trained and we are prepared to create a safe establishment for both students, faculty and staff.

As an educator, I never expected a pandemic would keep me from my classroom and my students. I never could imagine something like this in my lifetime. Along with that, normally getting sick is not something that I have ever really been fearful of, however, I have had friends on the mainland become ill to covid. This virus does not have a cure and can spread rapidly if not taken seriously. If one were to contract this virus there is no guarantee or perfect formula to determine how each individual reacts to the virus. The thought that healthy people are catching this virus and either being sick for weeks/months or even facing death has me wondering why we are not taking this more seriously.

After sharing these concerns with my family they have asked me to look for another job. I have been looking, however I am not sure I am meant to do anything else. How many other teachers are feeling this way. How many may have already retired early or quit. I was made to teach but I am not ready to die in the line of duty, especially if this could be prevented.

If someone, teaches, students, staff were to die because of COVID19 traced back to school, Who is held accountable? The school? DoE? the state?are you prepared for the class action lawsuits if teachers, students and staff go down for not taking the highest safety measures?

I believe opening schools without providing adequate training is completely irresponsible. It just takes one child/person to come to school that is infected. They won't know they are infected as they will probably be asymptomatic for 2-14 days. Giving us thermometers only tells me at this point I have been exposed.

All I am asking is that we take this seriously. We make sure our administrators are trained to take this seriously. That they see the dangers and risk we are putting everyone in without providing adequate training.

I am extremely anxious about returning to school without training on social distancing within my classroom, training for distance learning, and having our other staff members, including custodians and classroom cleaners trained on adequate cleaning procedures.

Please take our safety, our concerns and our fears seriously.

Kind Regards,

Samarra Lehman
3rd Grade Teacher
Mauka Lani Elementary School

Testimony BOE

From: Kupala M. Foster <kupalamfoster@gmail.com> on behalf of Kupala M. Foster
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:19 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HAWAII BOARD OF EDUCATION

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HAWAII BOARD OF EDUCATION

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.

CHAIR Payne and members of the Board of Education,

My name is Kupala M. Tara, I am a makua of Ke Kula o 'Ehunuikaimalino ma ka moku o Keawe. I am submitting testimony in support of delaying the date that students physically return to campus for the 2020-2021 school year.

Ke Kula o 'Ehunuikaimalino is located on a small campus in South Kona. Over the last few years, we have seen an increase in student enrollment, so much so that we do not have the physical space to house all of our haumana. With the implementation of social distancing, we are left wondering how our already overcrowded kula will be a safe space for our haumana and limahana. Our kula has not been given clear safety protocols, nor have all of our limahana had the opportunity to be trained on how to implement the vast amount of new expectations placed upon them for this school year.

In addition, we have high-risk members in our household. Subjecting anyone is our ohana to classrooms that are not equipped to adapt to children being 6ft apart, not enough kumu to break the students into separated pods or group, the fact that high schoolers and K-5 are on the same campus and potentially interacting, that there is not enough outdoor space to hold out door classes safely, there are not enough cleaning staff to clean as at the intervals deemed safe, the fact we have no school nurse or health aid, and that putting kumu and keiki into this situation turns the school into a daycare more than an academic institution....for all of these reasons we should delay the opening of school and better equipped the school to open.

If the BOE/DOE chooses to start school with notice of all these potential risks of harms, it is not only reckless to the health of the keiki, kumu, and staff but may also rise to the level of negligence. Based on the factors raised above and others raised in testimony presented today, surges throughout the nation, tourism re-opening, and the conditions that exist on our campus, it is reasonably

foreseeable that a keiki, kumu, staff, or person on campus is unreasonably exposed to COVID-19 should anyone on campus or within the ohanas test positive. Especially the kumu and keiki in the K-2 classes. If keiki, kumu, and ohana test positive due to exposure linked to the campus, who is liable? Who will pay for the COVID-19 tests of everyone potentially exposed? Who is responsible for the time for work lost, hospitalization if required, or potentially even death of a loved one?

I hope the BOE/DOE re-considers opening before it is safe to do so, especially given the conditions on the campus that you have been advised of. Schools around the nation are delaying start as surges and the highest counts of COVID-19 are being reported daily.

In addition, delaying start will allow the BOE/DOE to work on the curriculum for 100% distance learning for the Kaiapuni schools. Delaying the start will only allow our schools and others to become more prepared and safe for all limahana and the community.

Mahalo nui no kou kōkua,
Kupala M. Foster

Testimony BOE

From: Carmen Paguirigan <cpbiotech@yahoo.com> on behalf of Carmen Paguirigan
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:19 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To whom it may concern,

My name is Carmen Paguirigan 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. My children attend Mililani Middle and High School.

I wanted to take the time to share my thoughts about your upcoming decision regarding the differentials for Special Education and Hawaiian Immersion Teachers. This is an incredibly poor decision to pass as a board. Don't you think we should be doing all we can to support our teachers, especially during this time?

Honestly, I have personal experience in the schools and have witnessed first hand the hardships that teachers, especially special education, have to endure. A few years ago, I was an educational assistant in a upper resource class. I was in constant awe of the teacher: what she went out of her way to do and what was expected of her. I have been subbing and have had several long term positions in the past couple years, and in that time, have decided that teaching is a career I'm not sure I want. Since getting that firsthand experience has really highlighted the hardships teachers deal with on a daily basis and how difficult it is to do what the kids need with the lack of funding and available support.

I cannot imagine hearing that with the upcoming school year, our teachers cannot count on the funds that have been promised to them. For the sake of education and Hawaii's education, do NOT take away these teachers differentials!

Thank you,
Carmen Paguirigan

Testimony BOE

From: Ezra Witsman <yoshitoshi2@yahoo.com> on behalf of Ezra Witsman
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:19 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Teacher Shortage Differentials

Aloha Superintendent Kishimoto and Members of the Board of Education,

My name is Ezra Witsman and I am a social studies teacher at Kealakehe High School (KHS) in Kailua-Kona. I have been a teacher at KHS for 17 years. I love teaching and helping my students succeed in life.

At KHS, it has been difficult to hire enough qualified (certified) teachers to fill all the open positions. In fact, there were many days where we were short substitute teachers. The differentials help to retain veteran and new teachers. When will we reach the critical mass where there are not enough teachers to open the school?

We need to have enough certified teachers so that we can open the school and continue to provide a quality education for our students. Personally, the differential has significantly influenced my decision to continue teaching at KHS.

Mahalo nui loa and take care, Ezra Witsman

Testimony BOE

From: marie lindsey <mcklindsey@gmail.com> on behalf of marie lindsey
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:20 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony on Opening of Schools to Students

Dear BOE Board Members,

My Name is Marie Lindsey and I am a teacher at Kalaheo High 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.

I feel that our schools are not prepared to open safely for our students and teachers. I have reviewed the plans on the DOE website, watched their new conferences and other guidance. I strongly feel that we cannot open school campuses to students on August 4. There are numerous unanswered questions we teachers have and 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.

I feel that the plan to open my school has not addressed the health and safety of myself or our students. Because of existing medical conditions I am at risk of having complications if I contract COVID -19. In our schools proposed schedule I will have contact with 100 students a day in my classroom four days a week. This is 2 different groups of 100 rotating in face to face meetings. Additionally, teachers are expected to supervise students at recess to ensure compliance with mask wearing which adds even more contact with students. Even though classroom furniture will be set up for 6 foot distance, the reality is that students will be walking around the classroom, taking off their masks to chat or drink water and

coming in close contact with each other. This situation will increase the risk that a contagious student will easily spread COVID-19 to others.

Please advise the DOE to meet with the HSTA to ensure that my and fellow teachers concerns about opening school safely are addressed.

Marie

Marie Lindsey
mcklindsey@gmail.com

Testimony BOE

From: D L <dleonhard@hotmail.com> on behalf of D L
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:20 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Reopening of schools in Hawaii: questions/concerns

Aloha-

I am writing this email as I am a DOE employee, a member of the community as well as a resident of Hawaii.

There are a lot of concerns that those of us who work for the DOE have regarding going back to work when the schools are set to reopen in August 2020 during the Covid-19 pandemic. We are concerned about our safety and well-being and that of our families, as well as that of others including the students, staff, and our community. The health and safety of all in the school community is not something that should be compromised.

I have emailed personnel at the Department of Education, including Superintendent Dr. Kishimoto, Deputy Superintendent Phyliss Unebasami, Complex Area Superintendent of Baldwin-Kekaulike Maui Complex Area, Kathleen Dimino to which I have received no responses as of this time.

Myself, as well as others, have questions that we would like to be addressed. These include, but are not limited to the following:

If a teacher/staff tests positive for Covid-19 are they required to quarantine for 14 days?

Is their sick leave covered/paid?

If that teacher has five classes a day with 30 students each, do all 150 of those students need to stay home and quarantine for 14 days?

Do all 150 of those students need to get tested?

Who pays for those tests?

Are they testing at school?

How are the parents being notified?

Does everyone in each of those students' households need to get tested?

Who pays for those tests?

What if someone who lives in the same house as a teacher/staff member tests positive for Covid-19? Does that teacher/staff member now need to take 14 days off of work to quarantine? Is that time off covered/paid?

Where is the Department of Education going to find a substitute teacher who will work in a classroom full of exposed, possibly infected students for substitute pay? Will they be fingerprinted and put through thorough background checks?

Substitutes teach in multiple schools. What if they are diagnosed with Covid-19? Do all the students in each school that they have taught now need to quarantine and get tested for Covid-19? What about staff members that they came in contact with at those schools? Will they need to quarantine and get tested for Covid-19?

Who is going to pay for that?

Who is going to trace it?

What if a student in a classroom tests positive for Covid-19? Does every other student and teacher/staff member that student has been around need to quarantine?

Does everyone (student's family and staff) get notified who is infected and when? Because of HIPAA regulations how is everyone going to be notified?

Who is doing the tracing for the schools, including substitute teachers? Who is doing the tracing for my school?

What is this stress going to do to teachers and staff? How is it going to affect their health and well-being? How does this affect their ability to teach, knowing that a student could be infected with Covid-19? What does it do to the quality of education? What is it going to do to the students? What are the long-term effects of consistently worrying while at school, be it a student, teacher or staff? What does the teacher/staff respond when students ask a multitude of questions regarding Covid-19 and their safety? Are there written guidelines to follow? If a student comes to school and is sick will they be sent home? Will they need to be tested for Covid-19? Will they need to quarantine? Will the teacher/nurse be allowed to send such student home?

How will it affect students and staff when a teacher gets Covid-19?

How will it affect the student who brings Covid-19 home? How will it affect the parents of the student? How will it affect their family and household, including grandparents and older members of the family and household?

How are the parents going to explain to their child that their family member or grandparent got Covid-19 from the child being exposed at school? How is that going to affect the child?

How are parents going to explain to their child the loss of a schoolmate, teacher, or staff member due to Covid-19?

Hopefully this doesn't occur, but what if it does?

I would also like to know how Department of Education employees are going to be protected from Covid-19 that are going back into the classroom to work with students and staff?

Is the Department of Education supplying the proper PPE and are there written guidelines that are to be followed to ensure our safety? For all schools and all employees?

When students are dropped off at school, is there a specific protocol (ie: temperature checks) before going to class? Is every student temperature checked? If have a temperature, what specific protocol is to be followed

Are there guidelines for sending students home who are sick? If a student or a staff member comes to work sick or becomes sick what are those guidelines? Will Covid-19 tests be required before returning back to school? Who is going to do the testing and who is going to pay for it? Are the results to be given to the school?

These are serious concerns that I feel need to be addressed. Not only to me as an employee of the Department of Education, but to all Department of Education employees as well as parents, students, and our community.

Your timely response is appreciated.

Thank you-

Deborah Leonhard

Testimony BOE

From: Lee <hosdine@aol.com> on behalf of Lee
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:20 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Re: Memorandum of understanding between BOE and HSTA

Aloha,

I am sending this communication in regards to the memorandum of understanding between the BOE and HSTA:

I am urging the DOE and BOE to delay the reopening of school year 2020-21 at this time; I feel the schools are not fully ready to re-open at this time; this concern is based on the lack of guidance from administration at the school where I teach regarding social distancing and mask requirements in a closed area (i.e.: classrooms, we have been told that masks will not be required in the classroom and this is very concerning for me as a teacher), we also have not been given guidelines for enforcement for mask compliance.

The only protocols covered in our faculty meeting on Tuesday was temperature checks for staff and students upon arrival to the school campus. We have not been given any training or guidance on distance learning in the event of a school closure where we are required to switch to such a model. We had to do what we could when the schools shut down in March and were pretty successful in accomplishing our goal.

I was hoping for more guidance from our admin and the Board of Education for possible scenarios on the school campus, but, were basically told we would learn as we go into the school year. No answers, support, or guidance offered for staff who are concerned for their own safety, and many have family at home to be concerned about as well. Some staff fall into the "high risk" category for exposure to this deadly virus. These decisions should not be based on reopening the economy but for the safety and well being of individual human beings, despite the crashing economy.

If starting the school year can be delayed, this time can be used for staff and admin to "brainstorm" and hopefully find solutions to dealing with this situation we are all in at this time using what we know about this dangerous virus that is affecting us all at some level in our lives. This may help to enable us to do the best we can for what our profession calls for: the education of our Keiki in the best possible setting at school. As an educator, I would like nothing more than to be back in the classroom with students, but this is not the time until we can ensure a safe environment for all students and staff.

Mahalo.

Respectfully submitted,

Lee Begaye
Pahoa High and Intermediate School
Pahoa, Hawai'i

Testimony BOE

From: Vedrana Maric <vmaric1690@icloud.com> on behalf of Vedrana Maric
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:20 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

My name is Vera Maric, 5th year teacher at Kauai High School. I am writing to ask that we delay the reopening of schools for students. Teachers and schools are in no way ready to reopen. Teachers should have at least a week prior to students returning to get their affairs in order and make the classrooms ready. Right now we have only one work day to do everything, which is obviously not enough time. As a school we need to prepare for the possibility of schools closing again and how we will move forward more prepared this time in order to support our students. If we truly care about the safety and education of our children, we need to prepare for them. Why are we rushing them in and putting everyone at risk? Teachers are pleading with you here. Please help.

Thank you,
Vera Maric

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Emerald Kalai <ekalai-12@hotmail.com> on behalf of Emerald Kalai
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:21 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Concerns about reopening schools

Aloha, with the recent spikes in cases I am very concerned about re-opening the schools soon.

This is causing my family and I major concern as I do not want to potentially be at risk for exposing my family especially my young children and elderly parents that I live with.

Are we testing all the teachers returning back to work ?

With the recent story of a football coach in the State positive and potentially exposing all his players, this can be a scary situation.

Thank you for hearing my concerns.

Aloha
Concerned Teacher

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: rowmarsoccer@yahoo.com
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:21 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Start School or Not

The following are comments from parents whom I asked this morning through text messaging:

I need to know what non DOE employee's feel and people with kids think about starting school in 2 weeks. Good to go or wait?

Parent #1:

As a father I'm worried for my kids to go back. But realize that going back is inevitable. I think the schools need to make us feel more comfortable about the situation. Right now if the media is playing into the teachers feeling uncomfortable. Naturally everyone else is going to have there reservations on moving forward. Honestly. The HSTA got more airtime last night's news than the actual roll out plan. Like I said the media is playing up the teachers feeling uncomfortable. But if everyone is "Akamai" and "Pono" with the new normal. I think together as Islanders we can overcome.

Grandparent #1:

I know everyone needs to get back to some kind of normalcy especially kids. But I think we should hang on and wait a bit. We really need to think this out. We are talking more than a flu. And it's spreading like wild fire in California now that things are reopened and Arizona? I'm worrie. I wish everyone the best and pray all is well. I know somehow they will make the best decision.

Alumni #1:

We took temperature of every person who came to our door. We take children, but adult says goodbye at door, no lingering. Upon pick up, temperature taken again.

For teens, staff should stand at all gates to take temperature. They should sanitize their own chair n desk upon arriving to each desk. No borrowing of writing utensils. Everyone wear masks. Follow strict guidelines, inform parents of all the precautions taken like no body contact, etc, and you can have a successful school year! I understand the online classes. In reality they need to develope social skills so they can function in the world with compassion n respect. Sometimes those lessons are best learn from peers at school if they are not taught at home.

Sincerely,

Rowena Martinez
91-531 Aikanaka Rd
Ewa Beach, HI, 96706
[\(808\) 358-9381](tel:8083589381)

I currently have grandchildren attending public school and would like to start school with online classes for now and gradually implement modified physical attendance to address needs as it comes up. Kids, whom I've talked with want to start school. Not everyday, lol.

Testimony BOE

From: Robbi-Lynn Contrades <kamanumeleokalani@gmail.com> on behalf of Robbi-Lynn Contrades
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:22 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Pay cuts and push backs

Dear Governor Ige, whom we as fellow colleagues in education endorsed for the office of governor, we are asking you to consider the long term effects of such rash and hasty decisions to impose budget cuts on the legs that hold up your administration's table and bringing students back to school as early as August 4th when there is still much uncertainty regarding, health, safety, and more. While the economy needs to rejuvenate, there are ways to slow down and be thoughtful of those decisions: when you cut pay, you add another demoralizing brick to that which already existed and expedited the already vulnerable, overworked, qualified, yet underappreciated professionals that ALL walks of life depend on: teachers. Before Covid 19, teachers were already being asked to work more than a full time job: we were asked to produce quality students under the most disqualifying conditions: packed classrooms, heterogeneous classrooms that require multiple approaches to curriculum, increased administrative type work: handling our own payroll, collecting of forms, money, teaching social, emotional development in addition to subject area curriculum, reporting academic, behavioral, mental, social, emotional health data, planning, executing and assessing academic mastery while trying to squeeze in test taking skills for SBA and so much more. We were even considering having the poor teachers schedule their own conferences, another full time job. What we needed was to hire more people and give them jobs, opportunities to earn money and provide for their families and do some or at least one of the many jobs that one teacher is unbelievably asked to do, aside of teach, and teach well, their chosen subject area. As I type this, my blood pressure increases just by remembering. Some of us were seeking mental and physical support outside of our frontline jobs, just to get up and do it all again, day in and day out including weekends and holidays. Let us not forget the labors of prepping our rooms, inventory on school supplies, desks, chairs, cleaning, and our short breaks that do not accommodate basic needs like eating slowly, using the bathroom, since many of us are working with students through our recess and lunch breaks and/or actually working our "recess duty". Look, you were an educator, so you know what I am talking about. Many of us were on the verge of taking an early retirement, which would be like shooting our financial futures in the foot, so to speak, but a wounded foot is only a fraction of the wounds we already endure. Now, we need qualified, caring educators more than ever to ensure even more than academic, social emotional growth: keeping kids apart with masks on, all unnatural for kids during a full day. I am not going to want to endure much more when I and many others were already working under such inhumane and insane conditions. Simple logic governor: quality work deserves quality compensation. This old school, basic logic promotes self worth, esteem, incentive to do more. Low morale equals low productivity is basic yet true. Our economy needs healthy workers, healthy job conditions and more jobs. The "more jobs", however are to be thoughtful and mindful of building up quality among all stakeholders: teachers, faculty, parents, students. Another piece of logic, though I am but a humble English, right brained artist: diminished pay equals diminished quality education. Diminish safety and you will diminish quality education. This is not the time to further cut the legs off that table of progress. We are your legs, governor! Repair and build us up to hold you up.

Sincerely and desperately,

Robbi-Lynn M. K. Castillo-Contrades

7th grade ELA teacher @ Chiefess Kamakahalei Middle School
Kauai, Hawaii.

Testimony BOE

From: Suzanne G <tsgandaoli@msn.com> on behalf of Suzanne G
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:23 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Second wave concerns

I get that kids need socialization. I believe that online school protects the community as a whole. I, as a teacher, struggled with online teaching, but still support it until the vaccine comes out to fight this virus. We need a structured content approach and use of programs like IXL to allow student to master skills during online learning. God Bless is all.

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Martin and Heather Malley <malley@malleyweb.com> on behalf of Martin and Heather Malley
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:23 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: testimony

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to express my concern about our current school opening of August 4. I am a teacher with extensive experience, having worked for almost 2 decades with 3rd Grade students, a degree in zoology, and training in Orton Gillingham to help my struggling readers, especially those with dyslexia. I know better than most the importance of education for students at this grade level with respect to their future success. I am passionate about helping my students become life-long learners. I have many years of preparing for a new school year under my belt.

We left school in March with our future unknown. Teachers began the task of designing lessons that could be taught virtually while trying to reassure our keiki and their parents in these uncertain times. Our school year ended in a way unlike any I have ever experienced. I spent this summer working with 3rd graders at the summer school program, continuing to teach on-line, researching topics, finding websites and videos to share, learning to create google slides with embedded links, sharing lessons through google classroom, all while keeping in contact with students and parents, not only through Zoom, but class dojo. We teachers already spend a great deal of time and energy preparing our lessons by finding resources to best help our students who have a wide range of abilities and interests, and now we find ourselves spending even more time as we prepare for the opening of school as we have never had to before. Never in my lifetime did I ever think masks would be on my "things to buy for school" list. Teachers have been using their own personal time and money, as they often do anyway, to prepare their classrooms, and this year we are trying to prepare with these new guidelines and schedules in mind. I have spent a good deal of time throughout this experience focusing on school and learning all I can. It feels all-consuming and I feel we are being pushed into opening too quickly as we continue to learn about COVID every day. It is imperative that teachers be given more time to prepare, collaborate, plan, and brainstorm with our colleagues as questions of how best to have students and staff safety on our campus and how best to meet the needs of our families continue to arise. I have never worked harder in my life and school hasn't even started yet. We have so many questions.

I understand we want to get our economy back on track. I understand parents need and want to be back at work and many will need the assistance of schools to make that happen. I understand (better than most) the need for children, especially those who struggle with reading and other learning disabilities to be in a routine of learning. I understand starting school with half days is an attempt to build relationships with our students as we transition to full time in-school learning. But I also understand that even in this week before teachers officially start emails and phone calls are going back and forth as we try to make sense of the myriad changes we see happening as we plan on implementing these programs. I know we need sufficient time to plan in addition to the time offered in the half day model. I know the teachers and administration at Pukalani Elementary are not afraid of hard work. We are problem solvers and work hard to model that to our students.

Please listen to our request for additional time to plan to ensure the very best outcome for our Ohanas. This is historic. We want to get it right.

Respectfully,

Heather Malley

Testimony BOE

From: Barbara Haight <surfer.mom@hotmail.com> on behalf of Barbara Haight
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:23 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Teacher pay

Please do not cut our teacher pay differential. We worked so long and hard with substandard salaries. It's finally on the right direction to retain and attract teachers to this career, especially as our roles become more challenging and important.

Aloha

Barbara Haight

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

Testimony BOE

From: Alex Kendrick <alexvkendrick@gmail.com> on behalf of Alex Kendrick
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:23 AM
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

Dear BOE,

Please consider a gradual ramping up of schools. We are in an emergency situation. We need to do triage. Address the students most at need first in person and add more students as we go. We have seen what happens if we do not have a solid plan. Texas and Florida are terrifying examples. Let us all work together to help our students.

Sincerely,
Alex Kendrick
Kalani High teacher

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alexvkendrick@gmail.com

Testimony BOE

From: Sena Belgard <senabelgard@waikikischool.org> on behalf of Sena Belgard
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:23 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Teacher Testimony

To whom it may concern:

My name is Sena Belgard I am a teacher who teaches Special Education at Waikiki Elementary School. I am currently seven months pregnant and have another small child at home. Because of pregnancy issues I am considered immunocompromised. Yet there is nothing in place for teachers who are at a higher risk. If I want to be off of work for safety concerns I have to take leave without pay, yet I am about to have a baby and I need that leave for after the baby is born. This is not right. I have so many concerns from the lack of preparedness our state has given the schools and am extremely concerned for my unborn child's life if I were to catch this virus while at work. Teachers are asking for MORE time. We need MORE time to prepare for our schools to safely open for face to face learning.

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"^[1]. Especially in closed or poorly ventilated spaces such as many of our classrooms, it is absolutely essential to have a mandatory mask requirement for all teachers and students.
2. The current state plan relies on a fictional construct known as "Ohana Bubbles", which especially in the absence of a universal mask mandate, puts a family's health at the mercy of other families. However, no amount of distancing, disinfecting, or use of PPE will be sufficient to keep groups of people in confined, poorly ventilated spaces safe, because behavior of all those individuals outside the classroom cannot be assumed to have been safe.
3. The current DOE plan is to leave masking optional (at teachers' discretion) is unacceptable. Fundamental matters of scientific fact such as masks should not be left to teacher (or even school administrator) discretion. That would allow too many loopholes that will result in poor or no compliance that puts their child's lives at risk. It also puts an undue burden on teachers and/or school administrators to decide and enforce mask rules.

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 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.
5. Specific and detailed protocols in place in case a child or teacher/staff contract COVID or someone in their immediate family does.

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,

Sena Belgard

--

Sena Belgard
Special Education Teacher



WAIKIKI ELEMENTARY
"The Mindful School"
3710 Leahi Avenue
Honolulu, HI 96815
808.971.6900

Testimony BOE

From: Marina Henriquez <marina.a.henriquez@icloud.com> on behalf of Marina Henriquez
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:24 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Marina Henriquez

Hawaii academy of arts and science pcs

Will there be a nurse at school to monitor pandemic since the school does not have an infirmary or nurse station? How will the school manage the transmission if it does happen?

Sent from my iPhone. Please excuse minor typos.

Testimony BOE

From: Mr Benavitz <mr.benavitz@gmail.com> on behalf of Mr Benavitz
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:24 AM
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 Micah Benavitz, a teacher at Mililani High School. I am extremely concerned for the health and safety for the students, faculty, staff, and parents in regards to reopening schools. So far I have not received any written guidance on the procedures on reopening campuses. How will we keep students and faculty safe in a classroom with A/C no windows? What is the protocol if someone is sick or gets sick while in the classroom? It worries me if a student gets sick while at school, and spreads COVID-19 to the family. There are many families that live in a multigenerational home and the kupuna are at higher risk of COVID-19 being fatal. Some educators are contemplating early retirement or leaving the DOE because they feel returning to campus is not safe while there is a pandemic. It is frightening to hear from the Department of Health that people will get COVID-19 when schools reopen. It is ironic that the state shutdown schools when there was a low number of people infected with COVID-19, and now we are reopening when we have a higher number of people infected with COVID-19. Personally I do not feel it is safe to return to campus while we have active cases on the islands. I understand these are difficult times, and it is difficult to reopen the economy if students are home and parents cannot obtain childcare. Distance learning is also a challenge for students, however, the health and safety of the keiki, kupuna, and our community should be a priority.

Respectfully,

Micah Anjin Benavitz

Testimony BOE

From: Shea Wilson <sheahipp@gmail.com> on behalf of Shea Wilson
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:24 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Teacher differentials testimony

Teachers across the state (and country) have been undervalued monetarily for years. Although it has long been recognized that teachers play a critical role in establishing the foundation for future generations and that the teaching profession is an essential job, teachers' financial compensation does not align with these important values. Therefore, it is difficult to find qualified individuals willing to take on this profession, especially in rural communities that require long commutes for many teachers.

The additional differentials that were passed and received at the beginning of the year felt like our voices had finally been heard, but then not even a year later the state is trying to revoke this agreement. I understand that these are troubling times, but that's just it- these are difficult times for EVERYONE. To decrease a teacher's pay when so many families are already struggling, including the families of teachers, is both wrong and demoralizing.

If the state budget is suffering this much, then consider giving teachers that qualify for more than one differential (hard to staff, SPED, and/or Hawaiian immersions) the highest differential they qualify for instead of stacking them. This may not save the state as much money as revoking all qualifying teacher raises, but it will help the morale of teachers.

Testimony BOE

From: Gordon Wong <gordonkwong16@gmail.com> on behalf of Gordon Wong
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:24 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Please do not approve proposal to cut pay differentials, Re: Gordon Wong

To whom it may concern,

My name is Gordon Wong and I am a special education teacher at Mckinley High School. I am writing to you to ask you to reject the proposal to discontinue the differential pay for DOE teachers. Currently, I'm an emergency hire teacher and as you should know in this position I am barely making enough money to support myself and my family. I am in the process of getting licensed and am almost done. I humbly ask you to reject the proposal to cut pay differentials that would impact so many teachers and families and employees of the HIDOE who are already struggling in these tough times affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Mahalo,
Gordon Wong
Mckinley High School SPED Workplace Readiness Program

Testimony BOE

From: Kathleen Grondin <kmgrondin@gmail.com> on behalf of Kathleen Grondin
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:24 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Please DELAY the start date of schools and DO NOT get rid of the pay deferential.

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to add my voice of educators and parents urging that the BOE of delay the start of school. I am also adding my voice of educators urging you not to take back the deferential for hard to staff schools and SpEd populations. I will begin with delaying the start of school.

ON DELAYING THE START OF SCHOOL:

1. ***Schools ARE NOT AND WILL NOT BE ready to reopen on the current schedule.*** Part of that is a result of most teachers (at least of those that I know) not having had the training they need to actually reopen. Most teachers feel that, beyond putting their desks 6 feet apart and hoping for the best, they have received little guidance on what to do. Teachers need training, not just in how to set up their rooms to create social distancing, but they need training in the technology they need to use that will help create a safer curriculum. They also need training in best classroom practices that will help maintain the social distancing the physical layout of classrooms are trying to provide. A simple example is the practice of moving about the classroom and offering individual support after the main instruction has taken place and students are working independently. If a teacher spaces their desks six feet apart and then walks around the room offering individualized assistance, they then become a potential carrier of COVID germs being spread from student to student to student. This defeats the purpose of 6 feet social distancing. Allowing desks to be less than 6 feet apart makes this situation only worse. Teachers need training on alternative approaches for offering individualized support that works to maintain the distance. To do this, ***TEACHERS NEED MORE TRAINING AND GUIDANCE.***

2. ***Schools ARE PETRI DISHES FOR GERMS that will, in the long run, make the increase in new cases greater.*** We all know that. Shortly after moving to a different school and promptly getting sick, my own doctor informed me that when I change schools, I actually will be exposed to a different set of germs than at the previous school. As a result, she accurately predicted that I would be sicker than usual last year as I built up some resistance to the new pool of germs. Why is this so? Because schools are a gathering point for large groups of individuals (children) who carry the area's germs without a basic understanding of how to keep from spreading those germs. So, the closeness of individuals combined with an immaturity level of those individuals means more people are exposed to more germs thus getting sick. COVID is not the common cold. It can be deadly for all ages. Asking schools to reopen without adequate preparation is only asking for the petri dish environment of a school to be disastrous.

3. ***Teachers need additional time this year to prepare BEFORE having students arrive on campus.*** The four prep days that are in our contract assume a normal school year. The expectation that teachers would have attended training over the summer and would begin coming onto campuses to set up their classrooms prior to the return date for teachers is naive. **Teachers are 10-month employees not 12-month employees.** We are not paid during the summer months to work. That means that anything offered during the summer is voluntary and has to provide a stipend to teachers for attendance. This fact alone is one of the reasons why many teachers are still not trained in how to handle this crisis nor have adequate guidelines on how to set up their classrooms. **We need more time to prepare.**

4. ***Everything keeps changing leaving principals and schools in a state of constant upheaval.*** I have never experienced a year in my 10+ years of teaching where our principal had to reach out to us so often during the summer months. From what I understand, he regularly receives notifications and guidance that cause us to go back to previously set plans and alter them, many times significantly, in order to meet the new information he has received. The most recent of this was two days ago when he informed the school that we need to put into place plans for accommodating students whose parents do not want them in a face-to-face setting. This is causing him to consider plans for potentially reassigning a teacher to fully online teacher which would result in reassigning their students to other teachers leading to a restructuring of classrooms. Because schools are constantly being given new information daily, the plans they start to implement are undergoing constant changing which means that it is taking longer to prepare to reopen.

5. ***The data being used to argue for reopening school is outdated.*** One of the main arguments for reopening schools is a survey that was given to parents in May. In that survey, the general consensus was that parents wanted to get back to work and they needed their children to be back in school. That survey is outdated because, as many parents are expressing via social media and elsewhere, they either did not even know about the survey or filled it out at a time when the daily count of new cases was less than 5 cases. That number has changed and many of the parents who indicated they wanted their children to go back no longer feel it is safe enough to do so. Thus, they openly state that, if given the same survey today, they would answer it differently. We need to take the time to create safe environments for our children so that we can give parents the needed reassurance they are seeking.

My suggestion is that the BOE consider moving Hawaii to a schedule that parallels many mainland schools who open in late August and often right after labor day. This will give teachers and schools time to both set up the schools physically to be as safe as possible and time for teachers and schools to go through the training in practice that is needed for the changes to succeed. The end date of school could be delayed or longer breaks shortened so that this delay in start-up might have less of an impact on students. **It would also provide time for the DOE and BOE to resurvey parents** to find out how they feel at this moment in time. That is crucial information that needs to be gathered. I would like to urge to Board to seriously consider doing this.

ON TAKING BACK THE DEFERENTIAL:

1. ***PLEASE DO NOT TAKE BACK THE DEFERENTIAL FOR HARD TO STAFF SCHOOLS AND FOR THE SPED POPULATION.*** This deferential is vital to be maintained. One argument I am sure you will hear is the hardship it will place on those teachers who are receiving this deferential. This is a valid concern that should be taken seriously. However, there is an even greater concern that removing the deferential would create that also needs consideration.

COVID is hitting harder in those regions where poverty and language barriers are higher. This deferential is a means to encourage teachers to work with this highly disadvantaged population. It is one way in which the DOE can work to try to close the academic gap between the regular student population and the disadvantaged population. If they remove the deferential, the odds of it being put back in place are very slim. That means that the State will be turning a blind eye to the needs of this population precisely at a time when more and more people are out of work and becoming part of this population. This deferential needs to remain in place to protect the students it is meant to help. If we are to truly offer an educational system that provides equal opportunity for all students, then we need to try our best to preserve those initiatives we have in place to work towards creating that equality. This isn't just about potential hardship on our teachers, this is about helping to educate our keiki so that they have a greater chance to move out of poverty when they are growing up in it. Eliminating this deferential now will probably mean it will disappear. That has historically been how the State has handled these types of pay cuts. Teachers know that only too well from our past. Each time we have been asked to take a cut, that cut has become the new norm from which we then have to fight to build ourselves back up to where we

were before. Taking the differential away would only have the same effect. Teachers would then have to fight to regain that differential back. In the meantime, it is the keiki who will suffer.

Please, DO NOT REMOVE THE DEFERENTIAL. This doesn't benefit me directly as I do not receive it. But I believe it is a crucial step towards leveling the playing field for all the keiki we serve.

Thank you so much for your time and consideration in this matter.

Kathy Grondin
Upper EL Teacher
Kalihi Elementary

Testimony BOE

From: fuioili <fuioili@yahoo.com> on behalf of fuioili
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:25 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Please delay Opening of school

Aloha,

I have a 6th grader and a 10th grader in Nanakuli Elementary and Nanakuli High. I am very uncomfortable with the schools reopening because we have a 19month old at home and am trying to keep him, and all of us healthy.

I feel that kids at the elementary level do not have the proper hygiene skills to be able to keep this sickness at bay. Who will monitor their daily activities and ensure that they are washing properly etc? It's not a safe environment for kids to be in at this time. I don't feel like the efforts made thus far will ensure the safety of both the children and staff.

Please reconsider reopening schools at this time.

Mahalo!

Sent from my T-Mobile 4G LTE Device

Testimony BOE

From: Rebecca Forte-blunt <rebecca.forte-blunt@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Rebecca Forte-blunt
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:25 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Delaying school start date

Aloha,

Please do not open schools until protocols are clearly in place. There are so many unanswered questions and unknown facts about COVID and rushing the students and teachers to begin school should be avoided. My husband is a healthcare worker and works with infected patients daily, which puts me at risk, therefore would potentially put students in danger and expose them. There are many questions that need to be answered;

- 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 school?
- What happens to the students and adults on campus if a student, teacher, or 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?
- 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?
- When will there be proper training for the teachers to ensure their safety and the students safety?
- Can you ensure that school's air conditioning is clean and filters germs?

These questions need to be answered to fairly expect teachers and students to return to a safe environment. As an educator, I definitely do not feel comfortable or safe going back to school July 29th.

Thank you for your consideration,

Rebecca Forte-Blunt
Special Education Teacher
Ewa Makai Middle School

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Testimony BOE

From: Erin Thompson <thompsonsone@khswwaverider.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Erin Thompson
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:25 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: testimony

Aloha Board of Education Members,

I am a public school teacher from the Big Island, and also help take care of several elderly and immune-compromised family members.

I implore you to DELAY the start of school and consider a school reopening plan that primarily features distance learning to begin this school year.

This would allow education to continue as we prevent Covid-19 spread and SAVE LIVES.

There is nothing safer than distance learning for our keiki and our communities until we understand this disease better and have developed more medical tools to bring it under control.

I am a high school science teacher and I highly value hands-on, face to face instruction, BUT not at the expense of the health and lives of my students, my family, my community, and myself.

I am willing to do whatever it takes to connect with my students and facilitate online learning until it is safe to venture back into the classroom. I do not think I should be asked to put my life, and the lives of others, on the line by being mandated to return to campus while this virus is running wild.

The solutions for the elementary, middle, and high school levels may not all be the same, but I am absolutely sure that the high school teachers and students are the most ready and able to engage in distance learning.

Distance learning may not be ideal, but it is far preferable to contributing to the inevitable spread of Covid-19 and unnecessary suffering/death that will result if we proceed with on-campus school.

Please fight for the health and well-being of all Hawaii by granting a delay, and reopening schools with distance learning.

Sincerely,
Erin Thompson

PS: I'm really worried. I don't think all of the people with the power to make the big decisions are grasping the reality of this crisis. I know that we can't control all of the negative fallout from this pandemic, but I do believe that a tragically significant percentage of the deaths that have occurred in our country were avoidable - if only we had good national leadership and listened to the science/medical experts.

Testimony BOE

From: Ron Smith <ron.smith@mauihigh.org> on behalf of Ron Smith
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:25 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Cuts to shortage differentials

It is regrettable that we must periodically urge our elected officials to ensure that our primary, elementary, and secondary school teachers are paid competitively with mainland schools, especially given the high cost of living here.

I understand why non-licensed educators may not receive the same salaries as those who are licensed and may also have additional credentials (graduate degrees, National Board Certification, etc.). However, those who are licensed, etc., should certainly be remunerated for their experience, education, and professional development. We, too, are "essential workers."

Finally, a significant number of our students will grow into adults who will never relocate. Is it wrong for them to ultimately have premier access to economic security here, as well as other benefits afforded our citizens?

Teachers are one of the first lines of defense against people falling into and remaining at low socio-economic status. Paying us appropriately, which includes funding and distributing shortage differentials, indicates that you acknowledge we are invaluable toward helping to curtail this sad reality.

Thank you in advance for your kind consideration.

--

Ron Smith
Special Education Teacher
Maui High School
Room P-6B
(808) 727-4065 (Classroom Number)
(808) 727-4000 (Main Number)
ron.smith@mauihigh.org
Ronald_Smith/MAUIHS/HIDOE@notes.k12.hi.us

Jamie Yap
Principal
Maui High School
Administrative Office
(808) 727-4020
Jamie_Yap/MAUIHS/HIDOE@notes.k12.hi.us

The Hawaii State Department of Education ("HIDOE") does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age,

color, national origin, religion or disability. This requirement extends to all of HIDOE's programs and activities, including employment and admissions as applicable. In addition, the HIDOE does not tolerate acts of harassment on the basis of race, sex, age, color, national origin, religion, or disability. Any student who believes that he or she has been subjected to harassment on the basis of race, sex, age, color, national origin, religion, or disability, is encouraged to report such harassment. Students and parents may report allegations of discrimination or harassment to the Principal, Mr. Jamie Yap at 727-4000, or via email at jamie_yap@notes.k12.hi.us; OR to the HIDOE's Civil Rights Compliance Office at (808)586-3322.

Testimony BOE

From: Michelle Araki <melander@hawaii.edu> on behalf of Michelle Araki
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:26 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Dear Hawaii 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 resins for Bargaining Unit 5 employees. I am a teacher at Hilo High School. I am also a parent who's children are attending Waiakea Intermediate (6th grade) and Waiakea High School (9th grade). I am asking that we be very cautious in opening school buildings to students. There are so many unanswered questions. We are not prepared to be open.

One of my biggest concerns is the fact that teachers with school aged children do not have a plan for childcare. I am one of them. In a normal year, teachers are asked to balance their families and their students. Now, in this pandemic, we are being asked to make an even harder choice. We have to choose (not balance) between our families and students. Many teachers rely on their parents to help out with childcare when they have to be in school and their children are not. BUT, those are the very same people that are in the high risk category. Can you imagine the emotional and mental scarring a child will have if they bring home COVID-19 to their grandparents and they end up in the hospital or die? Some principals are working with their faculty to work out childcare. Others are saying it's not their problem. How effective will a teacher be if they are worrying about their childcare situation? My colleagues and I are weighing our options for leave on the days that our children are not in school. How is that helping our students? We need time to work out a plan for childcare for teachers who have school aged children.

Another concern I have is the social distancing in school. Thank you for hearing us and asking the Department of Education to go back to the MOU with the HSTA and require six feet distancing. That is the best practice to keep the spread down. Social distancing is required to keep everyone safe, but I'm concerned about the affect it will have on students' mental health. One of the arguments for having children back in school is that they need the socialize. How much socializing are they going to do when they are split from their friends? Students are being herded into social distancing areas and being watched to make sure they are staying apart. In classrooms students need to remain far apart and group work will not be like we usually do. How much socializing will they be doing? Let's be real. Having them go back to school is not so that they can socialize.

We do not have the supplies needed to start school. We asked for desk shields for our students. This should not be too difficult since we have less students in the classrooms and the schools received CARES money for these items. But, we were told they will not be ordering them. Many of our supplies are on the way and may not arrive in time for the start of school. That alone should be cause for delaying the opening of schools. Our school does not have enough digital devices to be 1:1. How are we supposed to get them ready in case we have to go fully online again if we don't have enough devices for students? The Department of Education says that they ordered thousands of new devices. But, that can't be nearly enough that's needed for the entire state. We

need time to set these students up with the supplies they need to be successful if we have to go to 100% online learning.

I feel that with proper planning and time, we will be able to open school buildings safely for everyone involved. I understand the great pressures that the board and our leaders are under. But, with everyone's safety as the first priority and taking our time, we can do what's right for everyone.

Please don't take this as I don't want to go back to school. I want nothing more than to be able to go to my classroom and talk story with my students about their day and what's going on in their lives. I have been in tears thinking about the choices I have to make. They seem impossible. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Michelle Araki

Testimony BOE

From: Amy Ogasawara <amyeof@yahoo.com> on behalf of Amy Ogasawara
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:26 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: Keith Fukumoto
Subject: Re-opening of public schools on August 4th

Dear Board Members,

I invite each of you to visit several public schools during the month of August for at least one to two hours at each school. I suggest you begin with the Special Education pre-school classes and kindergarten classes first.

If you would like to visit Kaimuki Middle School, I am willing to help guide you to different classes with the permission of our Principal and our teachers. Any extra adult in the classroom is always welcomed. At this time, I have not heard from our contracted agencies regarding providing ParaProfessionals for students who need adult support all day, so we will begin the school year short-handed in this area. The areas we need the most assistance in regarding adult support for students are for those who need to be fed, have diapers changed, and are non-ambulatory (need assistance walking with a walker). As you know, many of our special needs students are not able to tolerate wearing masks all day due to sensory issues or just general discomfort. If you are able to assist us by volunteering as an adult support for our students it would be greatly appreciated.

Some of you may have pre-existing health conditions and are hesitant to visit schools for long periods of time. We also have teachers and staff who have pre-existing medical conditions or are recovering from cancer. If it is safe for them to return to work in the schools, it should also be safe for you to visit as well. Please also invite the media as you visit each school/classroom so that the public will be reassured of the safety for all adults and students in the public schools.

We also look forward to seeing all of you in one room for your meetings, rather than meeting virtually as you have been for these past few months. I believe the colloquial phrase is, "walk the talk,"

I have purchased my own plexiglass shields (like the ones at the banks and grocery stores) because I test students one to one and did so this summer. I will continue to bring bleach wipes, hand sanitizer, and paper towels from my home until I receive these supplies from my school. As you know, these items are very difficult to find at our local stores. Perhaps everyone at the HDOE state offices have been supplied with masks and other cleaning items, but at the school level we all continue to purchase our own masks/face shields with personal funds.

Please contact my Principal to schedule your visitation. I look forward to seeing you at my school very soon.

Sincerely,

Amy Ogasawara, M.Ed.

Kaimuki Middle School

Student Services Coordinator

Public school educator since 1992.

Testimony BOE

From: Anthony Williams <kamakaeu@gmail.com> on behalf of Anthony Williams
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:27 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Hawaiian Immersion & SPED pay differential

Welina mai me ke aloha,

My name is Anthony Williams. I am a 4th grade teacher in the Hawaiian Immersion program at Pā‘ia School on Maui. It is extremely disappointing to hear that our pay differential may be put on hold. In these new times where online learning is becoming so critical, please keep in mind that Hawaiian Immersion teachers are not able to simply use online programs available to the public. We have to figure out a way to provide these online programs in the Hawaiian Language which requires hours and hours of preparation in translating or creating activities in Hawaiian. This is on top of having to learn how to use a program. Many online programs have activities already created for teachers to get started right away but that never applies to Hawaiian Immersion teachers. We always have to figure out how to provide these activities in Hawaiian. We have to work harder than general education teachers because of this fact. That is why the pay differential was such a great thing to provide for Hawaiian Immersion teachers. But now that we have to do even more work, the differential may be taken away? That is extremely disappointing. Please consider keeping the pay differentials for Hawaiian Immersion teachers as well as SPED teachers who also have to do so much more to provide for their student population.

Ke aloha nō,
Anthony Williams
Pā‘ia School Hawaiian Immersion 4th grade

Testimony BOE

From: Hanlan Bowler <hanlan.bowler@gmail.com> on behalf of Hanlan Bowler
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:27 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony RE: Action Item H: MOU between State of Hawai'i BOE and HSTA (SY 2020-2021 Covid-19 Response): 2017-2021 Contractual Modification and Conditions of work related to Covid-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 Employees

Aloha BOE,

RE: Testimony RE: Action Item H: MOU between State of Hawai'i BOE and HSTA (SY 2020-2021 Covid-19 Response): 2017-2021 Contractual Modification and Conditions of work related to Covid-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 Employees

I urge you to **delay the opening of schools** so that **school staff has more time to ensure that schools are safe and prepared and that all of the staff are adequately trained to respond to Covid-19.**

The **first reason to delay openings** is that all staff must be fully trained to know how to handle and respond to Covid-19 in the school setting. As of now, this has not been done. The **second reason to delay school openings** is that clear and consistent policies have not been created or published for schools in regarding the handling and responding of Covid-19 in the school settings. The **third reason to delay school openings** is that schools need a face mask requirement. According to the CDC, Hawai'i State Governor, and the state representatives, they recommend all Americans to wear a face mask to prevent the spread of the Covid-19 virus.

By delaying the opening of schools, allows more time for the staff to be fully trained and consistent and clear guidelines to be drafted and published for the schools as well as the general public. These three items are paramount in **keeping all of Hawai'i keiki, kupuna, teachers, administrators, support staff, their families, and the community healthy and safe during this time.**

With Sincere Respect,

Hanlan Bowler
Webling Elementary School
Teacher & Parent
'Aiea, Hawai'i

Testimony BOE

From: Shea Wilson <sheahipp@gmail.com> on behalf of Shea Wilson
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:27 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Teacher testimony for delayed school opening

I have been teaching for nearly 10 years and I have never been so concerned for my health and safety than I am now given the August 4th date for the return of the students to school. I understand that we must go back to school at some point, but I am simply asking that the DOE delay the arrival of students until proper safety measures are enacted/ironed out. Although the DOE has outlined a good plan to start, not every school has a clear plan for implementation. For example, the principal of the school I work at has stated that the teacher or students have to do the sanitation in our classroom. This is in direct conflict with our contract and MOU.

This principal has also sent out our school handbook saying students do not have to wear masks in the classroom. This is another violation of the BOE and HSTA agreement for returning to school during a pandemic.

I can only testify to what I have been experiencing first hand, but I'm sure my principal is not the only one struggling to follow the new policies, and as a result, is failing to do so.

I am reluctant to return to work with students until these new policies are implemented with fidelity as my health and safety will be jeopardized if I do. This is why the reopening of schools should be postponed until this occurs.

Testimony BOE

From: Randolph Florendo <randolph.florendo@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Randolph Florendo
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:28 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am writing in regards to the proposal before the Hawaii State Board of Education (BOE) 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.

I am strongly opposed to the proposal that would hurt me financially especially during this pandemic we are facing. There are many reasons to oppose the proposal but for me, it's more personal. I began teaching in 1995. During that time, I qualified and passed the Fire exam for the fire department. I was on path to become a fireman which was my long time dream. I forwent my dream to become a teacher. I wanted to give back to my community and my home. I have been teaching SPED for over 20 years. During this time, teacher's pay was in line with firefighter pay. As years, strikes, and contracts went by, teacher's pay was not keeping up with the cost of living. At the same time, Firefighter pay increased substantially. I look back and sometimes I feel I made the wrong decision in career choices. But what drives me to go to work and stick with teaching are the students that I have taught as well as their kids. It's a demanding job (Middle School SPED Behavioral Students) but the rewards of having a positive impact on them is unmeasurable.

Over the years, I don't know how I survived living paycheck to paycheck. During this past year, when we were provided the differential pay, it lessened the financial burden on me and my family. It allowed me to NOT work extra with a part-time job and gave me more time with my family. Workwise, Although I spent lots of out-of-pocket expenses for my class, it lessened the burden on me. Why do I spend out-of-pocket for my students? I am from the community (Waianae) and I know the majority of my students cannot afford many of the basic things that can help them succeed academically and in life. I am a teacher and will teach, nurture, guide, and set examples to show students that I care and hopefully, they learn to be just as giving and nurturing in life.

In closing, please reconsider and OPPOSE the proposal to defer what was promised to teachers. We have worked long and hard to get to the point where teachers are respected and valued.

Sincerely,

Randy Florendo - (808)-450-0740
Waianae Intermediate

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Testimony BOE

From: Kristine Pierce <kristinepiercetv@gmail.com> on behalf of Kristine Pierce
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:28 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Please postpone opening of classes for now. I am a breast cancer warrior and have two kids who go to Benjamin Parker Elementary in Kaneohe 🙏🙏🙏

Testimony BOE

From: Sheryl <skjudd2004@yahoo.com> on behalf of Sheryl
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:28 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Dear Sir/Madam,

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 that the schools are ready to be opened.

As a sister of a teacher, I have heard that she has not received any training at all on how to operate when the new school year opens. She also expressed how they weren't supplied with all the PPE needed.

As a parent of children who formerly attended public school, I don't see how social distancing will be accomplished with the inadequate amount of space in certain classrooms. Also, with the class sizes, I just don't see it.

As a grandparent, I am very afraid for my young grandson to go back to school. I see how young children interact and it is hard to keep them at proper distances from each other. Also, they will be in so many "ohana bubbles" interacting with many different people.

I also wonder if there are enough custodial staff to keep entire campuses sanitized. I predict that the virus will be spread very quickly within the schools and they will end up being shut down.

Thank you for your time.

Sheryl Judd

Testimony BOE

From: Connie Cushnie <connie.cushnie@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Connie Cushnie
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:29 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Teacher Differentials

To Whom It May Concern:

I feel that the differentials for Special Education Teachers and Teachers working in hard to fill areas has worked. The statistics have proven that these differentials are necessary in order to provide quality teachers in these hard to fill positions. Current teachers moving into Special Education have seen a 29% increase, and teachers leaving Special Education have seen a 59% decrease.

I have been in special education for 10 years. On average, I have a caseload of 10 to 15 students each year which requires many hours of writing IEPs, behavior plans, and attending meetings. Another important role of a special education is to ensure that each special education student is receiving the necessary modifications in class to ensure that they are successful.

During the pandemic it is even more crucial to ensure special education students are receiving the support of their teachers. Many of our special education students are behind in reading and math. Many of them are 3-4 year behind their peers. If the State of Hawaii cannot maintain an adequate amount of special education teachers, students will fall even further behind.

As a Special Education Teacher I am petitioning the Board of Education and Hawaii State to continue differentials for Special Education Teachers as well as teachers in hard to fill areas. Afterall, it was promised to us .Please do continue these differentials to help support educational success for our children in Hawaii!

Connie Cushnie
Special Education
Waikoloa Middle School
(808)883-6808 (Ext. 277)

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Testimony BOE

From: Raechelle Villanueva <rvillanueva@waialae.edu> on behalf of Raechelle Villanueva
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:29 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony For 7/23 BOE General Business Meeting

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.

I am a 3rd grade teacher at Wai'alae Elementary Public Charter School, as well as a parent of two children in our public school system. I also live with my mom who has an increased risk factor for COVID-19.

Our schools are not ready to open for face to face instruction. We are basically scrambling to piece together pieces of a vague puzzle.

I would like to quote the following from the Hawaii State Teachers Association, which augments my concerns:

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.

A few days ago health Director Bruce Anderson told lawmakers last Thursday Gov. David Ige asked him only recently 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.

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. It has been left up to each individual school to navigate and figure out. I opted for a 100% distance learning for my own children even though I have no idea what the program will be like. I did it to keep my at risk family member at home safe and for the safety of my beloved colleagues. On top of that, we teachers need to figure out how to do balance 100% distance learning and hybrid teaching. That is literally a job of 3 teachers. We have literally less than a week to figure this all out. It would be best to focus on one thing, which is the safest method to instruct our children with limited possibilities of spreading the virus. That is 100% distance learning. I have friends who teach in LA and Chicago. Their districts are opting to start the year off with 100% distance learning. Why can't we? Why are we rushing to be the first?

I have other questions that I would like the Board and the Superintendent to address:

- If a teacher tests positive for COVID-19 what exactly will happen? How will we get tested? Shouldn't we get tested like how we get a TB test upon initial employment?
- Teachers are literally leaving by the droves. Everyday, educators are applying for leave, retiring, or simply quitting. Schools are scrambling to fill positions. How is it possible to operate safely this way? Teachers are scared and rightfully so.
- 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? Who will train substitutes for the hybrid style of teaching?

- 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 subs choose not to get tested and are asymptomatic?
- The DOE has said that schools must contact the Dept of Health if a certain amount of students in a school or classroom get infected, but how many infected students does it take to outright CLOSE a classroom or school? There is a lot riding on the concept of the 'ohana bubble but not enough awareness by the DOE has been spread to the public. How are we going to educate our parents and families before school starts? If the 'ohana bubble is so important, why are we allowing afterschool extracurricular activities like band practice? Doesn't that go against the whole concept? How is that safe?
- What is this stress going to do to our teachers? I know I am stressed out. I have had many sleepless nights, a tight feeling in my chest at times. I also worry how the stress of making sure my students stay 6ft apart at all times will impact my teaching.
- How many more people are going to die, that otherwise would not have if we had stayed home longer?

More importantly, who shoulders the blame if a student, family, or school staff member gets infected or dies because of COVID, and it can be traced back to school transmission? I know many teachers are so fearful of the possibility and guilt if a student should come down with COVID in their class. That is a burden no one wants to carry on their shoulders. This has compounded the intense anxiety we are experiencing. We love and care for our students.

These are important questions that need to be clearly answered, planned for, and spelled out, in all of their ramifications and consequences, and communicated to both school staff and parents on the front lines, before welcoming students back into school buildings.

Our own DOE Superintendent compared school openings to opening a restaurant or grocery store for business. These are different situations. I see stores outfitted with things like plexiglass sneezeguards when customers interact, but teachers are not being provided that in classrooms. I purchased one for my own class on my own. It was very expensive and even then, I feel that is not enough. Businesses and stores have limited contact with the same person for only a few minutes. Coworkers in the same area are less than 10 people like the CDC guidelines. Teachers will be with the same large group of students for possibly up to 6 or 7 hours a day. Some of our classes will be running at full capacity of 20 plus kids. That in itself is not following CDC guidelines. Studies are now showing how children over the age of 10 spread the virus easier than younger children.

We as teachers are being asked to make a choice between our safety and our duty to our students, and now the community. That is an outright wrong choice to have to make. As a teacher and parent, I get it. People need to go back to work. However, not at the cost of our children's and loved one's safety.

We want schools to open, but do it SAFELY. We want a specific PLAN to give to principals and teachers. Our student's parents deserve a clear and specific plan on all ends. Until we get that, we are asking to delay students return to school buildings. Let's slow down and start with a 100% distance learning.

Thank you for your consideration.

Mahalo,
Raechelle Villanueva



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Testimony BOE

From: Ezra Witsman <yoshitoshi2@yahoo.com> on behalf of Ezra Witsman
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:29 AM
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 re

Aloha Superintendent Kishimoto and Members of the Board of Education,

First, if we can't assure parents, students, teachers, and support staff that the schools are prepared to open in a safe manner, then schools should remain closed.

Second, teachers have been given insufficient time and training to teach in a 100% distance learning environment. Teachers should be given additional time and training to prepare to teach in a distance learning environment.

Mahalo nui loa and take care, Ezra Witsman

Testimony BOE

From: mtupper@hawaii.rr.com
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:26 AM
To: 'TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov'
Subject: FW: TESTIMONY

From: "Marjorie Tupper"
To: mtupper@hawaii.rr.com
Cc:
Sent: Wednesday July 22 2020 10:22:26AM
Subject: TESTIMONY



BoEtestimony7/22/20

Testimony BOE

From: Yanis <ynkona@gmail.com> on behalf of Yanis
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:30 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am submitting this written testimony for the Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees. It is my understanding that there are sufficient responsibilities that were agreed to within this MOU that have not been fulfilled by the State to protect our school staff and our keiki. With less than two (2) weeks before schools are scheduled to reopen, there is a lack of time to publish said information and allow the teachers, school staff, and parents to digest said information and implement plans to ensure the safety of our fellow community members. With that said, we should institute 100% distant learning for the remainder of the year 2020. Let us work out the details during this upcoming school year and open when we have the necessary safeguards in place. Let's not rush to open our schools in order to satisfy certain individuals or groups. We need to keep the safety and well being of our keiki and school staff. Mahalo!

Yanis Nora

Testimony BOE

From: Cheney Kaku <ckkaku@gmail.com> on behalf of Cheney Kaku
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:31 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony: DOE should delay students start to school

To Board of Education,

I am submitting this testimony in support of delaying students from starting school. Teachers have not had enough time to be trained in new procedures and distance learning. Hawaii should delay students' start so that the school system is better prepared for them, so that students' learning environments will be better and safer. On a school level, I feel we are all trying really hard to make do but overall the start of school will go better if given more support from the DOE with training and time to plan prior to students coming to campus.

Thank you,
Cheney Kaku

Testimony BOE

From: Nicole Suzuki <nsuzu53@gmail.com> on behalf of Nicole Suzuki
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:31 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha Board Members,

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'm concerned for my own health and safety and the health and safety of my students. I urge you to please delay the return of students to school so that my colleagues and I have more time to adequately plan to make this the best school year we possibly can under the pandemic circumstances. There are many unanswered questions that my colleagues and I have with regard to how we will be delivering quality instruction to students across various platforms simultaneously.

There are many variables for which we are planning for this summer without much guidance - in person, blended, and distance learning happening simultaneously. I've not yet received guidance from my administration on expectations for this and my colleagues and I have been trying to collaborate on this while on summer break, but it's not enough time together and we have many, many questions with regard to expectations and logistics.

My colleagues and I want to do our best for our haumana, and we need your support to delay the return of students to school so that we can have more time to adequately prepare for this unprecedented school year. We are not planning for the start of school as if it's a normal year. We are planning and expected to execute THREE separate, yet simultaneous, scenarios at the same time - in person, blended, and distance learning. To do this well, it requires more time to plan with my colleagues and administration before students are welcomed back to campus.

I'm also very wary of the safety and level of exposure to COVID-19 that I will have, that my students will have, and that my own children will have. I have young children and the only way that I will be able to work is with the support of my parents to care for and facilitate my own children's distance learning when they're not at school. My parents are in the high-risk group. I am scared for my parents' safety as well.

If I had the flexibility to work from home, I'd opt to keep my children home and do distance learning full time for them for the safety of my entire family. Unless I resign from the DOE and change careers in these unprecedented times, I do not have that option.

We are one of the first states to go back to school this fall, and we must do this right. We cannot afford to put the lives of our students, teachers, and school personnel - and their families - at risk. We can see from the examples of other countries that have reopened schools in recent months, they were forced to close quite quickly. Let us learn from others in this very unprecedented time and put health and safety first.

Thank you for your consideration.

Nicole Suzuki

Testimony BOE

From: Paul Bauer <paulbauer001@yahoo.com> on behalf of Paul Bauer
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:32 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY- A Seasoned Veteran

To my Board or Education Members...

My name is Paul Bauer. I have been teaching grades Kindergarten to Grade 5 in Kalihi for over 20 years. I have been providing education as well as 'social services' to our keiki in my classroom school year. The term "social services" is not an "official" part of my position. But, over the years, I've seen the need to fill the vacuum when our schools don't provide nurses to look after these poor underprivileged children. We haven't had a proper nurse in house, nor other health supports in place consistently for years now. I've had to call families myself just to get parents to take a child home who isn't feeling well. And as a repercussion, I am scolded for taking this role on rather than fixing another makeshift "sickbed" in the back of my classroom. So now, I am considering leaving the profession because I just don't trust the DOE or our local Administrators to safeguard me from basic threats like a child with a cold that occur in a normal year. But now, now that COVID has descended upon us, I am woefully insecure and very anxious about returning school in a few days! We really need to PULL BACK just a few weeks longer to allow administrators along with the guidance of our Health Department as well as the CDC to put in place a solid plan for schools. The idea that my room has NOT even been cleaned after a long summer and I am unable to gain access to my classroom until the first day that teachers are to report already has me at a CRISIS mentality! Then, there is NO GUIDANCE!?!

What exactly are you trying to do by placing us in situations that are unsafe for elder/senior teachers like myself & the young keiki at our charge??? You really MUST reconsider the timeline. I WANT TO WORK! I WANT TO SERVE! I WANT TO CHANGE LIVES! But not at the cost of my OWN life. That would be a disservice to myself, my family, and the longevity of my tenure as a senior mentor teacher on staff for our DOE in a tough title 1 school serving the neediest of children.

Think good & hard about your decisions moving forward so quickly without the protocols & safeguards in place. If you act hastily and without caution for your teachers, you will see an exodus of devout educators like myself!

Please reconsider your timeline. Let's take a few weeks more to allow a plan to emerge that ensures the confidence of your legions of educators! This much is true.

Paul E. Bauer III
Wyandanch Lane Ltd.
paulbauer001@yahoo.com

Testimony BOE

From: Kyle Kaiser <kkaiser@kaiserhs.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Kyle Kaiser
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:32 AM
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 Kyle Kaiser and I'm a social studies teacher at Kaiser High School.

How many more teachers have to die?!

Distance learning from home is a simple solution to this problem. Follow LA unified schools' example and keep students and teachers at home!

I am one of many concerned voices that wants Hawaii to take teachers and students on the safest path possible this fall to eliminate the risks of covid infection. The plan for reopening schools in Hawaii so far brought up more uncertainty and skepticism than feelings of hope and assurance.

Reopening Schools in Hawaii as early as August 4 is an invitation to serious problems regarding contact tracing nightmares and exposing students and teachers to covid despite the protocols in place.

There are already 4 confirmed cases of teachers dying due to covid. How many more teachers need to die before the state decides that distance learning from home is the only practical solution available at this time?!

Follow Governor Newsom's example in a California as he ordered LA unified schools to go back to distance learning for the school year.

Mahalo,

Kyle Kaiser

Testimony BOE

From: prancpipp@earthlink.net
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:32 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: re Reopening of Schools

Dear Board of Education,

With less than two weeks left before the return of students and even less time before teachers are to return to schools, I am highly concerned that the reopening schools during a period when increased numbers of cases of COVID-19 continue to be diagnosed daily is unsafe for students, teachers, and the community. After months of the community having taken precautions to socially distance, avoid large gatherings, wear masks, and be especially cautious around individuals who are at high risk of being infected, it seems unreasonable to suddenly group large numbers of children together in confined spaces, expect them to wear masks appropriately all day, supervise their movements, and then release them to their homes -- via car, bus, or unsupervised walks -- to rejoin their families.

Teachers and staff are expected to work in an impossible situation every day: working in what is essentially a "mass gathering," monitoring each student's movements and distancing, making visual medical assessments, managing classes in already crowded situations, shifting to positions for which they are not qualified -- all without any clear guidance from the people in charge, just two weeks away from opening. They have their own families to return to, many with their own children, others with elderly or health-compromised loved ones to care for, some with health issues to deal with themselves.

COVID-19 has proven to be a highly contagious disease with lethal outcomes. It also appears to mask its symptoms in some individuals. It only takes one person to infect another and spread. If even one child or staff member contracts the virus and manages to spread it at school, the consequences will be disastrous. It will mean probable loss of life and having to shut down operations again. It will overshadow any scenario we have encountered thus far in the last months of meticulously taking precautions and caring for our loved ones and community.

I urge you to reconsider the date for reopening of schools and wait until the number of diagnosed individuals has settled or a better plan for alternatives is in place. We should not be rushing to open schools while the consequence of life or death is at issue.

Sincerely,
A concerned citizen and spouse of an educator

Testimony BOE

From: Sydney Villegas <syds329@yahoo.com> on behalf of Sydney Villegas
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:32 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Delay of School Opening

Aloha Esteemed Members of the Board,

I am writing as a testimony for the delay of school opening on August 4. After a careful study of both sides- the DOE and our union, HSTA, I came to the conclusion that the first nine-days be spent in school conversations, trainings on the different instructional models, and training on the implementation of MOU protocols as supported by DOH and CDC guidelines.

Working of those recommendations above, teachers can have a bigger picture and be prepared for all the circumstances as to ensure a safe and healthy environment conducive to welcoming and teaching our beloved Keikis.

I appreciate the DOE and Administration's Return To Learn Plan. However, we just need that chance of sitting down and exploring the different avenues that would enlighten and prepare all the stakeholders.

We love our keikis and their families so much. As a doctor (PHD), teaching is my life. HIDOE is my second family. I teach at LHS, and I have kids in the elementary and high school. My dreams for my kids are exactly my dreams for our keikis.

I will do my best to serve our community. But I can only do this if I am healthy, safe, and protected. As a teacher, all I need is a practice of the expected routines that I need to do just like classroom routines we expect from our students. If I can carry out all the protocols with knowledge and confidence, then I can assure our community of a high quality instruction best delivered alongside care and safety for our keikis.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Sydney Villegas, PhD
ELA Teacher
LHS
Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Abbey Palmer <abbey.palmer@gmail.com> on behalf of Abbey Palmer
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:32 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Reopening Schools Testimony

My name is Abigail Palmer and this is my testimony regard "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 reconsider opening schools on August 4. Teachers would love to be back in our classrooms but it simply is not safe. We have not received any training. Parents are asking questions that we cannot answer. How can you expect us to help keep ourselves and our students safe without any guidance? Distance learning is the safest option... for general education AND special education. Our special education students are medically fragile and that puts many of them at a higher risk for contracting COVID-19. This is dangerous. We cannot put our students at risk for the sake of saying we are re-opening. Please, give the CDC and officials time to get the virus under control. The nation is in the middle of a pandemic and we have to think about staff and student safety. Putting the students first means thinking about their well being and safety. We must remain closed until all teachers are adequately trained and prepared to return to campus. Students already have the benefit of understanding distance learning. They are familiar with the routine and so are teachers. We are not familiar with what to do to return to campus now. Two admin days is NOT enough time to train teachers. We want to keep our students safe. We want to keep ourselves safe. If teachers get sick, there will not be substitutes willing to risk coming in. Teachers who are scared for their safety will end up quitting which will just add to the teacher shortage that we already have. Please think about what's best for the students and teachers. Please consider distance learning until covid 19 is under control. We should not have to risk our lives just for the sake of reopening when we can safely distance learn.

Mahalo,
Abigail Palmer

Testimony BOE

From: Sean T <sean.telles@gmail.com> on behalf of Sean T
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:32 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony: BOE General Business Meeting, Oppose Action Item G, Comment Action Item H

Dear BOE,

Please do not take away deferencials. It is a bait and switch. It will damage the most vulnerable schools/students when those teachers leave who transfered into those schools specifically for the extra pay.

Also, please do not start school in-person without taking accountability for any future deaths, which will incur. As a teacher, I am not ready or willing to have that personal or legal weight and liability.

Thank you for your work. I know it's not easy.

Sean Telles

Teacher in Ewa

Testimony BOE

From: TheInspirationandLov <maileathilo@gmail.com> on behalf of TheInspirationandLov
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:33 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha Board of Education members,

I am emailing to testify and submit my opposition 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 work in the field of public higher education has afforded me with the opportunity to develop connections and collaborations with many public K-12 schools in the state of Hawai'i. I also have many family members who are educators here. As a result of these connections, I strongly value our keiki, teachers, and schools. In particular, Special education classroom teachers, Hawaiian language immersion educators, and educators at hard-to-staff schools provide unique and essential services to our state's keiki that we cannot afford to have jeopardized.

The pay differentials have been effective in mitigating rates of teacher turnover and shortages in these three critical areas. To discontinue the pay differentials would be a short sighted solution that will likely have harmful long term implications. I urge you to consider alternative ways of coping with projected budget shortfalls that will not disadvantage the long term futures of our keiki.

Thank you for your time in considering this testimony.

Sincerely,
Maile Sing

Testimony BOE

From: Isabel Choe <isabel.choe@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Isabel Choe
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:33 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

My name is Isabel and I'm an educator at Queen Ka'ahumanu Elementary School. I am testifying on Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between HIDOE 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 have concerns about schools buildings reopening with all teachers and a high number of students coming back on a day to day basis. As case numbers fluctuate and asymptomatic people walking around, I'm worried how this might affect everyone in a school setting. I also agree with the concerns that LG Green has raised about students returning to school.

As a teacher, I want nothing more to teach students like normal, but unfortunately, these circumstances are not normal. I am conflicted with wanting to do my duty as a teacher, and wanting myself, my coworkers, the students, and their families to stay safe and healthy. Our school staff, especially our admin are doing an amazing job gathering information and working hard to ensure that we're informed and as safe as possible, but I am still anxious about this whole situation.

My hope is that every decision that's made is made with all teachers, school staff, students, and families in mind.

Mahalo,

- Isabel

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Testimony BOE

From: Maryam Ayati Dillabaugh <ayatidillabaugh@gmail.com> on behalf of Maryam Ayati Dillabaugh
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:33 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Opening School

Hello!

I am a parent and a teacher. I've been a parent for 9 years and teacher for 20. I have worked as a teacher in 2 states. I love working for public school students here in Hawaii but I have not loved working for DOE. Working for county operated districts vs a state run operation has been quite different.

In addition to the tremendous pay cut I took moving to Hawaii (My salary is about \$38,000 less), I also pay more out of pocket for my classroom. It's not just resources for curriculum and supplies for the students but also for cleaning supplies for my classroom. My classroom is beyond filthy. I have dirt on the rafters and window slats going back years. I have cleaned all the areas I can reach and once a year borrow the 6ft ladder to clean corners and shelves. I have purchased my own vacuum and Swiffer mop for my classroom in addition to the countless tissue boxes, paper towel rolls, disinfecting wipes, hand sanitizer bottles, and other basic school supplies. I have done all of this without thought except for those months where my husband reminds me to try and stay within our budget. My parents have begun to make these purchases for me here and there because after 20 years of teaching, with a Master's Degree, my salary won't even cover my mortgage on an old 960 sq ft house in Palolo Valley let alone the amount of things I need to run a classroom. And yet every year I make choices to support my classroom and take resources away from my family.

Here I am being asked to go to return to work with an MOU we all know is just a piece of paper. I already have my rosters/numbers and will have to house 2 students outside my classroom to observe 6ft social distancing. I have spent my summer vacation trying to track down disinfecting wipes and hand sanitizers, always just missing the last box or last bottle..OR wondering if \$12 is too much for an 8oz bottle of hand sanitizer that smells like cheap liquor.

I believe in public education. I had reservations but was convinced it would be ok to return to work with proper precautions when our cases were 0-2 a day at the beginning of June. However, now as our numbers are rising and our resources are the same, we are asked to return to work with empty promises that our schools will be safe. I have yet to see a clean classroom and we open in 2 weeks!!! I have yet to see that ample restrooms will be open and cleaned routinely, or other PPE that are being offered. I have room for 9 students in my room but will need to remove much of my furniture which houses my resources. Students will still need to sit outside. I will have to spend time coordinating with neighboring classrooms to make sure there is room outside for students. So far I have been given a bottle of disinfectant, some gloves and a package of paper towels.

Even though I clearly spend my own resources to improve the classroom for my students, PPE and disinfectants are incredibly hard to find. It's almost a full time job trying to find these things!

I teach high school. Teenagers (collectively) are the worst at taking this seriously and staying safe. I see their social media posts...they are not only NOT social distancing, they are engaging in behaviors that put us all at risk.

The message is clear... Educators are in this alone and are expected to do the best they can with the resources that are there, even when these resources are not enough. The MOU is there to make the public feel like the

government has done their part and if it's not working out it's because of the teachers or administrators...it's an individual school's problem. We are back to being the fallback guy. If it's not working it's because we're not doing our jobs. Disgraceful!!!

Just like the spring quarter...it didn't work not because teachers didn't work but because of the DOE policy that grades wouldn't count. Not very many teenagers cared after that. I showed up to countless virtual classes with 1 to 0 students present. Teachers and schools were blamed for not doing their jobs instead of looking at how poorly it was handled from the top. And now we are asked to have faith in a system that has failed us routinely and has no problem placing the blame on its teachers. I worked 16 hour days in q4 trying to figure out how to engage my students and provide distance learning. I have spent 4 weeks out of this summer in training trying to find ways to be better this school year. I have spent at least 6 days in meetings or discussions regarding the school year. I am not afraid to work hard or put in the work. Teachers do the work! But we cannot carry this on our shoulders alone.

We are asked to open schools with our hands tied behind our backs! Where are the resources? Where is the support? What is the actual support? Come down to the schools and actually see what is going on to prepare before you send us off to some sort of Russian roulette on who will survive.

There is no choice for education this school year that will be perfect. As educators, we know now more than ever, the importance of face to face contact when educating our youth. As a parent, I want my kids to go to school. But I also need to believe they will be safe. IF there is no physical safety, mental and emotional health is irrelevant. As a teacher of graduating seniors, I wanted nothing more than to celebrate them, hug them goodbye and see them as much as I could...but physical safety trumps all that.

What happens to students that don't come with PPE? What happens when families that you place in a "classroom ohana bubble" think COVID is a hoax? their behaviors put my family at risk. THE BOE MUST HAVE STRICT POLICY with SPECIFIC LANGUAGE given to the schools.

Is 1% of the population dying is worth sending kids to school on a modified schedule that may or may not improve their mental health?

Based on our new schedule, I have one student in a section in an AVID class. One of the main anchors of the course curriculum is working collaboratively and building social emotional skills. I am curious to see how it will be for this student, knowing that she is alone in a section and all of her other classmates get to be together in larger numbers in other sections. I wonder how that will affect her mental and emotional health?

I get it. We are all doing the best we can and trying to come up with systems to educate our kids while keeping them safe. We are in unprecedented times. I cannot imagine how difficult it is to be a leader at this time in our history. We have to be smart and look at the reality of the facts in front of us. But leaders are leaders for a reason...especially those who are appointed to being a leader! They must act and set the policy. Not just give a directive and then let the schools flounder around trying to figure it, with little time and resources.

While our numbers are not those of hot spot areas around the country, our resources are also much less than those major cities. In a time when resources need to be poured into schools to help, they are being taken away. Examples of this are schools having to pay for substitutes, no part time hires, etc. Schools have to find PPE and sanitation supplies on their own...Why can't a larger entity like the DOE use its power to get us what we need instead of schools scrambling and having to compete to get these things. We are not physically capable of being a safe place for kids without proper PPE and sanitation. I want to have faith that these things will be there, but they are not. Usually, I figure it out on my own and purchase it. It's hard to do that when they are not available in the numbers you need them to be!

Please reconsider how we open up schools in August. PLEASE MAKE SURE WE ARE SAFE!!! I WANT A GUARANTEE that we will be provided with all safety equipment and cleaners we need!

Sincerely,
Maryam Ayati Dillabaugh
Teacher and Parent

Testimony BOE

From: Mermaid Surfer <mermaidsurfer@hotmail.com> on behalf of Mermaid Surfer
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:34 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha Members of the Board of Education:

I am emailing my testimony regarding Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees. I teach English at Kahuku High and Intermediate on Oahu and request that we delay the return of students in person on 8/4/2020 so that we can spend more time preparing and planning to give our students both a safe and quality educational experience.

Since I started teaching, we've always been given 4 days without students, 2 of which are administration lead, leaving many teachers to spend long hours of their own time doing what needs to be done to get ready for students to return and these are under the normal circumstances we are ALL used to.

This year is an entirely different ball game. We have not seen our students since March. Our classrooms are in shambles; many of us returning to rooms that still have not been cleaned or set up to enforce CDC guidelines. The shock of all of this still has not set in with me and I've been trying my best to mentally train myself to accept this new normal so that I can set a good example for the kids when they are back. But here's the thing- I'm still having a hard time. In my 37 years of living, I've never encountered a situation like this before. Each time I sit down at my computer to think about lesson plan ideas, my mind reverts to a normal classroom setting situation. Once the reality sets in that things will no longer be that way for the time being, I start to panic because I don't know how or where to even begin with planning. Add in the fact that my family is on another island and I worry about catching this disease and never being able to see them again.

Psychologically, it's quite difficult to untrain the mind once it's conditioned to see things in a certain light. For me, the start of a school year symbolizes promise, opportunities and excitement for a new challenge with different students while fondly looking back on areas of growth to continue to improve on. How can I focus on those things as an educator when my own basic needs are being trifled with as I debate coming back to work directly with students in the midst of a pandemic?

Since March, I have frantically ran to the aisle of cleaning supplies first whenever I go to the store, eager to grab whatever sanitation supplies or paper goods I can get my hands on. Never in my time of living alone in my 20's and 30's have I had a freezer full of food or closets full of cleaning stuff to last beyond a week at a time. You may call that foolish but I call that being a teacher who lives on her own in the state of Hawaii. While it's gotten easier to find toilet paper, many of the supplies we will need for our classrooms on a regular and consistent basis like hand sanitizer and wipes are still extremely difficult to obtain. If we can barely find these products for our own homes, how are we going to find them for our classrooms? While you say these things are being provided for us, we are going to need a lot more than a month's supply to make it through a 10 month school year. If you are already planning to take back the pay differentials you promised for SPED/Hawaiian Immersion and hard to fill geographic locations, how are you going to pay for PPE, cleaning supplies and most importantly, more custodial staff?

As an employer, the DOE has let us down many times before. I could write an entire novel on how many times I've been screwed over but that's beside the point. How can I trust that this time you guys are going to deliver? In a sense, teaching has become for me what is similar to the dynamics of an abusive relationship. The teacher often gets guilt tripped into staying in the profession because we care so much about our students and will continue to put ourselves in compromising situations while holding on to hope that some day things will change for the better. We love our students and our careers so much that we continue to push past the pain of

being disappointed, taken advantage of and verbally abused and attacked by all kinds of people on a daily basis.

Enough is enough. I am sick of being reduced to a label of a glorified babysitter who is being guilt tripped into not fighting for what I feel our students and school staff members deserve. Parents have found ways during school breaks to provide childcare while they go to work and given the fact that many are still out of work as it is, claiming we need kids back in school so that they can go back is a weak argument. Don't fault us for the state of the economy- we delivered in the best way that we could in a situation that you pretty much set us and our students up to fail in.

We cannot control the lifestyles of our students and while there are many amazing parents who see eye to eye with us in this situation and do not want to send their kids back for in person instruction, there are still going to be the ones who insist this virus is not real, demand that their child not wear a mask and go against Governor Ige's wishes of them not being sent to school in spite of being sick. Educators need more time to prepare for situations like these.

The passive aggressive message delivered by Dr. Kishimoto last night was another instance of the continued abuse teachers are expected to endure. She alluded to the fact that since grocery stores, restaurants, delivery drivers, custodians and security personnel continued to work during the pandemic, teachers should also step it up and do the same. I'm not sure what planet she's on but we DID work through the pandemic. We DID the best that we could in spite of never having been trained on how to teach in this manner. We were instructed by the higher ups, Kishimoto included, not to grade assignments, introduce new concepts or require students to do the work. We were set up by her for continued criticism from the public from the get go. Once summer started at the end of May, many of us continued to work, myself included.

To close, I must say, I feel more safe doing food deliveries for DoorDash than I do going back to my classroom. That statement alone should speak for itself. Please delay the return of students to in person instruction so that teachers have more time to prepare because contrary to the plethora of lies Kishimoto is continuing to spew out to silence the public about us being trained and schools being safe and sanitary spaces for students to come back to, we are not ready. This is coming from someone who is on the frontlines- an educator.

Mahalo nui loa,
Ms. Jennifer M. Corpion
MAT, Chaminade University
Kahuku High and Intermediate School

Testimony BOE

From: Remy Dong <rdong19@hmi.edu> on behalf of Remy Dong
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:34 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: August 4 school opening

Aloha,

I hope that this email reaches someone who will actually listen to one of many concern parents here in our beautiful state of Hawaii. I do not think opening the schools on August 4th would be the safest thing to do. I have two children who are in elementary school. My son and daughter are relatively healthy, but when my son does become sick he gets really sick. I understand that we all need to take into accountability when it comes into our children's health. This is why I'm speaking out, I don't think a lot of parents will do so. I've been told that some parents will send their kids to school with fevers and even throwing up and only take them out when the school nurse calls the parents. I don't believe our teachers and other staff members should face these challenges. I understand that teachers will be considered "essential workers" but I know some teachers who have underlying health issues as well. So my question is what happens if my child/children contract COVID19 through school wouldn't that open our state up for potential law suits? Does the department of education really want to have that on their hands as well? I don't think our school system is ready for the children to go back to school at least not on August 4th. Another thing is that if the Board of Education actually does listen to us parents please have the teachers really focus on distance learning.

Thank You

Remy Dong

Testimony BOE

From: Benevides Ohana <benevidesohana@gmail.com> on behalf of Benevides Ohana
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:30 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY

I am sending in my testimony to delay the reopening of school due to the pandemic. I am a parent of 4 and 2 of them are in high school at Waiākea High School. I work at a school too, at Waiākea Intermediate School. We are a high risk family because of health issues that include asthma and type 1 diabetes for me. I don't feel that parents, students, teachers, and staff have enough time to plan and start a new type of school year. As a parent, I have no idea what the school will look like, what the classrooms will look like, what a school day look like, and there has been no training for students and staff members like me on how to be at school in this new normal. There are too many questions and concerns that have to be addressed which include cleaning, safety, accommodations for children who have 504 Plans including my son, device loaners, attendance, academics for those attending school and those who aren't. As the primary parent I feel that I am forced into making a difficult decision without any support or help to make that decision. I really don't know what is best for my family. My children's school is saying that we have to commit to an entire year of online learning if that's what we choose to do. There will be no teachers assigned to them. This doesn't work for us because my children need teachers to help and my son needs specific accommodations with his 504 Plan. Now this is concerning because he has a 504 Plan due to his health. Less than two weeks is just not enough time to prepare. At the school I work at there isn't enough shields. I don't have one and some teachers don't have enough coverage. We're all scrambling to get things together. I don't start work until school starts so how does that give me enough time to prepare? It doesn't. I just can't comprehend any of this and to make a decision that affects our lives is impossible and difficult because that decision has to be made soon and we are committed to it. I can't even plan for tomorrow because things could change, but I have to plan for my children returning to school? Please delay the reopening so that everyone can be more prepared.

Kayci Benevides

Testimony BOE

From: Erin Lau <erin.lau@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Erin Lau
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:34 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha BOE,

I am in full agreement with HSTA that we, teachers, need to delay opening of the schools. Schools need to have more PPE besides masks, face shields, gloves when students return on our campus and into the classrooms. For example, UV air purifiers for every classroom, library, office room, cafeteria, etc, for potential airborne COVID particles. Also, plexiglass barriers, as we would see in supermarkets and other businesses for customer protection.

In addition, 2 teacher workdays are not enough. We need more time to collaborate with our colleagues on procedures that will occur during the school day. For instance, bathroom, line up, before and after school line up, etc. Upper grade teachers need to collaborate and lower grade teachers need time.

At my school, some teachers had to move to a different classroom or another place, like the cafeteria and library. A few teachers had to move twice after the 6 feet ruling. They are still prepping their teaching space. In addition, most of our teachers will be teaching a different grade level due to looping of students. We've spent our summer sorting through grade level materials, rearranging and removing furniture. I still have a lot more to do before students are scheduled to come in Aug.4. I'm at school as I'm writing this and there are 4 other teachers still prepping. Also, SPED teachers are now general ed. teachers and may need more time to be familiarized with the curriculum materials and online components. This is also true for teachers teaching a new grade level for the first time. Throwing in the distance learning concept is another component that we haven't discussed in detail.

We would appreciate more time to plan and collaborate before we receive our students. We do miss the. but need to start off on the right foot.

Thank you for your time!

Mahalo,
Erin Lau

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Testimony BOE

From: Rianon Stephens <RianonStephens@hotmail.com> on behalf of Rianon Stephens
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:35 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Hawaii Public Schools

Aloha,

I'm writing to give my support to delaying the opening of schools in Hawaii, and instead focus on creating a sustainable plan before opening to keep teachers and children healthy.

It will be impossible to enforce the kind of social distancing guidelines needed to prevent mass spread due to the nature of school and the behavior of children. While I have deep sympathy for parents who are struggling to care for their children with full time jobs etc. it is NOT our teachers responsibility to put their health and lives on the line.

Thank you
Rianon Stephens

Testimony BOE

From: mtupper@hawaii.rr.com
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:35 AM
To: 'TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov'
Subject: TESTIMONY, Marjorie Tupper, Gr. 4 Teacher

7/21/20

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 Board Members,

The school year has to be delayed, modified and altered because we don't know how this virus will impact each of us or our family members. I understand that there are 3 things, at this time, that can help us control the spread of CoVid: wearing masks, social distancing and getting tested regularly. However, with the DOE's current plans not all of these measures are accounted for. I miss the students most of all, but I also miss doing my job without fearing for my life.

To think that school will allow for students to enjoy their friends again, and learn amidst controlled competition is disconnected from reality. Here are a few situations that remind me how this school year cannot be a continuation of what school was like pre-CoVid19.

I have met with my grade level teachers to talk about teaching during this global pandemic. How, for example, will we guide the students to socialize at recess? We know that they can't share classroom recess equipment (balls, frisbees, jump ropes, board games, etc.); and they can't go onto the playground equipment. As much as we might not like doing this, we know we will have to make sure that students only talk with each other (using a mask and socially distancing), eat their snack without sneaking some to their buddy, walk and maybe run around, making sure all are socializing safely.

In the classroom, students won't be able to easily work together because they need to be 6 feet apart. I know that I will coordinate their movement throughout my classroom so that they are safely distanced from one another, and there will be 6 feet between them when doing group work (though we don't have the space to allow for multiple groups of students working together). The students will not be able to sit next to each

other, and they might not see their friends, because only half of the class can attend school each day. (Also, I don't know where to place my fans to cool my room this year. I plan on taking students outside every 15 to 30 minutes, because gathering for more than 15 minutes enables transmission of this virus.)

Yes - 40 some odd days were taken away from students last school year. However, the upcoming school year will be a distorted version of the Pre-CoVid19 school day. Expecting that the resumption of in-person school will allow students the opportunity to socialize is at best, naive; at worst - irresponsible. I know I could do without the trauma of worrying/dealing with a colleague, student, family member, colleague's/student's family member, etc. becoming gravely ill, or the anxiety over whether my own immuno-compromised system will be tested. To me, the lack of school pales in comparison to the unknown impact of CoVid.

Sincerely,
Marjorie Tupper
Nuuanu Elementary

Testimony BOE

From: Rebecca Forte-blunt <rebecca.forte-blunt@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Rebecca Forte-blunt
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:35 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

Please do not open schools until protocols are clearly in place. There are so many unanswered questions and unknown facts about COVID and rushing the students and teachers to begin school should be avoided. My husband is a healthcare worker and works with infected patients daily, which puts me at risk, therefore would potentially put students in danger and expose them. There are many questions that need to be answered;

- 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 school?
- What happens to the students and adults on campus if a student, teacher, or 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?
- 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?
- When will there be proper training for the teachers to ensure their safety and the students safety?
- Can you ensure that school's air conditioning is clean and filters germs?

These questions need to be answered to fairly expect teachers and students to return to a safe environment. As an educator, I definitely do not feel comfortable or safe going back to school July 29th.

Thank you for your consideration,

Rebecca Forte-Blunt
Special Education Teacher
Ewa Makai Middle School

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Testimony BOE

From: Matthew Rossman <matthew.rossman@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Matthew Rossman
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:37 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony...Delay the start of the school year...Plan for distance learning

Aloha distinguished Board Members,

Please delay the opening of the school year. Please urge the superintendent to allow schools to do 100% distance learning for the first quarter.

I am a teacher at Holualoa School in Hawaii. I have talked with many teachers who do not feel that reopening school campuses during the pandemic is safe. We know from the CDC and WHO, that prolonged exposure, enclosed spaces, and lack of masking will lead to virus spread. All of these will be occur under the current re opening plan for thousands of Hawaii residents.

My mother did not want to retire, but she just put in her retirement papers a few weeks ago, and I have more friends who have put in retirement papers. Teachers are requesting doctors notes to be excused from campuses because working on a school campus is dangerous to your health at this time. I know many teachers are looking into leave options to start the school year.

My wife and I are teachers, and we are looking at all our options at this time. We would like to continue to work for the DOE, but we do not feel comfortable reporting to campuses with the buses running, the gang daycares going, the untrained substitutes and educational assistance roaming, and the children, masklessly spreading COVID 19.

Students will be sneezing on buses, classrooms, into AC units, in cafeterias, and on thier teachers. If you work in lower el, it is not unusual for you to be sneezed on, vomited on, or coughed on. To figure out what's going on with my students who are struggling, I routinely have to come into a one foot proximity before they are comfortable. Students do not feel comfortable telling strangers, or their new teacher, that they feel unwell from six feet away.

Distinguished members of the BOE, please don't force more of your teachers to quit, retire, or go on leave. Do not force students, teachers, and their families into positions of peril. Delay the start of the school year, and let students and teachers begin to build systems to effectively learn virtually.

Sincerely,

Matthew Rossman

Teacher, Holualoa School

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Testimony BOE

From: Chung, Gabrielle <gabrielle.chung@kalakauamiddle.org> on behalf of Chung, Gabrielle
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:35 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY

To 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 Gabrielle Chung, I work at Kalākaua Middle School as a sixth grade teacher.

I am concerned for the safety for myself and others. I do not believe ohana bubbles is the cure all. We have students who will come to school whether or not they are feeling well and will spread the virus to others. It's that spooky.

For myself, I'd hate to do distance learning as it is challenging for myself, my students, and my child however, I feel it is a necessary due to our health.

The numbers of cases have been in the double digits. All it takes is one student to spread the virus to the whole school. We can not risk lives of many. I am lucky that I have the gift of health but am more worried for others who are not as fortunate as myself.

Please reconsider this decision. I have faith knowing that doing the right thing will always prevail.

Sincerely,
Gabrielle Chung

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Testimony BOE

From: Eva Anderson <eva.anderson@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Eva Anderson
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:36 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Action Item G

Aloha,

I am writing to oppose the temporary suspension of differential pay for Hawaii's hardest to fill teaching positions. I am shocked that at a time when Hawaii's most vulnerable students are facing the greatest threat to their education, that the body governing them wants to incentivize their marginalization. Teachers have responded to the differentials by transferring to SPED jobs and hard to staff areas, and now they get the "bait and switch." So they took on the extra responsibility and now they get a pay cut as thanks. These are rational people who have families to support. Teachers will quit, teachers will take leave, and teachers will take many more sick days. Our system is strained to bursting already, and if we lose experienced teachers, students will suffer for years.

Study after study shows that effective teachers are the most important factor in student learning, but you are now saying you are willing to lose experienced, effective teachers and hope new ones will be just as good. Hundreds of educational studies would tell you that an inexperienced teacher can't compare to a veteran, and I think keeping our best teachers is the best thing we can do for Hawaii's keiki, for Hawaii's future.

Mahalo,

Eva K. Anderson

--

Sincerely,

Eva K. Anderson

Kea'au High School

Drawing and Painting Teacher

"We are all works in progress!"

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Testimony BOE

From: simply kalena <simplykalena@gmail.com> on behalf of simply kalena
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:36 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

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

Dear Board of Education:

My name is Karen Arakaki. I am a School Counselor and Teacher at Roosevelt High School, where I have worked for the past 29 years. I have taught there since 1991 and have worked with six different Principals and have had the pleasure of teaching and counseling the children of my former students.

I have never written to anyone asking for help, because I've always looked within myself, consulted Administration and colleagues, spoke to agencies and community members, or even asked for feedback and ideas from students and their parents, in order to problem-solve school related issues. However, today I feel compelled to write to you, because delaying students' return to school for everyone's safety and benefit, is beyond any of us.

Our Faculty just received our Return to School Plan yesterday via email and we will return to work 5 days from today. Yes, we received it late, however, I do not blame my Administration for its tardiness, as they have been working tirelessly along with our Leadership Team, to write this and get it out as quickly as possible. Rather, I hold the Department of Education and Superintendent Kishimoto, accountable for the DOE's lack of haste, absence of thorough planning, for their neglect in ensuring that ALL faculty, staff and school needs are met for a safe and successful reopening of schools for everyone, and for their lack of consistent communication with all stakeholders. Why are all of us, NOT on the same page? Why do all of us NOT have a clear understanding of the protocols and procedures that are "supposed" to ensure a safe reopening? And, why are we NOT looking at the data that shows that unless we adhere to the CDC's guidelines, we are putting everyone's lives in danger and may be setting schools up for failure, with the potential school closures one month after reopening?

As our school's English Language (EL) Coordinator and Counselor, formerly known as ELL or ESOL, I work with students and families who have identified English as their Second Language. A majority of my families receive free and reduced lunch. Most of my families cannot read, write, or comprehend English without translation. Some of my families are homeless. And, many of my families have no devices or internet for distance learning. I am scared for them!

After reading our plan yesterday, I emailed my Principal to ask if my EL Parents will receive a translated version of the plan? Specifically, the sections that refer to their responsibilities and understanding of Covid-19 symptoms and transmission, suspected infection, their responsibility to get tested and to self-quarantine, and their full cooperation that they need to keep their children home when they are not feeling well to avoid infecting others with the virus? My Principal had no answer to my question it was never addressed by the DOE? Let me point out, that Micronesians make up 3% of Hawaii's population, yet, they make up 25% of positive Covid infections. In addition, our state has also seen a spike in infections amongst our Filipino families as well. Thus, how are we to ensure everyone's safety if our at-risk populations are not being educated about

Covid-19? How can you ensure our safety if this lack of foresight has neglected to make this safety plan accessible to all families?

In addition, the current Distance Learning platform provided by the DOE, Accelus, is not academically accessible to all EL students. It is not user friendly or academically appropriate for students for whom English is a Second Language? As such, how can this be offered to EL families that choose Distance Learning as an option? We will be setting these students up for failure! I am certain that my concerns also apply to many of our Special Needs students as well.

Last, I am sure you will be reading many testimonies about school environment so I tried to steer away from these topics. But, I have to leave you with this very real picture that some of our Teachers and students will be walking into on their first day of school. One of my colleagues will be teaching in a classroom with 21 students, 6' distancing, in an enclosed air-conditioned room with little/no ventilation except for the 1 door that is used to access the classroom. She will be teaching in these conditions for all of the 6 periods that she teaches. My colleague will be trapped at her desk because if she left it, she would be placing herself within feet of her students. She will have none of her regular teaching aides/equipment to help her instruct her students because it cannot fit in her class of 21 students! She is expected to do her job and teach as normal, when there is nothing normal about this environment? High schools have NO ohana bubble--it does not apply to us so stop talking about this as if it is "the answer" for safety! All it takes is 1 infection---then the dominos start to drop. As Teachers become sick, instruction stops, classrooms become empty, and schools will close because they cannot be kept open without the Teachers! As the President of the United States has his Secret Service to protect him from harm so he can continue to lead this nation, so should the Board of Education protect its Teachers so they can continue to teach safely, to be healthy, to not be fearful of returning to work because they feel that they are being used as a pawn to restart the economy! Teachers want to teach! Teachers want to be with their students! And, Teachers want to make sure that everyone is safe!

Be Safe & Stay Healthy,
Karen Arakaki

Testimony BOE

From: Melissa Ching <melissaching@me.com> on behalf of Melissa Ching
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:37 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To the Hawaii State Board of Education:

I am submitting testimony on Action Item H, the Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 20217-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

My name is Melissa Ching. I am a 4th grade teacher at Princess Victoria Ka'iulani Elementary School.

I am writing to implore you to delay the opening of school for students in the interest of health and safety. I am deeply troubled by the lack of transparency and communication regarding essential health and safety concerns surrounding the re-opening of schools and do not feel that Hawaii schools and staff are adequately prepared for the safe return of students to school. I ask that you delay the reopening of school for students to allow adequate time for teacher and school training/preparation and require the HDOE to provide specific plans/protocols to address students' health and safety and academic and social-emotional needs. I do not have confidence that the DOE has adequately prepared for the safe return of students for the following reasons.

1) Lack of adequate planning/communication - We have heard many vague assurances that students will be safe, but when questioned about specifics by the HSTA and even State Senators, no specific details regarding protocols, response plans etc. have been released. Already the HDOE has demonstrated a lack of cohesion and leadership by delegating major decisions to principals to make in relative isolation, at the school level. I honestly believe our principals are doing their best in an impossible situation. They need consistent, specific guidance and protocols on issues such as student and staff health checks, protocols for students/staff who become sick and/or test positive for COVID-19 etc. This should be decided and vetted at the state level to ensure consistent, rigorous safety protocols are in place in all schools in Hawaii. Too many questions remain unanswered such as:

- How will students transition on campus while maintaining social distancing protocols (arriving at school, waiting to enter the classroom, recess, lunchtime, transitioning between classes, bathroom breaks, leaving school etc.)?
- What will happen if a student refuses to comply with social distancing or PPE protocols? What additional protective measures will be put into place if a student has a doctor's note saying they are unable to wear a mask etc.?
- Will/How will students be assessed daily to determine if they are healthy and able to enter school? We have been told that no temperatures will be taken and that students will be "visually assessed"? Who will conduct this visual assessment and what will it entail?
- How will classrooms be sanitized, both on a daily basis and throughout the day as middle and high school students switch classrooms? The MOU states that teachers will not be required to clean and disinfect classrooms. How can custodians be realistically expected to disinfect frequently touched surfaces in all classrooms and common areas during short passing times as secondary students switch classes?
- Do schools really have adequate cleaning supplies on hand? We are hearing that schools have ordered essential PPE and cleaning supplies, but that they are simply not available. In the larger community, we have seen shortages and inconsistent availability of essential supplies. Given that all businesses and even private homes are competing for the same limited supplies, it makes sense that schools would also face these same

challenges in acquiring adequate cleaning supplies. In fact, the MOU specifically addresses this situation to allow employees to purchase supplies on their own and be reimbursed. I have heard from fellow teachers that administrators are acknowledging that cleaning supplies are on back order and teachers should purchase/submit reimbursements for disinfecting wipes etc. if they can find them. Why is there a disconnect between what is being communicated at the school level and what is being communicated to the general public?

- What will distance learning look like for schools implementing the blended or hybrid model? How will teachers be teaching face-to-face and provide distance learning at the same time? What about students who do not have consistent access to electronic devices and/or internet?

- When/How will all teachers receive training on distance learning? In the big picture, what are we trying to accomplish (there are different schools of thought on this; should we be prioritize academics and try to provide the same academic instruction and rigor we have in the past or will this be overwhelming and add additional stress for students and families who may already be in a state of distress during these challenging times? Should we prioritize the "whole child" and focus on social emotional needs that students may have in the face of COVID-19, social distancing etc. and reduce our expectations for academics to prioritize students', teachers' and families' overall well being?

2) Ohana Bubbles will not keep students safe. - It was jolting to hear the stark truth from Health Director Bruce Anderson when he said "I'm willing to bet that we're going to get cases very quickly showing up among kids in the classrooms." There are essentially 2 major problems with the concept of Ohana Bubbles. Firstly, students will not be able to maintain consistent social distancing within their Ohana Bubble. We've seen on the news that everyone (adults included!) are getting a bit stir crazy and desperate for social interaction. Children are no different. We can reasonably assume that students will have a limited ability to resist the impulse to come into close contact with each other, even with the best of intentions and instruction on social distancing. Staying in their Ohana Bubble doesn't mean they can't catch the virus, but it does (hopefully) simplify contact tracing when an outbreak occurs. Secondly, when we consider the logistics involved in the school day, it is unreasonable to think that students would only come into contact/close contact with the students in 1 classroom. Our secondary students will be exposed to students and teachers in up to 7 classes per day. All students will be exposed to students outside their Ohana Bubble when waiting at the bus stop, riding the bus, arriving on campus, during transitions throughout the day etc. Lt. Gov. Green said that "Young children can't adhere to social distancing or staying in a bubble and teens will socialize and be difficult to manage."

3) We are operating under false assumptions about what school will be like. - I keep hearing that schools need to reopen to provide childcare for parents who need to return to work. However relatively few students will be returning to school full time, with the majority reporting to school only once or twice a week. Finding a safe, supervised place for children to be while their parents work remains a need. I have also heard that we need to return to in-person learning as soon as possible to minimize the academic impact of COVID-19. However, rushing to re-open schools without appropriate professional development for teachers is unacceptable. Last spring, when it became clear that COVID-19 had reached the islands and we suddenly had to shut down, teacher and school responses were inconsistent, reactive and chaotic due to the lack of opportunity to prepare. This year, we need to do better for our students. Dr. Kishimoto has implied that teachers have been training and preparing for months, but this is not the case. Certainly, some teachers have taken the initiative to take advantage of virtual training opportunities they sought out, paid for and attended on their own. In the collaborative spirit traditionally attributed to educators, teachers have conducted and/or attended peer trainings, also on their own time. This is simply not enough. We are in unprecedented times and "business as usual" is no longer practical or safe. No doubt, specific training related to COVID-19 and its operational impacts was (and is) provided and required for first responders and other essential workers. Teachers and other school personnel also require appropriate training to ensure we can safely and effectively do our jobs. To think that the usual 4 days of teacher preparation prior the the return of students will suffice is dangerously short-sighted. Two of these days are already set aside for teachers to prepare their classrooms and materials and certainly all of that time (and more!) will be needed to make necessary modifications given our new "normal." The remaining 2 days are typically used by administrators to cover the usual mandatory trainings related to the opening of school

(regarding blood-borne pathogens etc.). This leaves little to no time for teacher training related to COVID-19 and distance learning. These issues are too important to be squeezed in and to plan to address them on half days once students have already returned to school is unsafe and irresponsible.

To reiterate, please delay the reopening of school for students to allow adequate time for teacher and school training/preparation and require the HDOE to provide specific plans/protocols to address students' health and safety and academic and social-emotional needs. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Melissa Ching
Princess Victoria Ka'iulani Elementary School

Testimony BOE

From: mec12006 <mec12006@hawaii.rr.com> on behalf of mec12006
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:37 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am a parent and educator 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 the date to reopen our schools to students should be pushed back. Teachers need time to prepare and receive training for virtual teaching and carrying out safety precautions set forth by the CDC. I am not confident I will be able to do my job well without the proper training. We're not able to effectively teach students this new way of learning if we ourselves don't know what we're doing. As a parent, I would like my child to be taught by teachers who are knowledgeable and well trained. The Superintendent claims teachers received training throughout this ordeal. This is completely FALSE. No training has been provided. Please delay students' first day of August 4 to give teachers time to prepare and receive training. Mahalo.

Testimony BOE

From: Lynn Otaguro <lmotaguro@yahoo.com> on behalf of Lynn Otaguro
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:37 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: testimony

July 23, 2020

Board of Education
State of Hawaii

Supplemental Testimony for BOE Agenda, July 23, 2020, 1:30 p.m., to request a delay in the start of the school year

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.

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 am writing this supplemental testimony because there are so many issues that need to be addressed in order that schools be able to effectively open during this time.

In addition to other issues previously brought up, a delay in the start date of school would give the DOE and schools time to work on the following things.

How to best to structure the use of other service providers. Schools have many providers who help individual students or take groups or go into classrooms to provide services and support learning. How can schools structure that support in a way that does not increase risk, considering the idea of the pods? For example, part time teachers (PTTs) often go into classrooms to help students; at other times, they pull out students, usually grouping them by level and combining students from different classes. To make the best use of their time, the PTTs also serve multiple classrooms and grade levels. This issue of service providers also exists for non-classroom teachers, educational assistants, paraprofessional tutors, and myriad other service providers (speech, occupational therapy, physical therapy, counselors, school psychologists, behavioral specialists) that work with different students in a school and sometimes in multiple schools. Schools would benefit from guidance on steps to minimize risk in these circumstances.

Training for schools/staff. School staff members are trained on blood borne pathogens and other things at the beginning of each school year. At this moment, it is crucial to have training on the coronavirus and contact tracing, how the DOE/DOH proposal of pods is supposed to work, school procedures for preparing classrooms and handling cases of infection, and what schools can do to mitigate risks. As far as I know, no one has taken the time to address school staffs to provide good explanations of the disease and how it spreads, how the approach planned so far addresses the risks of disease, and what schools can do to lower risks. (While some of these issues may have been touched upon in news briefings, the purpose of a briefing is different from training of staff and cannot be said to have reached all staff members, who should be aware of any important procedures and protocols.)

Training for parents/communities. The DOE could help with creating training for parents on how the pods work and how families can support school safety by having their children socially distance outside of school to minimize other contacts. Parents also can be told how they can help their children wear masks and socially distance in school. While

schools may already be working on this, consistent communication with families and the community will benefit all schools and contribute greatly to a more successful reopening.

Clarification of vital procedures and training and communication with staff and the community will build greater understanding of what is involved in having the schools reopen and how everyone can help the schools open up safely and stay open. Without this, there will continue to be apprehension and a lack of trust. A delay in the start of school will give time to the DOE and schools to work on these issues to build greater trust.

Thank you,
Lynn M. Otaguro
Oahu, Hawaii

p.s. I apologize for sending the other testimony separately. I am attaching it here again for your ease of access.

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

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.

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

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Testimony BOE

From: Carleen Burns <hulamom24@yahoo.com> on behalf of Carleen Burns
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:38 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Reopening of school

My name is Carleen Burns I am a science resource teacher at Kihei Elementary. On any given week before Covid started, I was teaching around 350 students a week. I am one of the older teachers on campus and without any safety protocol guidance I'm very nervous about reopening school. No matter how small the classes we all still have a chance of getting it because we cannot control what they do when they go home. I need more guidance and training on Distance Learning because if what all the experts are saying about the "second wave" is true we need to be prepared now.

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Chan W <chanteldwillis@gmail.com> on behalf of Chan W
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:38 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: testimony

Aloha,

My name is Chantel Willis. I work at Mauka Lani Elementary School. I am writing in on behalf of the following:

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 happy to go back to school and be able to teach again. Teaching is my life calling. Unfortunately, during this pandemic going back to school won't be the same this year. At our school 4th and 5th grade will be on an A/B schedule. Many other schools will also be doing some type of hybrid schedule. Long story short, we teachers want to make sure we are prepared for our students to come to school in the safest environment possible and receive the well-prepared lessons. We also want to make sure parents are prepared to adjust to their child's new schedule. Teachers and staff need more time to carefully prepare and plan. Please push back the student start date.

Thank you for your time,
Chantel Willis

Testimony BOE

From: Pamela Tipton <pamelat9699@gmail.com> on behalf of Pamela Tipton
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:38 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Do not drop SPED differentials

BOE,

I am honestly appalled that you would even consider dropping or reducing the Special Education teacher differentials. These are some of the most overworked and underpaid teachers in the nation, let alone our state. I have been in Special Education for 15 years. I'm now the Kaua'i School District Special Education Beginning Teacher mentor. Not only is the job taxing with the skill level needed to juggle a case load of 12-20 students with various levels of needs, and to mention behavioral needs met, adding on the IEP paperwork pushes many teachers out of the profession. Hiring unqualified teachers to fill positions that require the strongest skill set of teaching is NOT the answer, yet you keep allowing it to happen by not retaining the teachers in place now. To cut their pay by 10k, after only paying it Jan-May is absolutely disgusting. Some of these teachers made financial decisions to remain in Hawaii based on the differential...and you played a catch and release game with their lives. Get them to sign a contract then cut their pay. Shame on you. I'm still waiting on the 10k that was promised during recruitment in Spring 2017 to fill a Sped position for 3 years. Not only did I uphold my end of the deal and I completed that 3 years...I've now been selected to mentor Sped teachers. Hawaii DOE has a bad enough reputation as it stands with sub-par wages compared to the rest of the nation, its almost criminal to take these differentials away. Reconsider before you lose even more teachers. Paying relocation bonuses to hire and move brand new teachers to the island does not solve the problem but infuriated the seasoned and experienced teachers already in place. These differentials were meant to keep staff in place. That goal has not changed. Your choice of spending in other avenues needs to change.

Pamela Tipton

Kaua'i School District Special Education Beginning Teacher Mentor

Testimony BOE

From: Olivia Tolentino <oliviaastranero@gmail.com> on behalf of Olivia Tolentino
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:38 AM
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 relate to COVID-19 response for bargaining Unit 5 employees.

My name is Olivia and I am an elementary school teacher. I am also a parent of two children who attend the same school that I work at. I am asking that we delay the return of students on campus until the teachers and staff are actually prepared for reopening safely, or until the number of COVID-19 cases decrease. Both of my children have some type of health issues. My younger child gets seizures when she has a fever. My older child was hospitalized last year with Pneumonia and is now on an inhaler daily. I am also pregnant and expecting to give birth in October. I do not want to put any of my children at risk, but I have no choice because I am a teacher who is expected to be on campus every day. My children were given the option to do full distance learning, but I wasn't given the opportunity to teach virtually.

I see what my school is doing to make our campus safe. They are doing the best they can. Summer Learning Hub went well. I can say that because I taught during summer. I felt it was safe enough because the COVID-19 cases for the state were low, there was a very limited number of students on campus, and all health, safety and classroom procedures were clear. We had time to meet, plan, and run through all expectations and routines before students stepped foot on campus. Reopening the schools on August 4th is not the same. The number of cases have surged, we are welcoming hundreds of people on campus at a time, and teachers cannot have only 4 days to plan to teach during a pandemic. Schools need time to meet, plan, and run through all expectations and procedures **before** students step foot on campus.

The discussions seem heavily focused on what to do **when** we have someone who is COVID-19 positive on campus. If we know that we will end up with positive cases on campus, why are we risking it? We have many people on campus who are not children and are being put at risk. At the same time, many children live in multigenerational homes who can bring the virus home to their grandparents without realizing it. Delaying the return of students will give teachers time to really be prepared for students and will give time to see the COVID-19 cases come back down.

Please delay the return of students on campus. We should be trying to stop the spread, not welcoming it with open arms. Teachers set the tone in the classroom. If you want the kids to feel safe, the teachers need to feel safe too.

Mahalo for your time,
Olivia Tolentino
Makalapa Elementary School

Testimony BOE

From: Amy Sun <amysunis@gmail.com> on behalf of Amy Sun
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:38 AM
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 Geographic Locations, and Hawaiian Language Immersion Programs for the 2020-2021 School Year. My name is Amy Sun, and I am a general education middle school math teacher at Hawaii Technology Academy in Waipahu.

I do not stand to gain anything financially as I am a general education teacher. However, the discontinuance of extra compensation for my colleagues will have a devastating effect on both my support in the classroom and the quality of education we can provide my future students. I depend on and work very closely with special education teachers at my school. Their expertise and special training extends beyond the special education classroom. In my inclusion classroom, I frequently look to my special education colleagues for advice. In my classroom, everyone benefits from special education techniques and support. These teachers are not teacher aides, and they do not just focus on their students. They are valuable and integral to my classroom culture and success.

If we all agree that teachers are essential enough to usher us back into the classroom, why are we discussing a back step in promised raises? I understand that COVID-19 has caused a strain on our current budget and we must prioritize students' safety. But how much longer must our teachers wait to be compensated for our growing list of responsibilities? In addition to being curriculum specialists, behavior experts, vision and nutrition evaluators, emotional supports, protectors against bullying (both on- and off-line), disaster response team members, and school shooting body shields, this year teachers have added another responsibility to our list: health care monitor. This is a lot to ask from special education teachers and teachers at hard-to-staff schools.

If we discontinue the extra compensation, we are truly sending the message to these teachers that they are not valued. Teachers who choose to teach special education and choose to teach at hard-to-staff schools have a choice. They don't do it for the money. They do it for their students. But now with COVID health scares, a precarious return to school, and loss of extra income for financial security, they may choose differently. And our students will surely suffer from this loss of talent in the classroom.

--

Amy Sun

"It is NOT enough to be good. You must contribute good to the world. The world must be a better place for your presence. And the good that is in you must spread to others. You can and MUST rise above mediocrity, above indifference. You CAN become involved and speak with a strong voice for that which is right."

Testimony BOE

From: Wendi Magaoay <wmagaoay@gmail.com> on behalf of Wendi Magaoay
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:39 AM
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.

My name is Wendi Sato. I am testifying as a teacher at Waimea High School. I am concerned about the safety of our students, teachers and staff if we reopen schools on August 4. It's very concerning that HDOE has still not fulfilled their side of the MOU agreement. (Why not?) It's concerning that we still have not received clear written guidance from the State Department of Health and HDOE on the reopening of schools. (Why not?) We have been waiting for this guidance all summer. Most teachers do not get paid during the summer, yet have been voluntarily working tirelessly to prepare for the reopening of our school. However, this lack of guidance has hindered and frustrated efforts. It is concerning that we have so many unanswered questions regarding standard practices and protocols to the reopening of our school during a pandemic. It is extremely concerning that we have not been provided the training that the Superintendent claims to have provided to all teachers. It is also concerning that we are still unclear about the distance learning curriculum that we need to provide for our students. Please understand that I would like for schools to reopen because I do believe it is in the best interest of our students to return to school. However, it would be unwise, unsafe and irresponsible to hastily reopen schools if we are unprepared to do so. It is our responsibility to provide ALL students a quality education AND a safe learning environment. For these and many other reasons, I feel it would be best to delay the opening of our schools until we can fulfill this responsibility.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Wendi Sato

Testimony BOE

From: Sita Hale <hales22@khswwaverider.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Sita Hale
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:39 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony of School Closure

Dear Hawaii Board of Education,

My name is Sita Hale and I am going to be a junior at Kealakehe High School. I want to express my concerns over the opening of schools. I know that Superintendent Kishimoto has said that teachers have been trained and prepared for the upcoming school year. I know for a fact that is not entirely true. My mom is a teacher and she has had no training. You say that classes will be cohorts, but I know that students will be interacting with other “cohorts” whether it be in the bathroom, at lunch time, on the bus. And to make it worse you are not requiring masks which are scientifically proven to help prevent the spread of coronavirus. By opening schools, you are inevitably going to cause illness and death. I have elderly grandparents with compromised immune systems. And I know many other kids do too. Sure, distance learning does not allow the human interaction some kids may need, but I’d rather do my learning on a computer than risk the lives of my grandparents and even my parents. COVID-19 may not be as fatal to children, but if our cases rise it’s on your shoulders. If our parents and grandparents lose their lives, it’s on your shoulders. So I beg you to please, please, please reconsider the opening of schools.

Sincerely,
Sita Hale

Testimony BOE

From: Mae Oshiro <m.oshiro@seariders.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Mae Oshiro
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:40 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: testimony

To: The Board of Education,

My name is Mae Oshiro. I am an English teacher at Waianae High School and I am 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.](#)

First of all, teaching at a hard to fill school is difficult. I live in Pearl City but choose to teach in Waianae to be a part of making a difference. I could easily teach at a school near where I live but I wouldn't be happy. I enjoy and thrive on challenges. Teaching in Waianae is a challenge. The students have warm hearts but have so many issues that they come with that are sometimes beyond our control. From poverty to domestic violence to very dysfunctional families (living with grandparents, parents in prisons or dead from a violent death, etc.) Yet, I want the best for them just as other teachers want the best for their students. So I try my best to be there for my students and build positive relationships that will help them grow and develop so they'll have as many options for their futures.

I've gone to basketball games and volleyball games because a student asked me to since their parents were not going to be there to see them play. I've attended many senior nights for football, basketball, volleyball, soccer, softball, baseball, etc. I am an active member of our school's PTSA, an active member and teacher representative on our school's SCC, volunteered in many community service events with my NHS club, poetry club, AVID students and AP classes (too much to mention), etc.

I've taught at McKinley High School, Ilima Intermediate and Kealahou Intermediate before coming to Waianae High School. This school is by far my most difficult. I've also used the most out of pocket monies to help my students succeed. That's why the differential pay is important to bring more veteran teachers to our area. To give new teachers a reason to continue to stay and grow to become an excellent teacher. It's difficult having at least 20 new teachers every year. We had a high of 40 new teachers, since the differential, it has been dropping every year. This year, for the first time, we have less than 20 (according to the Principal before summer). I'm sure part of it has to do with the differential pay. Our students deserve to be taught by qualified teachers and not long term substitutes.

Secondly, our HSTA wants to delay our start date. Many teachers are apprehensive and worried because we are not receiving information to rest our anxieties. Are our schools all going to be ready? Is a couple of days (other 2 days for administration) to set up our classrooms enough time, given the new mandates and procedures for the COVID 19? Do all the schools really have all the additional supplies needed for our students daily? After spring break, when supplies P.O. were being sent to our accounts clerks, we couldn't order Clorox wipes and other cleaning/sanitizing supplies because they were out of stock everywhere.

Yes, there are procedures and protocols written for the Department of Education and today our school sent out a booklet to our parents and teachers. But now to prepare to implement those procedures and protocols need additional time. I would even like our school to administer a test run of a day with some faculty members pretending to be students (without COVID19 vs. a day with a student suspected of COVID 19). Even a couple of days extra will help the schools to be more prepared and ready to welcome our students with open arms.

Thank you for your time!

Mae Oshiro
Waianae High School Teacher

Testimony BOE

From: matofa1 <matofa1@yahoo.com> on behalf of matofa1
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:40 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Open school

I recommend postponing the student's school start date due to the incomplete appropriate teacher's training for distance learning which includes a not clear program to follow

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

Testimony BOE

From: manifestaloha@yahoo.com
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:40 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Delay opening schools

Aloha

This is a plea to delay opening schools this year because there are so many unresolved issues regarding safety and preparation due to the COVID 19 pandemic. Staff and faculty are at risk and there isn't enough time to put entire courses online in a week. If we don't do it right it could be disastrous putting the whole community at risk.

Mahalo
K. Roseguo

[Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android](#)

Testimony BOE

From: LORELEI ILAGAN <elilagan808@gmail.com> on behalf of LORELEI ILAGAN
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:40 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY

LORIE I.
BOE MEETING

reference agenda item VI-D

I am opposed to the schools reopening face to face classes in August. Our school has it planned out that they are dividing the students alphabetically and having them on campus every other week.

I don't feel confident that all the students will be able to follow the basic rules amidst covid: wash your hands, wear a mask, and social distancing. And then they will come home to their families some of which have health issues or they have elderly family members living with them.

Because there is so much unknown and I know that the funding for the schools is scarce, it is hard to imagine sending the kids back to school feeling confident that they will be able to thrive and succeed in this type of environment.

Our school has stated that the classrooms will not be cleaned after each use and that the students will be on their own as far as keeping things sanitized. And then there are classrooms that don't even have proper ventilation and to have to wear a mask in that environment will not be a good combination.

And the teachers shouldn't have to monitor our children's health or make sure that the areas are constantly checked for sanitization purposes.

Although I was given the option of having 100 percent learning at home, it is modeled for independent learning. That should not be the only option. We know for a fact that a lot of children are not independent learners and so I was not able to opt in for that but then I had to choose the option that would make me anxious in sending my sons back to school.

I am not opposed to starting school in August BUT I am opposed to having face to face classes. I would feel more at ease to start off the quarter slow and see where the cases are at that point and then reassess if it would be feasible to reopen face to face classes in the next quarter.

Testimony BOE

From: Katherine Mcdougall <kmcdouga@hawaii.edu> on behalf of Katherine Mcdougall
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:41 AM
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 all whom it may concern,

As a district resource teacher, I am not only frustrated by the current state of the department, but saddened by the expectation that state leaders have had months to come up with plans, withheld information, and are expecting teachers to be prepared for students in one weeks time. I am not going to share my frustrations with you- yet only provide some thought provoking questions that should help guide our leadership in making decisions about the reopening of schools. If individuals in the department have been working tirelessly to provide us with guidance on reopening, why do teachers then not feel ready? Why did our superintendent offer distance learning services without first informing the principals of their expected obligations to do so? Why do teachers have only 1 week to prepare for students who have been out of school for 6 months? Those at the state level have needed this much time to come up with guidance for us, why do teachers not receive even a fraction of that time to prepare for students?

On the subject of cutting shortage differentials:

As far as special education, we already have a multitude of vacancies in special education, and when covid hit, we lost more. We have had some wonderful teachers make the switch to work with our most challenging and needy kids with the understanding that they would be compensated for the increase in their workload.

For the department to fully cut those shortage differentials, those sped vacancies would double. I have no doubt- then class sizes would increase and the achievement gap would become irreparable. Now I understand that state employees must take a hit, as we know that economic downfall is upon us. What might work for the department is to cut the differentials in half. Special Education Teachers need to be compensated for the overtime work, and hazardous conditions they work in- and that is to be said without a pandemic.

Do you really think that the 3 hours allotted in the MOU will cover the meetings and meeting times needed to discuss a child with special needs in full and make plans? And that time doesn't even cover what it will take for teachers to develop virtual instruction to work on IEP goals and objectives all while following inclusive practices and providing students their education in the appropriate LRE.

Please do not talk away the shortage differentials for our special education teachers in full, and please allow our teachers more time to adequately prepare

Testimony BOE

From: Heidi Veilleux <hveilleux@haaspcs.net> on behalf of Heidi Veilleux
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:41 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony on Action Item G

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 Heidi Veilleux and I am a teacher at the Hawai'i Academy of Arts and Science in Pahoa, Hawai'i.

I understand Hawaii is facing an unprecedented financial crisis due to COVID-19. But while a retraction of differentials may help to balance budgets, it will absolutely devastate our dwindling supply of qualified teachers for our most vulnerable students. If Hawaii's teacher shortage crisis worsens, we will see a collapse in our public education system. We cannot allow this to happen. Our keiki will suffer the most, especially our most vulnerable students who need experienced educators during these difficult times.

Invest in education and our keiki. As a state we should be putting ample and adequate resources into education, which is a public service that has been chronically underfunded for too long.

Respectfully,
Heidi Veilleux

--

Heidi Veilleux
Elementary Teacher
Aloha Academy
Hawai'i Academy of Arts & Science
Pahoa, HI 96778

Testimony BOE

From: Markie B. <leikanoenaalii@gmail.com> on behalf of Markie B.
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:41 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

My name is Markie Belmodis, I am currently a first year teacher at Leihoku Elementary school. I'm writing this to inform you how ending the pay differentials will not only greatly affect myself, but my co-workers, my school, the community I grew up and teach in, our island and our state. From Kindergarten, I knew I wanted to become a teacher. Knowing that I could grow up and teach in the community I grew up in motivated me to pursue my education. Like many, my childhood wasn't easy, my parents divorced at a young age and I was constantly being shuffled between households. School was the only consistent thing in my life and I give credit to the teachers that I had. Without the support, love and dedication from my teachers, I know I wouldn't be where I am today. I was finally able to get my Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education this past semester. Again, I had to go through trials and tribulations to get here. I took my Praxis Math exam, about 10 times just to finally pass, and get into the teaching program at my college. Again, I couldn't have done it without my support from my teachers and my motivation to teach in the community I was born and raised in. Ending pay differentials for hard to staff areas, for Special Education Teachers and for Hawaiian Immersion teachers will have a spiral effect on our whole state. What will happen to a child like myself who depends on their school and their teachers to fill the gaps that they have in their life? Who will push them to continue their dreams and give back to the community that helped shape them? Who will tell students that there isn't enough teacher support and that's why teachers are moving away? I can whole heartily say that we deserve this pay differential. While I haven't officially started my first year teaching. I can say that I KNOW these teachers that the pay differential affect go ABOVE and BEYOND for their students, parents, school and community. Taking away funds from these teachers will affect EVERYONE. Before you make a decision, stop – think back to your childhood, think back to what your teachers and schools did for you.... Do you believe ending pay differentials is the answer?

Mahalo,

Markie Belmodis

(808)341-4751

leikanoenaalii@gmail.com

Testimony BOE

From: David Miyashiro <david.miyashiro@hawaiikids.org> on behalf of David Miyashiro
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:41 AM
To: Testimony BOE
Subject: Testimony - 7/23 GBM
Attachments: HawaiiKidsCAN testimony - 7.23.20 GBM.pdf

Aloha,

Please see our attached testimony. If possible, please confirm receipt.

Mahalo,

--

David Miyashiro
Founding Executive Director

C 808-220-2183
P.O. Box 450
Kailua, HI 96734

Aloha United Way designation number: 81140
EIN Number: 27-3069592

www.hawaiikids.org | [Twitter](#) [Facebook](#) [Instagram](#)



david.miyashiro@hawaiikidsan.org
hawaiikidsan.org

David Miyashiro
Executive Director

July 23, 2020

Hawaii Board of Education
General Business Meeting
Catherine Payne, Chairperson
Kenneth Uemura, Vice Chairperson

Aloha Chairperson Payne, Vice Chairperson Uemura, and Members,

HawaiiKidsCAN opposes the memo provided in Action Item C) Board Action on Superintendent's evaluation for the 2020-2021 School Year: Superintendent's Priorities and strategic plan indicator targets.

HawaiiKidsCAN was in strong support of the recommendation by Chairperson Payne on June 18 to use the 14 indicators in the 2017-2020 Strategic Plan, as the 2030 Promise Plan is not officially approved. These 14 indicators include foundational elements of school system health, including closing the achievement gap, core academic achievement, and chronic absenteeism, and our system need to reckon with why most of the indicators have not improved significantly in the last four years. HawaiiKidsCAN has long requested a granular dissection of the lack of movement, and we were disappointed that the discussions at the 2019 BOE Data Retreat did not get to a high level of depth and detail.

Today's memo proposes to move away from directly addressing the 2017-2020 Strategic Plan indicators. While the new indicators do seem to have merit, it is vital that the DOE and BOE provide clear rationale for moving away from any of the prior indicators before they have been met. Just as we encourage our students to set goals and follow through to achieve them, our school system must also hold to the promises we've made to our families by achieving these core goals. These goals are just as relevant during this time of great uncertainty and disruption.

HawaiiKidsCAN supports the memo included and would like to provide comments on Action Item D) Board Action on metrics to monitor and evaluate the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools for the 2020-2021 School Year, including student access to devices and connectivity; personal protective equipment and sanitation supply needs; student attendance; and student academic status and progress.

HawaiiKidsCAN recognizes the extreme challenges of this moment, and we applaud our schools, DOE leadership, and health officials for grappling with the infinite number of unknowns and difficult choices. We were pleased by the vital signs that were proposed, as well as the monthly reporting cadence. In this time of confusion, it is essential that families, educators, and

community members have a clear and current picture of how our schools are adapting and performing.

We would recommend that all vital signs provide disaggregated data on high-need subgroups, which is essential to ensure equity. We would also request that more information is provided on how the DOE will ensure consistency in attendance reporting across each school model. This should be the most rigorous definition available, going beyond just “showing up” or “logging on.”

We also urge the BOE and DOE to listen to the concerns of families and educators about the quickly nearing start of the school year. HawaiiKidsCAN has consistently called for an all-virtual start to the school year, with the option to phase in more in-person learning opportunities over time. This seems to be similar to the approach of large school districts including Los Angeles Unified School District, San Diego Unified School District, and Montgomery County Public Schools. Let’s be creative with the use of libraries, municipal buildings, coworking spaces, and supervised campus uses to enable pods of students to learn virtually in a safe space with internet connectivity, while providing relief to working parents.

HawaiiKidsCAN opposes 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

HawaiiKidsCAN has long been in strong support of the strategic use of teacher pay differentials to ensure funding is equitably deployed to address gaps. This strategic approach is more important than ever in a time of limited funding, as we need to maximize every dollar. Students receiving special education services will need support from highly trained professionals in this time of disrupted learning and virtual instruction, and rural schools are already anecdotally sharing concerns about significant teacher vacancies this upcoming school year.

We would urge the DOE to continue this great program and continue building the case for long term support. This is an opportunity to proactively meet with legislators to work out compromises in funding and find sustainable solutions to ensure the differentials are kept permanently.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

David Miyashiro
Executive Director
HawaiiKidsCAN

PS – we wanted to provide highlights from our previous testimony on school reopening, in case it was missed in the flood of submissions.

Overall, the HIDOE's *Return to Learn: School Reopening Plan* is a positive step forward with the start of school less than a month away. To further the discussion in advance of that reopening, we offer the following comments, questions, and suggestions:

- **Limiting in-person exposure in school models:** While the ability of school leaders to select school models provides maximum flexibility, we were concerned that full face-to-face models are being offered as an option at each grade level. Given the strong health concerns of students, teachers, and parents, it is disconcerting that schools may select a fully in-person model. The provided models in the plan also lack sufficient details on how to limit in-person exposure to COVID-19. For example, for all of the models, would there be full days each week where facilities could be closed for deep cleaning and preparation while learning shifts online?
- **Prepare for new shutdown:** Given that a new wave of COVID-19 cases is highly likely in the fall semester due to the resurgence of tourism, it could be clearer in the reopening plan how schools may quickly toggle between school models. Also, what flexibility is available to families with an expedited or simplified geographic exception process so that families are able to enroll in schools that best fit their health and safety needs as the health situation evolves?
- **Class cohorts:** The use of class cohorts/bubbles appears to be a fundamental element of the reopening plan, even serving as the basis for teachers and students to remove masks while in classrooms. Based on what has been presented in the plan, we found that **greater details would be helpful in defining the maximum and minimum sizes of such cohorts, and potential ways members of the cohort might be exposed to infections from outside the cohort** (such as recess, electives, and afterschool programs). Not requiring masks to be worn in the classroom sounds like a disaster in the making, particularly given that asymptomatic members of the cohort may cause infections for teachers and family members of the students in that cohort. We urge the BOE and DOE to strongly consider and mitigate potential health risks inherent in this model.
- **Attendance:** We were relieved to see daily attendance has an expectation for all schools, but it would be helpful to articulate and define how attendance will work across different school designs. To ensure equity, these definitions should be uniform and consistent. For instance, students could simply log on but not meaningfully participate or engage in a virtual setting, yet it is not clear if this would count as a student being marked "present." **School, complex area, and system-wide attendance data should be reported to the public and BOE on a monthly basis, at the least.**
- **Assessment:** We believe the use of the first two weeks of school to include assessing learning needs is critical and a valuable use of time. In particular, we encourage schools to target depth over breadth and prioritize academic content/standards in math and language arts for each grade and the precursor knowledge and skills most essential for

work in that grade. Given the disrupted end of the 2019-2020 school year and likely ongoing disruption, teachers will need to prioritize the differentiation of instruction and supports, which makes early and frequent formative assessment incredibly important.

To the fullest extent possible, school, complex area, and system-wide academic data should be reported to the public and BOE at the beginning of the school year as a baseline, and progress throughout the year should be tracked and also reported out. We also believe it is premature to consider a USDOE waiver for 2021 end of year assessments.

It is prudent to focus on ensuring a robust learning environment and consider the long-term negative impact on our schools from two consecutive years without a full picture of student learning. Resources such as FutureEd's *Blueprint for Testing: How Schools Should Assess Students During the Covid Crisis* offer thoughtful recommendations on an ideal timeline and framing of assessments for this upcoming school year (https://www.future-ed.org/blueprint-for-testing-how-schools-should-assess-students-during-the-covid-crisis/?mc_cid=bdd5c441e6&mc_eid=aa8ab27f5a).

- **Roadmap to close digital divide:** After reviewing the Digital Transformation for Learning Plan, it seems that more details are still needed to offer a clear and measurable roadmap to ensuring all students have access to digital learning. This includes a school-by-school accounting for the specific technology supports still needed by students and families, including devices, internet access, and supports. This roadmap should identify how the DOE can work directly with community partners to close gaps in access.
- **Clarity and focus:** Given the immense and unique challenge facing our schools this upcoming school year, it was not clear in the reopening plan the level of flexibility schools would have with their academic offerings. For example, Jal Mehta, a professor at Harvard's Graduate School of Education, said the crisis offers an opportunity to fundamentally rethink how we educate students going forward. Since teachers' in-person time with students will be limited, perhaps schools should concentrate on a few subjects in greater depth, while pruning away breadth in others, sort of like a college major.

Testimony BOE

From: Teressa Shimizu <teressa.shimizu@gmail.com> on behalf of Teressa Shimizu
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:42 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for Action Item G

Chairperson Payne and Board of Education Members,

It is critically important to continue the additional compensation for classroom teachers in Special Education, hard-to-staff geographic locations, and the Hawaiian language immersion programs for the 2020-2021 school year and beyond. Data clearly indicate the positive outcome(s) of the differential(s) on teacher recruitment and retention as well as the students these teachers serve.

Also, it is extremely important that a position of insistence be taken on the Department of Education's plan(s) to re-open schools, regarding adherence to the CDC guidelines to prevent the spread of infectious disease. Please demand that CDC guidelines for safe distancing, 6 feet between individuals, and mandatory mask wearing be strictly followed.

Thank you,
Teressa Shimizu, Teacher, Farrington High School.

Testimony BOE

From: Mona Soo <monapenny@hawaii.rr.com> on behalf of Mona Soo
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:42 AM
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.](#)

I am a teacher at Kauluwela Elementary School and I am also a parent to a child at Kalani High School. It is important that we delay the reopening of schools in order to ensure the safety and health of our students, families, teachers, school staff and everyone's families. One of the biggest concerns is that there is no vaccine or medication that will stop Covid 19 at this time. If schools are reopened, students, teachers, school staff and their families will get sick, might require hospitalization and may even die.

There needs to be clear protocols among all schools before schools can be reopened again. Distance learning and work packets would be a good way to start until specific and detailed guidelines are created and presented for all to agree upon. Teachers also need more planning time & training to do a quality learning program (face to face and/or distance learning). I am not comfortable returning to my classroom knowing that my students, colleagues and our families will be at risk. Some learning is better than no learning.

Thank you,

Mona Soo

Kauluwela School teacher & a parent of a Kalani High School Falcon

Testimony BOE

From: Irene Kendig <ikendig4@gmail.com> on behalf of Irene Kendig
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:42 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

22 July 2020

Dr. Christina M. Kishimoto
Superintendent
Department of Education
State of Hawaii

Dear Dr. Kishimoto:

My name is Irene Kendig-Sullivan and I am a teacher who teaches science at Roosevelt High School. My wife and I are expecting our first child in October. Although we are over the moon excited about our new family member, we are also terrified of the risk of my exposure and thus my family's exposure to the virus. My being exposed to 180 students every week will make our situation one where I must quarantine from my own family so I do not expose them. When students return to school I will have to fully separate myself from my wife, which is unbelievably sad and stressful. Then, once she gives birth I will have to fully separate myself from both her and our son, which is beyond comprehension. I also run the risk of not being able to attend my own child's birth because of returning back to school. Why are we forcing educators into this situation? If there is already a teacher shortage in Hawaii, yet you have younger/driven/innovative STEM teachers who love what they do, I ask again why are you forcing them into these situations? Why must we choose between our health and our jobs? I know that I am not the only teacher in this situation and I would like to make this point known on behalf of all teachers that have babies on the way as well as any teachers who are immunocompromised or live with family members who are. Also, if a student in one of my classes gets infected and we all have to quarantine, who covers my sick leave? If a family member of a student of mine gets infected, who covers my quarantine sick leave? Since High School students will be changing their "pods" every class, if one student in one of my classes gets exposed or infected will ALL students in all of their classes AND their teachers need to quarantine? Essentially, what is the plan for exposure and quarantine? I haven't seen guidance on this coming from you or the Hawaii DOE whatsoever. Because the DOE has decided schools need to re-open and teachers must be in-person, the DOE needs to provide paid sick leave for teachers who must quarantine after EACH time they are exposed.

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”^[1]. Especially in closed or poorly ventilated spaces such as many of our classrooms, it is absolutely essential to have a mandatory mask requirement for all teachers and students.
2. The current state plan relies on a fictional construct known as "Ohana Bubbles", which especially in the absence of a universal mask mandate, puts a family's health at the mercy of other families. However, no amount of distancing, disinfecting, or use of PPE will be sufficient to keep groups of people in confined, poorly ventilated spaces safe, because behavior of all those individuals outside the classroom cannot be assumed to have been safe.
3. The current DOE plan is to leave masking optional (at teachers' discretion) is unacceptable. Fundamental matters of scientific fact such as masks should not be left to teacher (or even school administrator) discretion. That would allow too many loopholes that will result in poor or no compliance that puts their child's lives at risk. It also puts an undue burden on teachers and/or school administrators to decide and enforce mask rules.
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 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 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,

Irene Kendig-Sullivan
1030 Aoloa Pl
Kailua, HI 96734

Testimony BOE

From: Emily West Geary <emily.west_geary@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Emily West Geary
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:42 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To whom it may concern,

My name is Emily and I am a Fully Self-Contained Special Education teacher on Kauai. Prior to the COVID-19 crisis, my job was challenging. I had additional work requirements, significantly more high need students, and more responsibilities compared to my colleagues as a special educator. One of the biggest deciding factors for me to continue teaching in Hawaii was the significant special education differential that was being added for the hard work I was doing. With the special education differential, I am now being paid comparably to other general education teachers or special education teachers in different states. During the COVID-19 crisis, the state, the school, fellow teachers, parents relied on special education teachers MORE than ever before. Once again, our job requirements, work expectations, and amount of data collection INCREASED. There is never a time to take money from some of the hardest working groups of people, but surely now is not the time to demand more work from special education teachers and then take away their well-deserved money. I can say that if my pay is decreased, I will find a different job, in a different district that respects my health and safety, and pays me appropriately for the work that is asked of me.

I understand how challenging these times are, but it has only gotten harder for teachers, ESPECIALLY special education teachers. The information is changing constantly and our need to communicate with multiple different team members to support our students is exhausting. We have risen to the task, as we always do, but we are asking that we are being compensated for the work that is being done. Adding additional work requirements and decreasing pay is not something that will go over well in an already challenging and under filled position.

I have a classroom where it will be nearly impossible to socially distance. I have at-risk, immunocompromised students with severe needs who will be exposed to multiple people 5 days a week at school. Teaching ESY this summer, with a third of the students I will have in my classroom come August, we ran out of soap twice, hand sanitizer three times, and wipes three times as well. For a fraction of the students, we were unable to keep up with the cleaning supplies. How is the state able to promise healthy and safe working/learning conditions when we do not physically have the materials to do so?

I miss my students. I miss my job. I miss my routine. But I want all of my students to be safe and survive. I want to be alive to be their teacher. At this point in time, I have very little confidence for the state and the school to keep us all safe and healthy.

Please reconsider the differentials for hard to staff areas. We deserved the differentials prior to the COVID-19 crisis, but now we have been asked to do so much more and we cannot survive without the differential pay. I understand the economy is suffering, we are all feeling it, but this is only another reason to not take away pay; we will not be able to afford to stay here, or we may not be alive/healthy enough to continue teaching. Rethink how much you are willing to risk so you don't lose qualified, able-bodied, healthy teachers.

Thank you,
Emily West Geary
Kauai High School
Special Education Teacher

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Testimony BOE

From: Antonia Ramirez <antonia.ramirez.educator@gmail.com> on behalf of Antonia Ramirez
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:42 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony
Attachments: Testimony about reopening schools.docx

Antonia Ramirez
Elementary school teacher

My name is Antonia Ramirez. I just finished my first year as an elementary teacher here in Hawaii. I teach at Kaleiopuu Elementary. As a veteran (new teacher) in your eyes, coming from the state of Texas with 17 years of experience, I have faced challenges. I left my home and my family to come to Hawaii because I know I can make a difference. The friends I have made and the students I was able to educate have confirmed what I already knew; this is where I want to be.

I want to be here but I want to be safe. Many of our classrooms do not have enough space to separate the children 6 ft. apart. We do not have partitions for the students' desks. There is not a secure way to screen the children every morning after they have been in the community. A community that already has positive cases of COVID-19. Just because we have the lowest rate of infections doesn't mean we are not in danger. That is not a reality. Every infected person interacts with at least 5 people on a daily basis. Those 5 people go back to their communities and families and unknowingly share the infection with others. I know that if we were provided enough test kits, our numbers would be way more significant. Don't test, don't know.

Do not compare us to any other state in the mainland. Our circumstances are not the same. We need time to prepare to keep the children and us to be safe.

What's going to happen when the state opens? I came home to get ready for school, but school is not ready for me. Bless their hearts! They are doing everything they can to prepare for us but there are no clearly established protocols across the state that will ensure that we will be safe. I have no family members here. I have underlying conditions and although I want to serve my students face to face, I need the conditions to be safe for me. If something were to happen to me, my family is over a thousand miles away. I am trying to continue educating these young children but at whose expense?

Excellent teachers have already opted to retire before their time just because they don't feel we are being provided the circumstances that will allow them to make it alive.

Our state is not ready to reopen the schools. I am asking you, please postpone the reopening of the schools until we know what we're doing. You have no idea how stressful it is to know that we are a week away from returning to school and there are hundreds of unanswered questions. I hope you help us make the best decision as we are gambling with lives!

Sincerely,
Antonia Ramirez
Elementary Teacher

Testimony BOE

From: Shannon Kaaa <shannon.kaaa.hsta@gmail.com> on behalf of Shannon Kaaa
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:42 AM
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, I am Shannon Kaaa.

I am a preschool Special Education teacher at Fern Elementary, in Kalihi, on the the Island of Oahu.

Over the summer, the principal at my school, like all the other principals, has been working hard to design a plan to reopen the school.

He has shared those plans, and has provided updates as things changed, with our teachers over email and at voluntary meetings.

The principals have done their best to comply with DOE directives as they come down.

BUT, our schools are not prepared to open.

Our TEACHERS are not prepared.

Teachers are scheduled to return to work 4 days prior to the students' return – the same amount of preparation time as in the past.

But, that is not enough time to address the changes needed.

The DOE has a plethora of information on their website, but teachers and staff need time to 'unpack' that information so we not only know WHAT is expected, but also know HOW to do it.

As a teacher of preschool children with special needs, I, like many other special education teachers, am especially concerned about the lack of guidance we have received to safely care for our students with special needs.

We need time for guidance,
we need time to develop protocols and procedures
and we need time to collaborate and share plans with the other people who work with our students with special needs.

We want to open our schools and be with students

But we need to do it safely - for our students, our teacher and school staff, and for the community.

On a personal note, I have a medical condition that has weakened my immune system – so, although the Department of Health is OK with an “expected increase” of COVID-19 cases – I am not.

We need more time to open our schools safely.

Mahalo for your consideration,
Shannon Kaaa

Testimony BOE

From: Jewlz LK <blakjewl58@hotmail.com> on behalf of Jewlz LK
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:43 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Dear Board,

Maybe it would an option for the DOE to settle on a specific type of Distance Learning. Let only teachers come back for technical training on distance learning for a period of time and then bring our students back after we are prepared in every way. If we invest in our safety and implement a better plan for teaching that will be successful, not wasting our time or our children's time but making good use of it we could have a better outcome with less fear. This way we are not endangering our students, teachers are back in school as the Government seems to want, and we minimize the chances that Covid-19 would take over our schools. Less stress on everyone all the way around. Just my thoughts...

Julia Lui-Kwan



Virus-free. www.avg.com

Testimony BOE

From: Rowena <snowwahinekona@yahoo.com> on behalf of Rowena
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:43 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: School reopening

To Whom it may concern,

I wrote in earlier expressing my desire to return to school. I am an EA at Kealakehe Elementary School and work in a preschool special education classroom.

I am aware children have a lower risk of contacting covid. Recently there has been an increase in areas where more children have been diagnosed with covid. This is disheartening. I want to be assured we will have all the protective gear necessary to be safe and healthy for staff and students. Some of my concerns are how often bathrooms will be cleaned. We have a great custodial staff, but perhaps more people may be needed to maintain a safe environment. They can only do so much. What about wiping down hand rails? How often will picnic tables where many staff have eaten in the past be routinely cleaned?

How will recess be handled? What about the playground equipment? I believe staff and students will be required to wear masks outside. We all are aware it gets hot in Hawaii. How do we handle students removing their masks because of the heat?

What about students bullying others about their masks and taking them off fellow students (or staff) in moments of anger or frustration? How is to be managed when another's mask is ruined? Those students need to have appropriate consequences.

What about students that have no comprehension of social distancing and the need to wear a mask? How do we keep students away from others if they refuse to comply?

Working in a preschool setting some students need bathroom assistance. I want to be assured we will have appropriate materials available to keep us safe. Six foot distancing in this case is out of the question.

Regarding fire drills and off campus evacuations, distancing will need to be considered as well.

I realize there is a definite need to return to the school setting in a timely and safe manner. I love my job and I thoroughly enjoy working with preschoolers. I cannot imagine how frustrating this all is with so much changing on a daily basis. I am aware administrators have put in countless hours to navigate the situation at hand. I hope we can all come into agreement and provide a quality education for our students in a safe environment.

Rowena Pike

Testimony BOE

From: Kelly Shimabukuro <moandkelly@yahoo.com> on behalf of Kelly Shimabukuro
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:43 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Continued funding of differentials

Aloha respected Board of Education Members,

I am writing to ask that the differential for Special Education teachers be discontinued.

There are many long term employees whose pay scale has been detrimentally effected by the long term compression of their pay. If there is funding available, I feel the money should go to ease the compression rates of our long term employees. Those valued and experience members of our teaching staff who have been effected by this for the last ten plus years.

Thank you for your consideration,
Kelly Shimabukuro

Testimony BOE

From: Colleen Pau <cpau@hilo-union.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Colleen Pau
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:43 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: testimony

Aloha. I teach on the Big Island. I am very concerned about my return to work. There needs to be a better health screening system in place. For years, parents have been sending their children to school when they are sick so they don't miss a day of work. It is very frustrating as an educator. Now, with the Covid, it becomes life and death for all of us. I have high blood pressure and have had many trips to ER with the flu in the past years. I am very concerned for my health and safety.

I believe it is a wise choice to push back the open date for students to return to school. Additionally, distance learning needs to be clarified. What are the expectations? We need to have training in place and know exactly what we will be doing prior to the opening of school. I have worked all summer on preparing plans, free of charge to the DOE, but realistically, schools and grade level teams need time to communicate and make decisions together.

Perhaps, we should be doing Distance Learning for the entire year and focus clearly on that. It should not be a death sentence to return to work. Please think long and hard as you make decisions. Put yourselves in our position as you make your choices. If Covid runs through my school, I will not be able to continue teaching. Our lives are important. Please consider that as you come to the table. Thank you.
Colleen Pau

Testimony BOE

From: Leila Cambonga <leila.cambonga@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Leila Cambonga
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:44 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony-Delay the return of students
Attachments: BOE Testimony.doc

Aloha Board of Education members:

Please find my testimony attached. 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.

July 22, 2020

Aloha Members of the Board of Education:

Please find my testimony regarding Action Item H. Board Action on Memorandum of Understanding between State of Hawaii Board of Education and Hawaii State Teachers Association (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

I am a Special Education teacher and I have 3 keiki. Two of my sons will be attending elementary school and my daughter will be starting her senior year. As a teacher and a parent, I am asking you to delay the return of students to campuses. Teachers along with their admin need to prepare for distance and hybrid learning.

My school has been reaching out to us with summer updates to keep the General Education teachers informed of next steps and I am appreciative of this. My Admin reached out to Special Education teachers today (7/22/2020) to inform us that on Thursday (7/24/2020) they will be receiving information from the District office on how to implement our SpED programs. It is only after this information is provided that our plans will finalize. They are holding a voluntary informational WebEx meeting for the SpED teachers on Monday, July 27, to provide detailed information. Our first day to report back is on July 31st and our students report the following Friday.

We are potentially looking at having our SpED students for 4 days of face to face instruction. We need training and time to prepare.

With this being said, I feel that we are being rushed to get back to school without enough preparation for both students and teachers. I am very concerned as the setting I am to report to is potentially dangerous as my students can be confrontational and do things like spit, yell, throw things, argue, initiate fights, etc... on a daily basis. This is my job and I do my best for my students. I am seeking direction in how to address these situations as they will occur. Will I be able to call security and have the student/students escorted out of class only to have the student return or will the student be sent home? There are many, many more questions but this is just one of the many that teachers have.

I support the delay of students returning to campus so that teachers can see a written comprehensive health care plan in case of Covid-19. To date, there is none. We are being told to "do our duty" and report to work because it is our responsibility to parents and the community to do so. Who will take responsibility if teachers get sick? The response I have heard is we have hired 15 additional nurses. Great! I have nothing but respect for these nurses who will be in the school office/health room. The nurses will not be in the classroom where students are not required but encouraged to wear masks. There are SpED students who have never missed a day of school even if they are running a fever, coughing, congested, fatigued and dehydrated due to being sick. I cannot force a student to go to the health room and if prompted to go to the office, students have flat out refused. When asked why they do not want to go, a few of the replies are: "I just need to take more medicine" "My parents aren't home" "I just need to sleep" "I can't go home because I will miss basketball/football practice." What plan is in place for students who refuse to go to the health room as teachers were told to do wellness checks but cannot use thermometers to do temperature checks.

I will not send my children to school if they are sick, more so if they are running a fever. Unfortunately, there are some parents that do send their children to school sick. I have seen a child throw up as parent walked them to class. Parent asked child if they were ok, cleaned child up, and walked child to class and left child in school. When parent was approached and told it would be a good idea to take their child home, the response was "No, my child is ok. I gave her cold medicine this morning!" What else can be done in this situation besides sending the child to the health room only to have parent pick them up hours later or not at all and child is left to attend A+?

We are asking for the delay of the return of students to schools for the health and safety of our students and teachers. Allow us to receive the training we need. Allow us to prepare to receive students as safe as possible. We have one chance to get this right, to do this safely and correctly. We can prevent illness and death with a simple decision to delay the return of students to schools so we can properly prepare and train.

Perhaps we should be looking into supporting a distance learning start to the 2020-2021 school year.

Teachers/HSTA are speaking out but no one is listening. Please hear us.

No one should have to get sick or die. One student getting sick is too many. One teacher getting sick is too many. One sickness is too many. One death is too many.

Thank you for your time. Thank you for listening to teacher and parent concerns. I appreciate it.

Mahalo,

Leila Cambonga

Mother of 3

Special Education Teacher

Testimony BOE

From: Lisa Min <lmin@hawaii.rr.com> on behalf of Lisa Min
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:45 AM
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 modification and conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees.

My name is Lisa Min and I am a teacher at Kalei'opu'u Elementary School, with 27 years of experience in the DOE. Please be aware that I want nothing more than to be back in the classroom with my students. However, we are less than a week away from the teachers' official start date and less than two weeks from welcoming students back and we are still lacking information/answers that are necessary to successfully reopen schools. My school administration has been working so hard and I cannot praise them enough, but they often are not able to answer questions that teachers have because they have not been provided sufficient information themselves. The DOE and DOH must provide detailed guidance addressing the issues that HSTA is concerned about. When we reopen, we would like to be able to stay open; not rush it, only to have to close down. Proper preparation is the key to success and we will not be able to do this with only four days before students come back.

We do not have clear guidelines regarding what happens if someone on campus tests positive for COVID-19. There have been vague answers, but not a detailed procedure. This must be in place and all schools need to fully understand what to do. As teachers, we will be on the front lines each and every day. We need to completely know what to do/what to expect in advance of opening to students.

We still do not have an understanding of how a "virtually only" option for parents will work. We don't know who will be responsible for this 100-percent distance learning option, as the teacher will be teaching students face to face in the classroom. Will teachers be responsible for both? With less than two weeks to welcoming students back, we still have no information.

Teachers at my school have been going into our classrooms to try to set up our rooms, but our classrooms are not prepared for health and safety guidelines. We do not yet have plexiglass shields for teacher desks (ideally for student desks, too). All classrooms in all schools should be outfitted with standard protections. It should not be up to teachers to pay out of pocket for such protections. When the public is out and about at various businesses, we see such protections set up. Yet teachers and students in the classroom have no such considerations.

There are still so many issues that have not been adequately addressed. The schools need more time to prepare for welcoming students back into the classroom. Teachers are asking for this delay in the opening date for students with the health and safety of students and school personnel in mind. It is the responsible thing to do for all affected.

Mahalo,
Lisa Min

Sent from my iPad

Testimony BOE

From: Sean Luster <sluster14@gmail.com> on behalf of Sean Luster
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:45 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

We are two brothers who both graduated from the Hawaii public school system, and our mother has been a public school teacher on Oahu for over 20 years. She is a dedicated educator and has always shown us how she truly cares about her students (which we've seen proof of countless times based on student interactions that we've witnessed). We are writing to you in support of her and the hundreds of teachers who are concerned about returning to in-class sessions this year.

- We understand the importance of education, but our concern for teacher safety and the welfare of the students far outweigh the desire to send kids to school.
- Our mother is worried about her safety, and we've heard dozens of friends with children who are worried about sending their kids to school.
- The data is showing that anyone of any age can be at risk from COVID 19 (students), and our mother is close to 60 (therefore, she is more susceptible to suffering complications from the virus based purely on age).
- We currently don't live in Hawaii and haven't been able to see our parents during the pandemic; if either of them got sick, we would have a hard time being able to see them, and we don't want either of them to have to put themselves in a situation where they can get exposed.
- We understand that this is a very difficult situation without a simple solution, but the well-being of people is what matters. There have been more cases around the U.S. in the past few weeks, and it sounds like the numbers will keep growing. If there is any way to delay teachers and students being forced to come back to school until more progress is made toward a vaccine or teaching can switch to being strictly online, we feel like that would be the smartest solution for everyone.

Thank you for your time, and we stand with the teachers and students of Hawaii.

-2 concerned Hawaii Public School Graduates

Testimony BOE

From: Cindy Jenness <cjenness56@gmail.com> on behalf of Cindy Jenness
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:45 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

This is concerning the response to the Covid19 contract with HSTA.

My name is Cynthia Jenness. I worked in the DOE for 35 years.

I feel strongly that our schools are not ready to open their physical doors to students and staff.

I am a retired teacher and substitute teacher. If I was still employed and would be required to physically return to our schools at this point, I would retire!

Do we actually have the necessary protective equipment for all staff (mostly teachers!) to distribute daily?

Do we have the necessary testing equipment to make sure the thousands of staff and students are well once someone tests positive? Will the results be timely?

What happens when your first line of educators are sick? Are there enough substitutes to keep schools open?

There is still so much that is not known!

Things like letting athletics continue ... Do we understand the long term effects of this virus? They are suggesting both lung and brain damage.

In these unprecedented times, rushing to do anything without a real plan will just set things back further.

Thank you for your consideration of my thoughts!

Mālama pono

Cynthia Jenness

Testimony BOE

From: Michal O'Neal <michaloneal@yahoo.com> on behalf of Michal O'Neal
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:44 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Wednesday 22 July 2020

To: Hawaii BOE

From: Michal O'Neal, High School Science Teacher (20 years)

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.

I am writing to bring your attention to the fact that I am willing to go back to classes as is on the 4th of August, if you are willing to bring a Notary Public for my updated Last Will and Testament and provide a compensation package for my family upon my death. The Notary Public should also be able to schedule appointments with the General Public as well, say, in the school library from 7 am to 4 pm during the four planning days that we have before school begins with social distancing and mask protocols.

The classroom that we work in is routinely 90 degrees plus for several months especially at the beginning of the year. The principal ordered fans (middle of last year) that do not circulate the humid air in the classroom and I wish that we could order the fans that I asked the department head for at the beginning of last year. I'm not sure how the humidity and dead air will affect the transmission of Covid-19. I am not sure how a dehumidified closed off room will affect the transmission of Corona Virus. I prefer to stay in the lab room with my students with proper ventilation. **I'm not sure how the principal, DOE, or superintendent can handle Covid-19 if the principal, DOE, and superintendent cannot even handle proper fans that actually help the students maintain a temperature that they can learn in.**

So here is what happens when 26 teenagers come up to their class at the top of the sunny hill (the furthest on campus) after lunch or wiki or just between classes when it is hot out: Three to five students gather around each of the two tower fans that they have for about two to five minutes or so before class starts to cool off and move the two other floor fans around to accommodate their locations if they are extremely hot. Some students go to the fridge and refill the water bottles with ice from the freezer that I maintain (refilling trays through-out the day all day) and pour some cold filter water from the fridge into their water bottles (if they can afford or I provide small paper cups). This is Our Classroom Routine in 90-degree weather. Obviously, we will not be able to do this anymore. **I hope the kids are mentally and physically prepared.** They will have to have purchased a Thermal Bottle for the day. Maybe, this is something that the DOE can provide with neck coolers and PPE?

The DOE could provide Notary Public to prepare for the deaths, a compensation package for the dead's family, fans to circulate the humid air, and thermal water bottles for cold water for our

students, neck coolers, and PPE. *Please, please, remember to have a Counseling Staff set up for the Deaths, to help the students with their grief.*

Potential Solution for Your Consideration:

1. Ready the Counseling Department Grief Counseling.
2. Have a state wide campaign to Educate the community on Covid-19 school reopening and the "Bubbles!". Be sure to use advertisements
3. Teachers given more planning time: Ease into to schedule by alternating cohorts / Teacher "Bubbles!" for half day trainings for five days for Covid-19 preparation (including Notary Public on Campus) and building preparation.
4. Five or more full days alternating cohorts / Teacher "Bubbles!" for online training.
5. Half days for teams / Student "Bubbles!" testing, equipment dissemination, and PPE / Distancing training for two to three weeks.
6. Hold back tourism until October 1st or play it by ear.
7. Provide First Line Worker Pay above and beyond Our contract before Covid-19.
8. Pay for our Internet to work from home.
9. Provide a Death Compensation Package for the Dead's Family.

One question that I will leave you with: Who do You think will die first? I have a theory that I will not share because I may seem condescending. But I will tell you Who Will Not Die First: Betsy D and DJT.

Second question: Who do you think will transmit Corona Virus to the first fatality here in Hawaii? My guess: a teenager vaping and drinking in the field or car or alley before class with a group of friends. What's your Guess?

The thing any scientist *or otherwise* knows is that "Bubbles!" burst when you are washing the blood off your hands.

Thank You for Your Consideration.

Sincerely,

Michal O'Neal, Science Teacher (20 years)

Testimony BOE

From: noriko o'shea <norikoosheaa@gmail.com> on behalf of noriko o'shea
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:46 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Reopening Schools

Aloha,

While I do believe it is important for us students to continue our educations, especially being a senior in high school, the health risks greatly outweigh any possible benefit. Schools and teachers are unfit to reopen, especially considering the lack of safeguards ensured by the state. Online learning is sufficient to the extent that the state is able to provide students with the proper resources.

Schools cannot physically reopen on August 4th without risking the losses of *life*. Unless the state values the lives of students, teachers, and families, school reopenings are premature and poorly planned.

Testimony BOE

From: Heather Tyrrell <hty9@yahoo.com> on behalf of Heather Tyrrell
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:46 AM
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.**

To Whom It May Concern,

I am a special education teacher at Ka'ohao School on the windward side of Oahu. I have been teaching special education for twenty years. I love my job and have invested in learning as much as I can about how to do it well, earning a Master's Degree from Teacher's College at Columbia University. When the pay differential was first introduced, I was contemplating switching to a general education classroom. I was feeling overwhelmed by my caseload, the abundance of meetings and the sheer volume of paperwork and mandates. I came to school an hour early and left on average two and a half hours after school ended. I am an efficient worker and most of that time was spent in front of a computer report writing or making materials. I began thinking about my dual certification (general ed/special ed) and the reality of switching to a general education classroom. I was ready to switch. The pay differential kept me from following through, it kept me in the special education classroom.

Now we are opening schools during a pandemic. Once again, special ed teachers are being asked to do more. We are being asked to put our own health and the health of our families on the line to work face to face with students when others are not. We are told we will be provided with PPE and trainings, but I have not seen any evidence of it. And just at the time when we are being asked to risk our lives, HIDOE wants to take away the pay differential. I am back to contemplating a general ed job or a new career altogether. I have loved and appreciated many things about teaching special ed the past twenty years and it would be sad to leave. Twenty years is a long time to be dedicated to something.

The pay differential was put in place to ensure we retain and attract special education teachers and it was proven effective. Taking it away will no doubt create a greater need at a time of uncertainty and put a greater burden on those who decide to stay in the position.

Sincerely,
Heather Tyrrell
special education teacher
Ka'ohao School

Testimony BOE

From: Farrah Krovoza <fkrovoza@hawaii.rr.com> on behalf of Farrah Krovoza
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:46 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Support for opening schools

Hello,

I am writing this to show my support for opening schools as planned. I feel like this is the “unpopular opinion” at the moment, as my social media and news feeds are flooded with calls to delay the opening of schools. But I want the BOE to know there are teachers out there who support the plan and are ready to get back in the classroom with students. Our school has chosen the A/B schedule, and I believe that with the smaller groups and following the CDC guidelines outlined, including masks, frequent hand washing and sanitizing, and social distancing, we can safely educate our students in the classroom. I can understand maybe delaying for a week to give teachers more time to plan and prepare, but anything more than that is unnecessary. The most frustrating thing for me at this point is the uncertainty of what’s going on. We need a plan and we need to stick to it so we can start moving forward. This constant change is not helping, both for parents and teachers. I am a teacher on Kauai and have 2 elementary school children, so I understand both perspectives.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

Farrah Krovoza

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Kate Werner <ekatewerner@gmail.com> on behalf of Kate Werner
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:46 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Push back yes

I am a teacher and a parent and definitely support pushing back the start date until safe esp for secondary given the research shows them as major vectors. Kate Werner

Testimony BOE

From: liaina claytor <vateatea@hotmail.com> on behalf of liaina claytor
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:47 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: DELAY THE START OF SCHOOL!

To All Concerned,

I am joining the chorus of of educators, parents and community members in asking that you reconsider the start date of August 4th.

We are not prepared to battle the challenges of teaching and parenting in the time of Covid.

Do the right thing. Have courage please to do the right thing.

Teachers are not well equipped. They have not been properly trained.

I am a substitute teacher at Wheeler Elementary and not one word has been uttered about what we are to do and what new protocols are.

Delay the start of school until January.

We will have hopefully stopped community spread and we will be far more equipped to be able to react and respond to all the problems we now face.

Are we honestly ready to dismiss every piece of good advice & best practices scientists and epidemiologists have offered??

Thank you for your time,

Respectfully,

Liaina Claytor
vateatea@hotmail.com
808-343-3423

Testimony BOE

From: Tiffany Okada <tiffany_okada@hotmail.com> on behalf of Tiffany Okada
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:47 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Please listen for the safety of everyone!

I am a teacher and a parent of two children in our Hawaii DOE system. I feel that we are rushing through the opening of school and are not prepared to safely open. I am scared as a teacher, to go back to school and have students return for in person learning at this moment in time. There are so many unanswered questions. It is frustrating as a teacher, who cannot answer all the questions from parents and for myself. We are not given the proper amount of time to prepare. We are actually given the same amount of time to prepare for the opening of school, but are required to do and figure out so much more within the same amount of time.

Our school is still trying to make class lists and find out which students would like to do 100% distance learning. We are still trying to figure out the safest way to do drop off and pick up, safely conduct lunch service, and outdoor recess and indoor recess procedures. I haven't heard anything from the A+ people at our school. We are starting next week and teachers are going into their classrooms during the summer break on their own time to figure out how to do social distancing in the classroom. I just purchased many plastic bins and baskets for my students so they can properly social distance in the classroom and not crowd around the cubby area with my own money! \$400 so far!

What happens if a teacher tests positive for COVID-19?

What if a household member tests positive?

Do we need to quarantine the whole class if one person tests positive?

What happens if a teacher needs to go into quarantine because a household member tests positive?

Where does the leave of absence come from? Our sick leave? Do I have that much sick leave? What if a teacher doesn't have enough sick leave?

What about A+? Is it happening? Is it not happening? What about the afterschool activities that our school offers?

How do teachers manage in class learners and distance learners at the same time?

What about distance learning? Are there guidelines? I haven't gotten very much training on how to do this. How do you assess students? What will our assessments look like?

What will EES look like this year?

How will substitutes be assigned? We are supposed to be in our Ohana bubble, but subs go from school to school and class to class. I know we have a shortage of subs too.

As for my own children, I fear they will bring the sickness home. I am in the process of setting up my trust and will just in case something happens to me and my husband. I knew it was something I need to get done, but now I'm panicking trying to rush through it because I know with the reopening of schools, this can take a turn for the worst for my family. I wish I can have my children do 100% distance learning because I know our schools are not prepared, but we do not have the luxury of choosing that option.

I'm not against reopening of schools. I want to teach. I want my own kids to learn. But I want to make sure that we are doing it safely. If schools had to choose the model to reopen, why not allow them the time to choose when to carry out that model safely. Please, take care of the children, teachers, and school staff.

Testimony BOE

From: Becky Burke <beckyburke2010@gmail.com> on behalf of Becky Burke
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:47 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

G: Board Action regarding temporary discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in Special Education, hard-to-staff geographical locations & Hawaiian programs for 2020-2021 school year -

Dear Board of Education Members:

I urge all Board of Education members to tell the Department of Education that Special Education Teachers, hard staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian immersion programs deserve the differential that the Department of Education now wants to temporarily discontinue.

Please tell the Department of Education that these educators deserve the differential because they need to pay mortgages, rent, child care, food, etc. Many educators are young & not married with or without children - how can they afford to live in Hawai'i? Why must educators always beg for money that they deserve? Why does the DOE treat educators with contempt instead of gratitude? Why does the DOE not thank educators for their public service?

The DOE calls this a “temporary discontinuance” when most likely the DOE will take away the differentials from these educators forever.

I strongly ask the Board of Education to tell the superintendent of the Department of Education that these educators deserve the differential that was not given to them but that they earned!

Many, many, many educators work past their contractual hours. All educators and administrators know this. And yet, the DOE always takes advantage of this too.

I'm am 62 years old and I have been in public service for many years. I consider myself a valuable asset yet the DOE placed my 10 year service certificate and pin in my mailbox after 12+ years of tenure.

How is that for appreciation?

**With Aloha,
Becky Burke,
Retired Teacher**

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Miss Star* <epadilla@mckinleyhs.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Miss Star*
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:48 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony re: 7/23/20 BOE mtg. "Opening of Schools", from Ms. Padilla, High School Teacher

Hello Board of Education and Hawaii Lawmakers,

My name is Eren Star Padilla, and I am a proud high school teacher at McKinley, serving in the Art & Music Dept. This year will be my 7th in Hawaii and as a full time educator.

I am in FAVOR OF DELAYING THE REOPENING OF SCHOOLS. Here are my reasons:

1. I am at risk with a respiratory illness. I am afraid to go back, because I'm afraid of getting sick. Since March, I have been diligent and careful, following all of the gov't directives and orders and staying away from people, friends, family, events, businesses, crowds, I don't even attend the Sunday Open Streets because there are so many people out, even though it's outside! I am more than scared, I am terrified to go to work and see dozens of children a day, up to 130 weekly, being confined in my room with them for our 75 minute classes. I thought 15+ minutes in a confined space with a Covid positive person dramatically increases the chance of spread.
2. From the first day of the pandemic and the shift to stay at home, work from home, my colleagues and I have been asking the same questions repeatedly and not getting any guidance or answers. WHAT IF SOMEONE GETS SICK? 'They' said the SCHOOL has to report the case to the DOH??? I heard the DOH reports to the school when a child, staff, family gets sick. I DEMAND 3-5 MANDATORY COVID TESTING FOR ALL STUDENTS, TEACHERS, STAFF PRIOR TO THE OPENING OF SCHOOLS AND ONLY NEGATIVE TESTS CAN BE ALLOWED IN. Testing is hard to find. A person must show symptoms. Unlike the president, unlike the NBA and Baseball players, WE cannot just get a test. Then the wait, then the turnaround, and then the reporting and then the quarantine. If we are in a school, in a confined space over 15 minutes with an infected person who's asymptomatic and it's spread to dozens, by the time that person shows symptoms (5-15 days), finds a testing site, waits in line, gets the test in how many days, the DOH? The infected person? Reports their results to the school, their workplace, their contacts, trying to remember who they were in contact with the last 5-15 days, you see where I'm going with this. The entire system is flawed.
3. More data is coming from studies around the world that children and babies are getting sick and spreading Covid. We really need to use this data to be realistic from a public health standpoint. Older kids, like at my high school and all adults will be at risk, we can't say children don't pose a threat, nor that they won't get sick! It's simply not true.
4. I can't find a thermometer. I went to a business they stopped me and temperature checked me. School is saying only the nurse can do that. I demand a thermometer and demand the right to temp. check ANYONE who enters my room and I demand the right to refuse them if they show symptoms! But where do they go? A quarantine area? The nurse's office? Home on the city bus to their community? Why can't we test them immediately at school? Will schools have tests that turn around results in minutes? We won't be able to control this thing.
5. Lastly, regarding distance learning. I'm starting a YouTube channel, I'm working really hard to front load my lessons in preparation for the inevitability that our school will have an outbreak and be shut down. The 1st day I tried to record lessons and upload them into YouTube took over 8 hours. I don't know what I'm doing, the quality is poor, my lesson is good but will the kids "get" what I'm trying to show them? Additionally, that was just the visual portion of the lesson. I have yet to construct the googl classroom plan for the lesson, the research, links, checklists, assessments, expectations, due dates, etc. for this one lesson alone. I predict this simple drawing tutorial which literally would take me no more than 25 minutes to do in person, warm up and teacher sample included, will take me over 12-14 hours to complete. And I have to do this for every lesson,

every class for the whole year. When will I have the time? They expect me to host my $\frac{1}{4}$ number of students face to face, simultaneously conduct my online class in REAL time to the other $\frac{3}{4}$ students at home online, to do attendance, etc. AND have video class conferences, do one on one help for office hours, teach my 6 preps, teach my advisory/homeroom, and they still asked me if I was going to be the Club Advisor this school year. Really??? WHEN will we REALISTICALLY have the hours to complete all of this work, especially if I'm to simultaneously teach in person and online, at the same time, everyday. I don't think I will be successful and that's my biggest concern. Failing as a teacher or falling short of giving my students my very best is causing me as much stress as getting Covid.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and please, DELAY THE OPENING OF SCHOOLS. We need more time, we need more help, we need more training, we need more PPE, we need a health plan, we need supports. Help us help you!

Eren Star Padilla
Art Educator
McKinley High School
Honolulu, O'ahu

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

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Testimony BOE

From: SueAnn Thomas <sueanncrichards@gmail.com> on behalf of SueAnn Thomas
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:48 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha BOE 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 urge you to consider beginning the school year with a 100% virtual plan, NO in-person learning, due to the risk of the spread of infection. Providing teachers with a plan to work on campus, and the opportunity to provide students with a 100% virtual learning experience. Currently, Hawaii Tech Academy provides this to their students. Several of the largest school districts in the nation in Virginia, Maryland, and California are planning to begin the school year with a 100% virtual/ distance learning plan.

As a teacher of 16 years, I have experienced many different illnesses contracted in the classroom, none of which have ended in death. However, the severity of COVID-19 and its rapid spread along with the possibility of severe side effects, long-term hospitalization, and death is extremely discouraging and frightening frankly. I am concerned about the risks of contracting COVID-19, how quickly it will spread throughout the school, and the risk of taking the virus home to our family members. Recently, reports have been discussed in the national media stating that the risk of infection in children is lower. However, 23,000 school-age children in Miami-Dade County, Florida, have tested positive for COVID in the past 3 months. That is an enormous amount of children to test positive when we have not been in school for nearly 4 months.

Currently, Hawaii public schools are to open for in-person learning based on the best plans in regards to health and safety. At my school, Iroquois Point Elementary School in Ewa Beach, has been working diligently throughout the month of July to prepare and plan for opening our school with the hybrid model, with the option for our families to register for 100% distance learning. Currently, our school has 65 students that have committed to the 100% distance learning plan. These plans are all created with the best intentions for the needs of our students and families. However, with the continued rise in COVID cases around the nation it is very daunting to return to classrooms due to the risks involved, whether with 100% student attendance or small learning cohorts of 10-12 students daily.

Please imagine yourself in our classrooms for a moment. Would you be comfortable with coming to your classroom everyday, with 10-12 students, while also interacting in a space with 500+ people daily for nearly 7-8 hours? Would you feel safe going home to your families every day? Thank you for your time and consideration.

With warm aloha,
SueAnn C. Thomas
sueanncrichards@gmail.com

Testimony BOE

From: Heath Kusumoto <kuzo2271@gmail.com> on behalf of Heath Kusumoto
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:48 AM
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 have a niece who is a teacher at Baldwin H.S. and another niece that attends Kalama intermediate school and I am extremely concerned and worried for their safety and health to work and attend school as planned on August 4, 2020 per HIDOE's decision to open schools.

I strongly urge the Board of Education to reconsider their decision to open schools on August 4, 2020. As the novel Coronavirus continues to spread throughout our state and country at an alarming rate, we need to place the safety and well-being of our children, the faculty and staff of the schools and the families of our communities at the forefront of this decision making process. To choose to place our children, faculty and staff...our communities in harm's way and to move forward with your plans to open schools on August 4 is negligent, reckless and irresponsible.

What remedies has the HIBOE considered when an infection occurs at one of our schools? Worse yet, if an outbreak occurred? Testing supplies and facilities are already under heavy burden with the record setting new cases occurring in the U.S. Let's not forget that Hawaii just experienced it's highest new cases of Coronavirus in a day not too long ago. If these trends continue, and they will, how long before our healthcare systems become over burdened with patients?

My job has been deemed "essential" and I have been working since the beginning of this pandemic. I work and interact with the residents of my community on a daily basis so I have a sense of the "temperature" of my community in regards to COVID-19 and I assure you it is fragile and it is very volatile. Yes, parents do want their children back in school...but in a SAFE school in a SAFE environment that promotes learning without any fears! The fear of becoming infected. The fear of infecting their loved ones. Fears that no child should endure!

Please, HIBOE, reconsider your decision to open schools on August 4, 2020. Please push back this date until the current record setting levels of new cases subside. Please push back this date until more than an ample supply of testing kits are available to ensure testing can be done on every island, in every school as often as needed. Please push back this date until testing facilities have the daily capacity to run results within 24-48 hours instead of 7-14 days. Please push back this date to exemplify that the safety of our children come first and not any monies promised by federal funding!

The safety of our communities, our faculty and staff of our schools and most importantly, the whole reason why schools exist, our children deserve your reconsideration.

Mahalo for your time.

Heath Kusumoto

Testimony BOE

From: Dillon Collins <dcollins@marlboro.edu> on behalf of Dillon Collins
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:48 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Teacher Testimony

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Dillon Collins and I am a social studies teacher at Konawaena High School on the Big Island. I am writing to implore the Board of Education to delay reopening physical schools until such time as it is safe to do so.

Given the severe rise in cases when states such as Arizona, Florida, and Texas reopened, as well as testimonial from leading scientists in the country, it is clear that Covid-19 remains as large an issue now as it did when schools closed their doors this past March.

Further, counties such as Israel prematurely reopened their schools this past May, which led to a significant increase in the amount of cases. I believe that reopening physical schools now will undoubtedly lead to a rise in cases across the state, which is a particularly high risk to the kapuna, as Hawaii has the highest proportion of inter-generational homes in the country.

Additionally, although there is not a high mortality rate for children, it remains to be seen what long-term damage may result in carrying the covid-19 virus.

Finally, the Big Island of Hawaii does not have the medical infrastructure to respond to a significant spike in cases that lead to hospitalization. This must be acknowledged when considering reopening physical schools, as the scientific knowledge we have, as well as the examples of Arizona, Florida, Israel, and Texas strongly suggest that reopening schools will lead to a spike in cases.

Please make the safe, rational, and science-based decision to delay the reopening of physical schools until such a time that it is safe to do so.

Mahalo,

Dillon Collins
Konawaena High School

Testimony BOE

From: Melanie Okimoto <melah05@gmail.com> on behalf of Melanie Okimoto
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:48 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Reopening on Aug. 4

Aloha,

My name is Melanie Okimoto. I'm a TEACHER at Kalihi Elementary and a PARENT of 2 young children who attend public school. I am also in the high-risk category because of immunosuppressant drugs that I take daily, so I am very concerned with the reopening of our schools on August 4.

I think we can all agree (for the most part) that we want our students and children back in the classroom; however, under the current situation and circumstances that we are facing as a nation, a state, and in our own communities we just are not ready to do that. We need more time!

You know, I hear often about leaders wanting to "get it right". Making decisions hastily won't accomplish that. In fact, it'll just lead to regret. What I've been hearing from the DOE, HSTA, my own school leaders, and the media are not all the same information. We cannot open and welcome students when the very ones who are in charge of their health, safety, and wellbeing are not all on the same page! I've heard Dr. Kishimoto saying things that I've never before heard from my own principal! How can she be making these "promises" or statements to the public if the very ones who are supposed to carry them out aren't even aware of them?!!

For example, taking daily temperature checks. Our faculty was told that we will not be doing that! We can if we want to; however, our school only has 2 or 3 thermometers; not enough for all teachers to do this. Oh wait, but we can buy it out of our own pocket...but we won't be reimbursed for that!

And what is the protocol for situations where people have been exposed to a positive covid-19 person? We have yet to discuss this as a faculty! When are discussions like these supposed to take place?! In the 2 days that our administration has with us right before school begins?! We cannot be coming up with plans as situations arise; we need to be ready for them! It's like playing a game and making up the rules as you play! That's not fair!

All in all, I do want to go back to work. I do want my own children to go back to school. BUT I need to be assured that we are "getting it right"! And the way to do this is to have a little more time to plan, train, and get on "the same page"! Please extend/delay the reopening of our schools!

Thank you for your time,
Melanie Okimoto

Testimony BOE

From: Aki Natsu <summersaki@gmail.com> on behalf of Aki Natsu
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:48 AM
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 agree with HSTA that students should not attend school until we have first established a safe environment for students, teachers, staff, and their families.

We should wait until schools and teachers are ready to open school comfortably with safety measures in place, including best management practices taught to students and teachers to create a disease-free learning environment; proactive testing of students, teachers, and staff; capacity at local hospitals to treat the sick, and the availability of contact tracing.

The current crisis in California repeated in isolated Hawaii would be disastrous. Unfortunately, such a crisis is predictable here, especially with the concurrent opening of tourism from the mainland.

We need more time to get ready for the opening of schools for students. In the meantime, we have to find the best way to teach students efficiently using distance learning, and the most pivotal thing is we should not have any victims from COVID 19 because schools were opened too soon.

-Aki Summers
Iao School
Teacher

Testimony BOE

From: Ethan Taylor <rolyateg@gmail.com> on behalf of Ethan Taylor
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:49 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Differential

I feel many teachers will leave the state and/or profession if the differential is denied, especially with the current situation related to returning to schools during the COVID-19 pandemic. Asking teachers to return and possibly sacrifice their health while simultaneously lowering their pay sends a terrible message to us that we are not respected nor valued. I need this extra money for my family as do many others who have lost salary recently. I have personally seen the differential be effective in gaining employees in hard to fill spots. Please keep the shortage differential in place.

Mahalo,

Ethan Taylor
SPED Teacher

Testimony BOE

From: Laua'e Y <lauaehula@gmail.com> on behalf of Laua'e Y
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:49 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: BOE TESTIMONY

Dear Board Members,

I am a teacher at a Radford Complex Elementary School. I am also a mother of a 5th grader who will be attending a Mililani School.

As a educator, I am writing to express my disappointment regarding the SERIOUS INADEQUATE communication and planning from the Department of Education. Superintendent Kishimoto has not been honest with the senate, the Board or the public. She has continued to make many false claims. I honestly do not believe that she has a clue what is going on at the school level.

I am thankful that MY administrator has been forthcoming with information on the daily, and has been very helpful and open to listening to our concerns. However I know this is not the case with other schools.

Superintendent Kishimoto also announced during the Senate hearing, and the press conference with Governor Ige that ALL students will be provided with a 100% distance learning option. This is NOT the case with every school, as I have family members who are not being offered a 100% distance learning option. Furthermore, the school I work at had to PURCHASE their own platform. Why was it not provided by the State?

My other main concern is the fact that every school is haphazardly throwing together opening plans. Protocols are left up to each school and administration. The staffs are working together to create their own safety and health measures, with little or no guidelines from the state. Point in case...when the DOE/DOH were OK with 3 feet distancing and voluntary masks. NONE of it makes any sense. These protocols are not clear, and concise and are not standard across the state. That leaves us ALL open to lawsuits.

Which brings me to the next issue. WHO will be responsible for lawsuits filed if they can prove that a student/staff/family contracted Covid from school and lack of sanitizing etc?! Who protects the schools and their staff?

We teachers want to see our students. We want to welcome them back. However, HOW can we do this if we feel scared? We should feel confident about opening our doors. Yet, we are NOT.

Do not compare teachers and staff to supermarket employees or other essential workers. THEY are not sitting in a room filled with a wide variety of students with behaviors who are pulling down their masks and sneezing on others! WE must sit in this room for 6-7 hours a day!

I believe HSTA's request is completely reasonable. We are NOT requesting not to have school. We are asking for MORE TIME TO WORK OUT OUR PLANS!

Please consider DELAYING the opening of schools! We need more time!

Mahalo,
Sheri Yamasaki

Testimony BOE

From: Megan Medley <meganmariemedley@gmail.com> on behalf of Megan Medley
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:50 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Students Return to School

I am concerned that schools do not have the capacity to provide the recommended amount of social distancing for students. At Iao Intermediate many classrooms are smaller than 25'x25' and they are being asked to fit 16 students in the room with the teacher. It is physically impossible to get that many people in a room at 6' apart. Further more I am concerned about students willingness to follow the rules. Kids have a tendency to break rules and in this case they could put themselves and others in great danger. I am concerned that our schools are not prepared to apply the consequences necessary to enforce safety rules of this magnitude. I know it is not ideal but it is my opinion that students should remain home and participate in online education. When a vaccine is available people will feel safe gathering in large group settings like the classroom.

Megan Medley

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Josh Joggerst <jjoggerst@lanaischool.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Josh Joggerst
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:50 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Please don't temporarily discontinue differentials

The differential that I receive is the hard to staff differential that allows me to receive \$8,000 to supplement my pay here on Lanai. This differential has allowed me to pay off my student loans early, pay for groceries that are extremely high on Lanai, and has raised my moral as a teacher to stay with the profession. Please do not temporarily discontinue differentials because it sends the wrong message to people who came to Hawaii because of these differentials to then just have them taken away can cause unnecessary harm to solving our teacher crisis. Thank you for your consideration and I hope that you will continue paying these differentials to solve Hawaii's teacher shortage problem.

Best Regards,
Josh Joggerst

Testimony BOE

From: Jenine Ibanez <jeibanez@kamaile.org> on behalf of Jenine Ibanez
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:50 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: I URGE THE BOE TO CONTINUE FUNDING TEACHER DIFFERENTIALS

Aloha, My name is Jenine Ibanez. I am a special education teacher on the Waianae Coast. I am writing to support the continuation of funding of the teacher differentials. Here are my thoughts:

1) During the physical school closures, I worked twice as hard to try to ensure an enriching education for the students I serve (this included preparing packets and delivering, communicating with parents and students, learning distance learning platforms, collaborating with general education teachers to be insync for student enrichment, participating in online meetings for students and with teachers for professional development). I know it sounds much like what is done while in school, but it was much more planning, organization, collaborating, communication, online teaching. I feel the differentials have been a blessing that improved motivation in attitude and in financial compensation in taking on the kuleana above (in a new way).

2) Things cost money! The cost of living is high in Hawaii. The differential can take the financial burden/stress off of being a Native Hawaiian and wanting to stay in Hawaii and supporting my family of 7.

3) Although teachers entered into the profession last school year without differentials, it was truly a blessing to receive and I am grateful. And in the humblest way possible, I think most teachers work hard and deserve to earn a salary that allows them to feel valued in their profession.

There are so many other reasons why differentials should continue to be funded, but the above are the 3 I wanted to share. I pray that whoever receives this email, truly considers making the decision that is best for the educational legacy of the state of Hawaii....and consider the effects of the decision made on this topic.

Thanks,
Jenine Ibanez

Testimony BOE

From: Natasha Nases <nases.tasha@gmail.com> on behalf of Natasha Nases
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:50 AM
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.

“may” and “should” are not sufficient words for this Memorandum. “Must” and “shall” is what needs to be said. Why are teachers having to make the decision if children should wears masks in the classroom? That should be mandatory, mandated by the school. Please postpone starting the school year so everyone can be more prepared.

It also seems like the superintendent is starting school with or with out teachers. That’s an awesome start to an already stressful situation.

Testimony BOE

From: Helen Lau <lauhelen@hawaii.edu> on behalf of Helen Lau
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:50 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: testimony on school reopening
Attachments: testimony_R_we_ready__BOE.pdf

H. Board Action on MOU between Hawaii Board of Education & HSTA (SY 2020-2021 COVID-19 Response): 2017-2021 contractual modifications & conditions of work related to COVID-19 response for Bargaining Unit 5 employees

Please see attached.

Dear Board Members:

I heard Ms. Payne yesterday on the radio. She talked about how critical it is for teachers and students to get acquainted as a foundation for teachers to teach and students to learn in the coming school year. I cannot agree more.

However, are we ready to reopen the campus for our students? I teach at a high school with over 2,000 students. Our principal has been working nonstop since May toward this purpose. As a school, we decided on a hybrid schedule to allow 25% of the student body on campus at any given day, except for Wednesdays which will be for faculty meetings and tutorials with students. She also arranged for my classroom to be renovated so that space is maximized for students. I have been preparing the room all last week for the carpenters to do their job which was scheduled for yesterday.

However, am I ready to open up the classroom for the approximately 150 to 180 students on my roster this year? No.

Not only am I on a steep learning curve to setup online classrooms for the subjects that I teach, not only am I concerned about whether I have enough time to clean and setup the classroom (post renovation), I am still wondering about some really important questions regarding health and safety.

- Are students from military families who are newly transferring into my school exempt from the state's quarantine? On Monday, I heard the interview of Radford High's principal pointing this out as a topic of discussion still.
- When a student or staff tests positive for Covid-19, what steps exist to inform and help people involved?
- Wearing a face mask and maintaining a 6 feet distance are our best defense for now in this pandemic, and yet, what does it mean when it is left up to the individual teacher within his or her classroom? I anticipate that some students would arrive to class without their mask, so I should have a supply ready as backup. Am I to add this to my personal budget along with folder paper, sanitizers, and paper towels? What if the student refuses to wear a mask inside my classroom?

Finally, I am concerned about how I can evaluate students equitably and give grades fairly. On the one hand, I know that there will be students who have little to no technology available to them so online classrooms are not readily available to them. On the other hand, I am aware of another kind of problem whereby there is such an abundance and dependence on technology that servers are losing student work. Due to this overload issue, some schools switched from letter grades to a credit/ no credit report card. My nephew's middle school experienced this in San Mateo County, California.

I appreciate your consideration of my argument. We are at "approaching" readiness to open our school.

Sincerely,

Helen W. Lau
Teacher
Moanalua High School

Testimony BOE

From: Charlotte Husen <husenhawaii@outlook.com> on behalf of Charlotte Husen
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:51 AM
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](#)

Aloha,

I am a Special Education Teacher in Hilo. I strongly feel that the Department of Education should postpone opening up our schools. Not only will the health and well being of the students be comprimised, it will also be a concern for the teachers and staff.

Please postpone the opening of the schools untill we are better prepared.

Thank you,

Charlotte Husen

Testimony BOE

From: Ashley Lau <ashley.lau@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Ashley Lau
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:51 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am a Maui girl, born and raised that went through our public school system and attended both UH Maui College and the University of Hawaii Manoa. I earned my Bachelor's and Master's degrees from the University of Hawaii at Manoa and I've taught secondary mathematics on Oahu and Maui the last 6 years. 5 years at James Campbell high school and last year at Lokelani Intermediate. This school year I will be fulfilling a personal goal by finally being able to teach at my alma mater, H.P. Baldwin High School. I'm proud to be a local teacher here in Hawaii and I love my job even though it is extremely difficult on so many levels.

The physical and emotional safety of my students, colleagues and myself is paramount for any sort of meaningful learning and or relationships to take place. As teachers, we think about what we would do in the event of a fire, earthquake, tsunami, fights, a missile alert, active shooter, lockdowns, bullying/cyberbullying, child abuse, student homelessness, suicidal students, student self-harm and so much more all on top of trying to create and implement an engaging curriculum while addressing accommodations for IEP, 504 and ELL students.

I don't think many teachers have thought about what they would do in their classroom in the event of a pandemic until this year. We try to think about what we would do in all types of situations so that we're prepared as much as possible to respond in a collected and effective manner. Some specific examples: I've had to break up fights in and out of my class, students stealing from me when I had a substitute (this happened twice at two different schools), visible marks of parental abuse on a student and sitting with them for hours after school to contact Child Protective Services, male student pretending to masturbate under his desk, students lying to their parents and those parents coming to my classroom to scream at me for something I did not do, inappropriate sexual comments from male students to me and other female students, racism, students that can't afford new clothes and footwear, students working jobs to support themselves and families but struggling to keep up in school. In these situations where I did not know how to handle a problem I knew exactly who to contact for help or where to reference resources for guidance.

Now that we have a new and seriously dangerous problem that we're facing, we as educators are trying to understand what the guidelines, protocols, procedures are as well as who we would need to contact for information or help.

- I don't know what type of PPE I'll be provided with.
- I don't know how much and what type of cleaning supplies I'll have for my classroom.
- I haven't been allowed into my classroom yet and I am new to the school so I have no idea what's in it or what it looks like to be able to plan for what I need for my classroom
- I don't know how many students I'll have at a time.
- I don't know how much of the curriculum I should be hoping to get through when I'll physically see each student just one time a week and once virtually.
- I don't know how I will engage or support students when they are at home but I'm teaching another group of students.
- I don't know what I am supposed to do if I test positive or a family member tests positive.
- I don't know how I'll engage students in the classroom when they cannot physically sit with each other to do group work, share manipulatives, and move around the classroom freely.
- I don't know how I'll keep my high school students from taking off their masks during the four 80 minute class periods they'll have a day and if I'm supposed to discipline them for not wearing a mask.
- I don't know how I will be able to teach, project my voice with a mask and face shield on to a classroom that has to maximize it's space while having students 6 feet apart. Some students will need to be pushed as far back as possible and that might make it difficult for them to hear, I really don't know because I haven't been able to see my classroom and plan yet.

- I don't know how my students are getting 180 days of instruction.
- I don't know how students will be socially distant before school, during each 5 minutes of passing, during lunch, after school, while going to the bathroom.
- I don't know how to effectively implement distance learning since quarter 4 was not graded, participation from my students was very low and I have NOT been offered training for distance learning this summer, though I would have gladly completed any training offered even though I wouldn't be paid for that time.
- I don't know what happens when schools will have to shut down because of a positive case.
- I don't know what it's going to take for schools to completely shut down so I can be prepared to do strictly distance learning.
- I don't know what I'm going to have to do when I go out on maternity leave early December.
- I don't know how "Ohana Bubbles" will work for secondary schools.
- I don't know if parents and students understand what school will really look like and what their options are for distance learning.
- I don't know how my students will be able to learn effectively if they are worried about getting Covid or passing it to their classmates, friends, family, teachers, etc.
- I don't know how I will be as effective as I normally am while I'm worried about contracting Covid or passing it to my students, family, coworkers and unborn child.

Obviously there is a lot myself and other teachers/staff don't know and we need to know before we can open safely and effectively.

It's going to be a difficult school year for everyone but especially for our Special Education teachers and staff and our hard to staff schools but you guys want to go back on a promise you made to them and the few qualified Hawaiian Language teachers we are lucky to have? When we don't have qualified Special Education teachers, qualified teachers in harder to staff areas and qualified Hawaiian Language students it's the students that will suffer the most.

This has been an extremely difficult year for everyone. I personally have had a very tough year. I suffered a miscarriage earlier this year but now I am almost 20 weeks pregnant and terrified for my unborn child and myself as well as my 2 and a half year old daughter. As a family we've taken so many precautions to keep ourselves and our extended families safe by social distancing, staying home as much as possible, practicing good hygiene and wearing masks when we go out and when we see my grandparents. We've had to distance ourselves from my elderly grandparents, 91 and 8 years old, because they also have underlying conditions and would have a very difficult time fighting of COVID-19 if they were infected.

To summarize, we need a little more time but most importantly we need written guidance from the BOE, DOE and the Hawaii State government to be able to thoroughly prepare for a safe and effective reopening.

Thank you for your consideration,
 Ashley Lau
 H.P. Baldwin High School
 Math Teacher

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Testimony BOE

From: Donna-Lynne Hanlon <donnalynnehanlon@gmail.com> on behalf of Donna-Lynne Hanlon
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:52 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

My name is Donna-Lynne Hanlon and I am an educator at H.P. Baldwin High School, Wailuku, Maui, 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.

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. Therefore, please delay the opening of school buildings to students. The HIDOE and DOH need more time to properly create and implement health strategies to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, and schools need more time to prepare educators for an online 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 I believe in the importance of ensuring students are provided instructional services in the school year 2020–21, it should not be at the cost of a safe educational environment.

My reasons for this stance are as follows:

Nearly one month ago, HSTA reached an agreement on a memorandum of understanding (MOU) about schools reopening. Yet the HIDOE has still not 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.

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.

The following questions remain unanswered:

- 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." **This is while being fully aware that almost 40% of our teaching staff are in high risk categories.** Hawaii already has a severe teacher shortage and opening schools early has the potential to make it even worse.

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.

Sincerely,
Donna-Lynne Hanlon

Testimony BOE

From: Kyle Kennedy-Pocock <kpaliku@gmail.com> on behalf of Kyle Kennedy-Pocock
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:52 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Please delay opening schools

Dear Board of Education,

Please delay the opening of schools. This is not a situation where rushing in and winging it is going to benefit anyone. The ramifications of opening up without clear guidelines and protocols in place seems like a recipe for disaster. I am a first responder and I've seen how quickly things can get out of hand. I don't feel we should risk our keiki and educators and ultimately our kupuna in order to just get the keiki back in the schools. The teachers are already overwhelmed and vastly underpaid for the amount of work that they put in and especially in comparison to the rest of the nation when you take cost of living into account. Please show them that we value them as humans as well by not rushing to open schools. Many have medical conditions which could make them more susceptible to COVID-19 and stressing them even more probably wouldn't help things. Rushing to open schools without proper guidelines and protocols would only reinforce the feeling that the teachers aren't valued. Why you think it's so hard to recruit and keep them. More work, less pay, substandard conditions compared to businesses, exceptions to the norm...these all show that our teachers aren't valued as professionals and now simply as people facing this pandemic. There are honestly more stringent measures adopted at the supermarket than are proposed in the classrooms, and the amount of time spent at the supermarket is minute compared to an entire school day. I urge you to continue to think things through and not act hastily. There are so many questions that I know there aren't answers to right now, so why rush?

Mahalo for your time and effort,
Kyle Kennedy-Pocock
Parent, spouse of a teacher, and first responder

Testimony BOE

From: Jackie <jfuyeno@gmail.com> on behalf of Jackie
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:52 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Delay opening of the school year

I have been teaching for doe for 30 years this coming October, 2020. I have been through many challenges through my teaching career.

My first year in teaching where I started in a remote area on the outer island and where teaching housing was not available. I waited a month until a teacher cottage was finally available. Then, trying to maintain a decent salary by going through a strike and furloughs for standing up for teachers to be treated as professional. The major School renovation process where teachers spent countless hours packing and cleaning up classroom after hours. Teachers are dedicated and are willing to do their best for their kids. However, this pandemic has to be top of our list of challenges when it affects ourselves and our keikis' health. Teachers want to return back to school, but we need assurance feeling safe in our classroom. I have been in my classroom the past month from 8:00 to 5:00 configuring how to make 20 desks 6 feet apart. In order to do this, you need to throw away things in your classroom and store unneeded furniture aside. It takes a lot of time and effort to make 20 desks six feet apart. Therefore, four days of planning is not enough time to even get your classroom ready. Our school is requesting plexiglass, but not sure if we have funds for it. Teachers are using their own personal monies to buy plexiglass, shower curtains (a substitute for plexiglass), bins (store student supplies), and etc... All of these things add up. Please don't even consider cutting our salary, or putting us on furlough. We are consider essential workers where we are supporting our economy by allowing parents go back to work. Doe needs to have more information or protocols on how they will handle if a teacher or classroom gets Covid.

Administrators and teachers need more time to set up classroom, discuss how we are going to teach remote/face to face, plan what we will actually do or how to keep kids 6feet apart in classroom/playground. There is so much here at stake. Doe should not rush to open school on August 4 until they provide our school the reassurance we will be safe to the best of their abilities/scientific/cdc research.

Jackie

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Candice-Joy Soon <candice-joy.soon@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Candice-Joy Soon
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:53 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Delay School Reopening

Hi,

My name is Candice Soon and I'm a special education teacher at Waipahu High School. I'm writing to urge you to delay the start date for students this upcoming school year. Coronavirus cases are getting worse, not better; we are seeing much higher numbers than when we closed in March. It doesn't make sense that schools are reopening when the situation is far worse. Moreover, there are many questions left answered by the BOE, leaving myself and many other teachers feeling like our schools are woefully unprepared. It is unfair to put both educators and students at risk just because the BOE is rushing to reopen schools.

Even with the 6-foot social distance mandate, there are still many issues and theoretical situations we need to address. Personally, as a special educator, part of my job requires me to be in close contact with my students, helping them individually and walking them through their thought processes. The mandate is necessary but it also prevents students from learning and succeeding to their utmost potential. To add to that, the rotational model of 25% in-person and 75% online over two weeks adds to the stress and confusion surrounding teaching, when teaching should be precisely focused on student learning and progress alone. Teachers also have not received adequate training for a novel situation such as this one. I don't think one week (before students start) is enough time to equip teachers with what they need to know to do their jobs well.

Please reconsider reopening schools at a later date for the safety of our teachers and keiki. We all want to do our jobs but no one should be put at risk and made to feel unsafe.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Candice

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Testimony BOE

From: cherieanna <cherieanna@mail.com> on behalf of cherieanna
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:54 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Please open Public school

Sent via the Samsung Galaxy S7, an AT&T 4G LTE smartphone

----- Original message -----

From: cherieanna <cherieanna@mail.com>
Date: 7/22/20 10:49 AM (GMT-10:00)
To: boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Please open Public school

To whom it may concern,

I am pro opening and having our keiki at school. I have five keiki, four of which will be attending this year. My children are all at different grades/levels of learning and I can attest from the stint of online/distance learning we had at the end of last year how each child is different and some do not do well without in person help. I can also tell you the sanity of our home being stuck each day as a one room school house with all different levels and most of them needing help or attention left me as a parent feeling as though I was neglecting my infant and household chores while trying mt best to help and or keep the other kids attending to their school work. I felt as if we were never doing everything the teachers were asking for and fighting with the kids constantly to get it done. The one who was old enough to direct herself and get her work done still needed some in person help with understanding some of the assignments and started having depression issues from lack of social verbal interaction (we don't have extra phones for our kids, and as it is had to borrow school computers as well). The small percent of Covid 19 cases in Hawaii youth and children should stay low as long as we keep foreign/new people germs at bay by keeping the quarantine for new comers and tourists allowing kids to stay at school. Again I plead to keep these childrens normalcy as much as we can by keeping them at school!
Mahalo, Mrs. C. Vigil

Sent via the Samsung Galaxy S7, an AT&T 4G LTE smartphone

Testimony BOE

From: Suzette Shigemasa <sshigemasa@hotmail.com> on behalf of Suzette Shigemasa
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:54 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY

ITEM H

I am asking the Board of Education to delay the reopening of schools until all possible scenarios are considered by all stakeholders and procedures are put into place to ensure the safety and health of everyone. Having a solid plan is imperative and life saving. As an employee who is not a part of the decision making team, I am putting my life in your hands.

ITEM G

I am also asking that you continue funding the pay differential for Special Education teachers and Hawaiian Immersion teachers. Numbers show that this decision has made a difference in retaining these qualified individuals in the places where they are needed. For the record, I am neither a Special Education teacher nor a Hawaiian Immersion teacher.

Thank you for your time.

Suzette Shigemasa
School Counselor
Keaau Middle School

Testimony BOE

From: Azi Ismail <aziani.ismail@gmail.com> on behalf of Azi Ismail
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:54 AM
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.

I am a special education teacher at a public charter school on the Big Island, Volcano School of Arts & Sciences. The school is located in a hard-to-staff geographical area. I strongly urge the Hawaii Board of Education to CONTINUE with the extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language immersion programs for SY 2020-2021.

These are critical areas of shortage in education and recent data has shown that the differentials have proven to be effective in moving teachers into these positions and minimizing teachers from moving out of these positions. This will help our keiki for the short and long term.

I have taken and passed the Praxis exam for Special Education a week ago and will now need to accumulate enough experience in elementary education to qualify as a Special Education teacher. It shows my commitment to be a Special Education teacher.

mahalo,
Aziani Ismail
Special Education Teacher (Elementary)
Volcano School of Arts & Sciences
99-128 Old Volcano Road,
Volcano, HI 96785

Testimony BOE

From: Stephanie Kau <stephanie.kau@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Stephanie Kau
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:54 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony Regarding the DOE's Comprehensive Plan for Reopening of Schools

Aloha,

My name is Stephanie Kau and I am a teacher at Kapalama Elementary School. I am writing to ask that you seriously consider pushing back the date for the reopening of the public school system in Hawaii. I truly believe that we are not prepared to do so in a safe and effective manner. With the absence of any kind of clear protocol provided by the CDC (including the lack of adequate contact tracers as stated by Dr. Josh Green, lieutenant governor), the the lack of any type of formal training provided to us regarding distance learning and with so many unanswered questions, I believe this will prove to be a very detrimental and possibly fatal situation for those involved.

As of today, there are so many unanswered questions as to the protocols of what happens if someone (student, family member, teacher, substitute teacher) contracts COVID19? Who will need to be quarantined? Does a teacher have to use their own sick leave to cover the 14 quarantine days? Who will have to be tested and who pays for those tests? And do you truly feel that asking a young child daily health questions means that they are well. I do not feel qualified to determine their state of being by a visual check as I am not a health professional.

During the past months, I did enroll in several online classes from national firms that addressed hybrid/blended/distance learning but did not find them very helpful. Perhaps because they were introductory classes that were meant for you to sign up for yearly subscriptions to get the full lessons. I personally do not feel prepared and do not believe that the responsibility of learning the particulars of distance learning should have been left up to each individual teacher to do on their own time and expense. Formal training and time for that should be provided for all teachers.

I truly want to be back working with students as that is the reason I became a teacher. Please reconsider what is at stake and put the needed things into play BEFORE reopening our schools.

Mahalo,
Stephanie Kau

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Testimony BOE

From: GM Uekawa <gmuekawa@gmail.com> on behalf of GM Uekawa
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:54 AM
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.

I'm Merlynda Uekawa and currently teach in a special education position at Waiakea Elementary School. I am a duo certified teacher in elementary education and special education, and there were many times that I have contemplated going back to a general education teaching position. Teaching in Special Education takes a huge amount of preparation time that is put in so that we can successfully meet the needs of the keiki, extra time to meet/phone calls with parents/guardians, general education teachers, and/or service providers. Receiving the differential pay for a special education classroom teacher has given me the incentive to stay in special education. As I have respect for the HIDOE and BOE, by retracting this differential pay will not only make me lose respect and confidence in the BOE and HIDOE, as you are now going against your promise to fund differential pay to the three areas with the worst shortages, but I may also reconsider a general education position in the near future.

In addition, you're not only breaking your promise to me, but to the many educators who believe BOE/HIDOE would support them with the differential pay, and had transferred into teaching positions in these three areas with the worst shortages! New figures show how the differentials have already made a huge difference in recruiting and retaining teachers in these shortage areas. Please do not go back on your promise to fund the differentials from existing HIDOE money!

Please make your decision to keep funding the differential pay in these worst shortage areas! Our keiki in these shortage areas really need highly qualified educators teaching them and this program is proving to be working as these positions are beginning to be filled.

Let me continue to believe that the BOE and HIDOE truly support our educators and keiki!

Mahalo!

Testimony BOE

From: Aaron Tanimoto <atanimoto@honokaahi.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Aaron Tanimoto
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:55 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

As a teacher and parent of public school students, I am concerned about the preparedness of the DOE in relation to safety amidst the pandemic. I believe the the current start date for students has not allowed for appropriate protocol development, and education of staff, families and students as to how we assure families the safest environment for learning.

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.

Aaron Tanimoto, teacher, Honokaa High School

Testimony BOE

From: Roxanne Koon <roxykoon@me.com> on behalf of Roxanne Koon
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:55 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am testifying on item H. My daughter-in-law is a teacher for the BOE and I am concerned for her safety. She is pregnant with our first grandchild and I worry that she may contract Covid-19, if she returns to the classroom. I know pregnancy is not considered an underlying health issue in normal circumstances, but we are not living in normal circumstances at this present time! We are dealing with a very dangerous and unpredictable virus. And I don't want her health and the babies health to be jeopardized. I know we all are thinking about the health and welfare of our school age children, but what about the teacher's health and their families health and the health of our future children. She and all other pregnant teachers are carrying precious cargo and we want to make sure they have a positive start in this world. Every day the CDC is learning more and more about COVID-19 and hopefully we will have a vaccine to combat this virus Soon. In the meantime, please reconsider opening schools too soon. My daughter-in-law is considering leaving, and that would be a shame since she is a terrific teacher. She has been teaching distance learning since the pandemic began and is doing a great job. Why can't she continue that? She has been told "no" that she must physically report to the classroom and this is unacceptable! Again, please reconsider opening the schools, for the health of everyone, especially our teachers, who 200 percent to the children and do it so unselfishly!

Mahalo

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Tyler Family <tomkatt88@gmail.com> on behalf of Tyler Family
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:55 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Members of the 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 HawaiiState 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 allow students to return to school campuses until proper safety protocols are enforced such as Mandatory Mask Wearing. Currently, the “Teacher’s Discretion” recommendation by the DOE regarding mask wearing in the classroom is not safe or acceptable. It takes just one student or teacher to put others in harm’s way.

As a Substitute teacher, I have not received any form of communication from the DOE regarding this school year’s guidelines. Do Substitute teachers continue to substitute at various schools as usual, or is there a new COVID-19 Substitute teaching policy? Only 1 or 2 school assignments?

Will substitute teachers receive proper training for curriculum and safety protocols? What if a substitute teacher is positive with COVID-19? Will they and all their students in all the various schools be quarantined or get tested? If yes, who pays for COVID-19 testing?

I understand the importance of having schools reopening. I have only addressed two areas of concern but until basic safety and better Substitute teacher protocols are established, I urge you to please delay the reopening of schools for the sake of the students, parents, teachers and staff of Hawaii.

Thank you.



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

Testimony

1 message

Dania Hill <hill.dania@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Jul 8, 2020 at 8:58 AM

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

Name: Dania Hill

School or worksite: University Laboratory School

School that your children attend: Aikahi Elementary School & University Laboratory School

I have concerns with the current plan as it highlights a 3-foot distance between students and faculty. While the measure is a good starting point, I worry about the safety of the students as well as my own. We live in a multigenerational household with two of my family members categorized as "high risk" (Heart condition and Type 1 Diabetes). If I get sick I could be responsible for infecting my family & consequently putting their lives in danger. Returning to the classroom in the middle of a pandemic is scary, the added component of ignoring CDC recommendations of at least 6 feet apart seems like a haphazard to me. I urge you to please reevaluate the current plan to one which effects the recommendations of the CDC.

Mahalo,

Dania Hill
(808) 561-3318