Testimony in favor of schools re-opening.

Kimberly Strauf <kimberly.strauf@me.com>  
To: BOE_Hawaii@notes.k12.us, boe.hawaii@boe.hawaii.gov, doeinfo@k12.hi.us, testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Good Afternoon,

My name is Kimberly Strauf, I am new to your island and school system, and I am a very concerned parent. My husband received orders to Hawaii this past year. We came from Northern Virginia that encompasses the Washington, D.C. area. Our time in that area was amazing and we were able to engulf ourselves in history, enjoy the city life, and immerse ourselves in different cultures. When my husband received orders to Hawaii we were excited but apprehensive. The reason why we were apprehensive was due to your education system. We came from Fairfax County, VA which is one of the top school systems in the nation. At the same time it also has its flaws as well. One of my concerns were Hawaii's education ranking as 50th in the nation. I spoke with a few colleagues that were previously stationed here and was told to prepare for my children to be a year or two behind in education. This as a parent is concerning because I do my best to advocate for my children in regards to receiving the best education necessary.

My children started school at Wheeler Elementary School November of 2019. During the 2109-2020 school year my daughter was in 5th grade and my son was in 1st grade. One of my main concerns were my son Callum's services being available at the school. I transferred Callum's IEP from VA to your state of HI. I endured the lengthy process of re-evaluations and voiced my concerns that my son, due to his developmental delays, had educational difficulties which set him back behind his peers. My son receives speech services and has a medical diagnosis of ADHD. His new IEP evaluation highlighted that Callum is at least one year behind his peers with regards to grade level and his IEP was expanded to accommodate new services. Callum’s new services would require him to have a split classroom setting. Callum would be in a general education setting half the day and in a one-on-one/small group SPED classroom setting. In addition, his speech service hours were also increased through the school. All of this was discussed at the re-evaluation meeting for his IEP and qualification of services. I also expressed my concerns in regards to him constantly catching up and wanted the option in order to exercise retention and have my son repeat the first grade. I was assured that under the new IEP that this would catch my son up. If it did not work then we could discuss the possibility of retention at the next re-evaluation meeting.

My children were happy the three months they were in school. This was their second school in less than a year and they were starting to make friends. I had the utmost faith and put my reservations aside with regards to Hawaii’s education system. I was ecstatic with the education that my children were receiving with in classroom instruction. For the very first time, I could say that Hawaii does take pride in its education and I did not know what other families were talking about. So far my kids were playing catch up and I was ecstatic with the teachers, the way the administrators operated their school, and I felt that my children's interest were being taken into account. And then COVID happened. Thank goodness my children were blessed to have the teachers they did. Only because they were not in the loop with regard to if they would see any of their classroom students during the 4th quarter. My children's teachers were rockstars. They took the time to send all of their students remedial work in order to try and keep them on grade level. Communicated with us parents with regard to what we should be doing at home.

However, virtual schooling had a lot of repercussions. The first was the mental health repercussions on my daughter. She could not interact with any of her peers and was isolated like so many other children. My daughter just turned 11-years-old and is undergoing so many physical and emotional changes as she enters adolescence. One of the most alarming signs I saw was what virtual schooling did to her emotional and mental health. She would break down periodically, get anxious, stressed, and at times I feared that my daughter would harm herself in some way. She started to show signs of depression due to her being isolated and looking at a screen all day. With no face to face interaction with her teacher or her peers. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children between the ages of 6-10 have a maximum of daily screen time between 1-1.5 hours/day. Even under this guideline children satisfying the minimum requirement studies showed increases in obesity in children, disruptions in sleep patterns, and affects on social emotional health to include mental health. Children learn best while physically present in the classroom. They learn social and emotional skills at school, get healthy meals and exercise, mental health services and support that cannot be easily replicated online.

The most affected by virtual schooling was my son. My son has ADHD as previously mentioned and is extremely behind academically due to his developmental delay. When I heard the news that the HISTA and HIDOE had made the decision to go 100% online my heart dropped. My son, like so many special education families, are constantly overlooked and thrown to the back seat. My son is being overlooked and I am not ok with that. No special education family is ok with any of that. My son has ADHD and your plan is to put him in front of a screen or tablet for 6 hours a day, which was done in
the 4th quarter, with the hopes that he grasp the information. His special education teacher was amazing but could only accommodate 30 minute sessions 3 days/week for one-on-one classroom setting. My son also did the summer HUB program and he is still behind. Even after I worked with him at home. His distractions are at home and not at school. He learns best at school. Virtual schooling was a failure. You failed my son and are matriculating him due to your failure. What next? My son should not be a casualty experiment and then tossed to the side. He should not be one more forgotten student in hopes he is one day someone else’s problem. You are educators and I am a parent. We are supposed to be working together. You are supposed to accommodate my son by law and your education system continues to fail him. The HISTA continues to fail him and brush him aside as another number. I will not stand by and watch his education continue to be a pawn in this chess game. I am for opening schools, I am for advocating for my son, and I am for him being back in school. I understand there is a lot at stake here, but by law you should be thinking about my son. You should accommodate his services with in classroom instruction and not virtual instruction. If you cannot, then you need to retain him and have him repeat the first grade. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Kimberly Strauf
Testimony

Nicole Grove <ngrove@hawaii.edu>
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Nicole Grove
Associate Professor
University of Hawaii at Manoa Department of Political Science
Meeting: General Business

Agenda Item: Concerns over Acellus Academy Distance Learning Platform and Vetting Process

Position: Support distance learning for all students for the semester with one shared curriculum designed by Hawaii teachers; oppose the use of Acellus for distance learners

In a Facebook post dated August 13th, HSTA Vice President Osa Tui Jr. expressed several concerns over the HIDOE’s reopening plans in the midst of a record-breaking surge of COVID cases in Hawaii. One of Mr. Tui’s concerns was the turning over of our children’s education to a platform called Acellus Academy. Parents who have chosen full-time distance learning, Mr. Tui wrote, would effectively have “no connection to schools and teachers.” After reading Mr. Tui’s post I did some research on Acellus Academy and its creator and owner Roger Billings. What I found was of grave concern to me as both a university professor and a public school parent.

There is actually very little written or to be found online about Roger Billings and Acellus Academy beyond his own promotional materials. One exception is an article published in The Pitch, a Kansas City weekly, which highlights a number of issues surrounding Billings, Acellus, and his other ‘affiliations’ that should raise red flags.

The first issue is Roger Billings’ questionable educational credentials, as well as those of the individuals designing and contributing to the Acellus platform and curriculum. Billings has adopted the title of Dr., however this title is effectively made up. Billings awarded himself what he calls a ‘doctor of research’ degree from an institution that he created called the International Academy of Science. It also appears that a number of individuals involved in the creation of the Acellus Academy platform and its curriculum have been awarded these degrees from Billings’ institution. While Acellus may be accredited, the International Academy of Science is not. This raises serious questions about whether or not there are primaries involved at Acellus Academy who have any real background in education. We would never hire a professor at the University of Hawaii campuses with a doctorate they awarded themselves, nor would we put a public school teacher who had invented their education credentials in charge of our children’s learning. This needs further investigation and suggests that the best options for our students - whether in person or remotely - are our public school teachers in Hawaii, who we know and trust.

The second issue is Billings’ purported involvement in founding a polygamy cult. Allie Johnson, the reporter for the Pitch article mentioned, discusses documents from a lawsuit involving Billings and the Novell Inc. software company, where Billings is said to be the founder of a polygamous cult called the Church of Jesus Christ of Zion. Their now defunct website purportedly listed Billings as the church’s “Patriarch and Prophet,” and the Novell Inc. court documents mention Billings taking other people’s spouses as “celestial wives.” Without needing to know anything further about these bizarre claims, I am definitively uncomfortable allowing Acellus Academy and Roger Billings to educate my daughters online and collect data on their school progress.

The third is the apparent lack of an adequate vetting process of Acellus, its owner and its organizational structure by the HIDOE prior to enforcing it as the only alternative to in-person classes. I reached out to HSTA after reading Mr. Tui’s post, and was told that the Board of Education directed the Department to have options for families who were uncomfortable sending their children to school. The Department did not come up with options, and instead was intending to force students and parents to choose homeschooling, and withdraw their children from the public school system. After serious concerns were raised about this, the Department quickly tried to come up with a solution and Acellus was what schools were told to use.

What we have now is a two-tiered system among students at Hawaii public schools. We have those who have opted for in-person classes who will still be taught online for the foreseeable future. These students will shortly be able to pick up class materials from qualified educators, and develop relationships with their teachers and peers (albeit online). Alternatively, we have those students whose parents opted for distance learning and will now be taught by Roger Billings and his employees, and who will not be allowed to build a connection to their teachers or peers. Accreditation is simply
not enough in the case of Acellus Academy, and we want teachers from our communities we can trust and have an investment in our children’s well-being.

Our children deserve a real public school education, and teachers and staff deserve to be safe. Instead of being forced to choose between risking their lives or financial ruin, teachers should be supported in directing their energies toward developing a comprehensive online curriculum that includes all students, while providing the social contact and legitimate learning our children so desperately need right now.

Nicole Sunday Grove
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Testimony for 8/20 Meeting

Jessica Kato <jessikato80@gmail.com>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Sun, Aug 16, 2020 at 11:31 AM

Aloha Board Chair Payne,

I write to you as a Complex Area Resource Teacher who has been providing Distance Learning Training to the teachers across our complex since early July, but also as a teacher who has always trusted your guidance and believes in your wisdom and understanding at this important moment.

The Campbell Kapolei Complex Area formed a Technology Team of three Resource Teachers and a Complex Area Officer during Quarter 4 of last year to begin preparing to support the teachers throughout our Complex Area with the impending reality of distance learning. Each of us has experience with online teaching and we were able to create a resource bank, as well as a PD framework that includes both technology tips, but also pedagogical approaches to distance learning: best practices and mind shifts that are necessary for teachers to be successful in this endeavor.

We continued to book trainings through August 17. In July, there were many teachers opting to join us in the library and few joining virtually from their classrooms, but slowly, as cases rose, those numbers flipped and more and more teachers joined virtually. Last week, the week of August 10, we did all our training virtually, as so many are nervous about health and safety.

I do want to point out that although these trainings are virtual, they are live, synchronous, and they allow teachers to ask questions, make connections with us and their colleagues, and actively participate in the learning.

The training provided by the state did not give such learning opportunities.

The state training offered a completely asynchronous experience, demanding teachers to sit passively in front of a computer for up to 16 hours. If this is what the state believes distance learning is, I understand why they are concerned—this approach did NOT model what good online instruction is and only served to alienate and intimidate many teachers, even more than they already are in this new world.

There was an opportunity for us, the people on the ground, to use the series of trainings in a more effective way. In fact, I even asked a principal if we should shift our training schedule to include discussion of the Seven Distance Learning Modules. Unfortunately, no one was given access to the Modules before their release, so there was no time to plan how to meaningfully incorporate that information in an interactive setting for our teacher. It was simply thrust upon us all: Administrators, Complex Area Staff, and Teachers in a simultaneous mandate. Regardless of how useful the information may have been, the lack of transparency and thoughtfulness in the roll out limited effectiveness of the training.

Furthermore, my husband and I are both teachers and we may not have childcare for our elementary age daughter. We do not feel safe sending her (or my younger son) to a group setting amidst the rising numbers of the pandemic.

I wonder-what will benefit the DOE and the students we serve more: leave, resulting in no PE for the children at my husband’s school or no training for the teachers and schools I serve? Or, teleworking and continuing our duties from home?

Please, help the DOE to see the blind spot that seems to have taken hold in the vision of distance learning and the demands of this life changing year, and help the decisions makers to see the reality in front of us.

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Jessica Kato

Nurtured Thinking
To Whom it May Concern:

I am a preschool special educator at Wheeler Elementary. I have been a special educator for 12 years on Oahu. I teach in a fully self contained (FSC) classroom and I have serious concerns about the health and safety of all personnel involved, including myself and my educational assistant and most of all for the little preschoolers that I will be working with FACE to FACE daily.

The fact that the rest of the school is going into 100% distance learning and we are NOT, just tells me that their safety and health is regarded as more important than my special needs students and myself within the FSC setting. Why are there different protocol and expectations in place from the general education population and none FSC special education population and us (FSC)? We have Covid-19 rates of infections in the triple digits coming up daily. We see it infecting little children at higher rates these days with more businesses and establishments opening up and with the softening of regulations and easing of restrictions of the safer at home orders. Little children have been proven to be more susceptible of the virus these days with more and more exposure to the deadly disease. They are also carriers of the deadly virus and can pass it on to others with close contact.

So, why is my life regarded as less worthy than other educators? Why are my special needs students’ lives regarded less worthy than their none/less disabled counterparts??

Please consider and take into account what I am saying. I am seriously concerned about the safety, wellbeing and health of all involved, including those who are consistently being exposed to other staff and students during the school hours... Let’s minimize the exposure and work on flattening the curve!

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

S.Y. Im
Testimony

Scott Moore <scott.moore@k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov, Bob Davis <Bob.Davis@k12.hi.us>

My name is Scott Moore and I am the principal at Waialua Elementary School.

General Business Meeting

Concerns regarding distance teaching and learning at schools and access to schools for vulnerable learners.

I am advocating that teachers should provide distance learning from their classrooms and that vulnerable learners should have access to face to face instruction with proper safety precautions.

I am shocked by the fear mongering the unions have engaged in over the last several months. Folks who would no doubt demand that doctors, nurses, police, firefighters and Costco employees go to work everyday to meet their own needs are dead set against educators doing their part for the children of Hawaii. You might argue that those professions cannot do their job without being present. However, direct experience has taught us that, for most children, especially in elementary school, virtual education is profoundly ineffective. As ineffective as distance learning is for young children, we are starting the year with 90% of our students learning at home. But that is not enough for the union. Not only are they against our most vulnerable learners, like special education students, having the option of on campus instruction - they are demanding that teachers not even go to campus where the full array of technology is available and all their resources are at their fingertips.

There seems to be no limit to the scare tactics attached to this issue. I heard one person spout the following non-sense. “A classroom is a perfect place to spread the virus.” No, a place with children, the group least likely to contract or spread the virus, is not the perfect place to spread the virus. No, a setting where everyone is wearing a mask, spaced several feet apart, in a ventilated room that is constantly cleaned is not the perfect place to spread the virus. No, a setting where people stay through the day in fixed groups that do not intermix with others is not the perfect place to spread the virus. Perhaps the person who said this has a classroom confused with a nightclub or some other place where adults congregate in close corners with little or no protection.

There are several essential truths here. One is that we cannot perpetually hide from the virus. We hunkered down for two months and it was waiting for us when we came out. We can and should manage the spread of the virus so as not to over tax our health care system, but we must recognize that poverty and social isolation kill people too. A second truth is that our infection rate is still under 1% of the population and healthy people under the age of sixty have about a 99.5% chance of fully recovering. And children are even more resistant to the virus. As of August 16, the California department of health website reported an infection rate of less than 1% for school age children - that is about 46,000 cases out of six and a half million children. Out of almost 46,000 cases, there has been one recorded death, statistically that is two thousandths of one percent. This means that a school age child has a 99.998 percent chance of fully recovering if he or she should contract the virus.

For those of you about to say, if even one person dies ...that argument means that if even one child dies of abuse or neglect or suicide or drugs because they were not in school, you must open all schools back up, if that is your argument. Grown ups understand there are dilemmas in life. There is no perfect safety in school and no perfect safety at home. In the face of a dilemma, data and reason should guide decision making, not emotions and slogans.

We have already decided to do several weeks of distance learning to reduce a very low risk for students, thereby increasing childrens' risks in other areas - like neglect and abuse. The vulnerable learners that we seek to serve - 10-20% of school populations - need the face to face instruction. And teachers need to report to work to more effectively educate children who are distance 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.
I am writing and giving testimony regarding item V. I am a 61 year old special education teacher who has asthma and other health conditions that make me fearful of the teaching in person. I am putting myself and my 68 year old husband who has an autoimmune disorder at great risk of dying from Covid 19 if we are infected. The only way we are safe is if the DOE:

- Ensures 100-percent distance learning for all students across the state, including those in special education, until at least the end of the first quarter.
- Requires the DOH and HIDOE to provide clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students’ return. Many states and cities have specific triggers already in place for when schools should be open or closed based on COVID-10 cases, but Hawaii does not.
- Guarantees that the HIDOE honors HSTA’s contract by allowing teachers to work from home (telework) for as long as distance learning remains in effect.

My students are savvy in technology and are capable of learning and meeting their IEP goals via distant learning.

Mahalo,

Tammy Gamble
H.P. Baldwin high School
Maui

Sent from AOL Mobile Mail
Get the new AOL app: mail.mobile.aol.com
Distance learning

Brittany Nakawatase <nakawataseb@knights.k12.hi.us>  
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>  
Mon, Aug 17, 2020 at 7:15 PM

We need to be able to do distance learning until there is a vaccine or cure for this horrible virus, if we go back to the classrooms with students there will be plenty of deaths on the DOE and BOE’s hands!! Let teachers work remote from home, campuses are not safe either, teachers are still contracting covid even with no students on campus! We as teachers should at least have that choice of working from home in order to feel safe!!
Aloha, I am writing to advocate that the schools provide 100% distance learning for all students and no face to face learning due to the high numbers of covid cases as Hawaii has the highest rates of infection. We need to ensure our children, staff and families are safe before returning to face to face instruction. In addition the DOE should allow teachers to telework from home and follow the current contract. My son attends Kamehameha Schools maui campus and within the first 2 days of schools 2 staff we infected with covid 19 and it still unknown how many children were exposed. This week campus has been closed and the students will not get instruction until next week. They had stricter guidelines enforced than Hawaii DOE. Maui's hospitals is not equipped to care for a large number of covid cases .. please put our keiki and communities safety first.. Aloha, Dawn Shiota, 23 years with DOE
School Safety

robin wong <robinwongkauai@gmail.com>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  

Mon, Aug 17, 2020 at 7:24 PM

Aloha Board of Education. My name is Robin Wong and I teach freshman English at Kauai High School. Today was my first day in class with students. While the kids came to my classroom with masks on, it was impossible for them to maintain a distance of 6 feet as they were entering the classroom, departing the classroom, gathering socially, eating, sharing food, etc. The expectation that 14-year-olds are going to maintain a medical level social distancing is unrealistic, and for younger students, it's absolutely absurd.

I implore the Board of Education to mandate distance learning, at least for the first quarter of the school year. Students, especially younger ones, do not have the social conscience or self-regulation skills to maintain a safe distance. It was folly to imagine they might. The longer we continue to test the bounds of infection during this pandemic, the longer we are going to be seeing spiking numbers, hospitalizations and worse. Let's do what's right for teachers, students, their families and our community.

During these challenging times, we should not be pushing an education agenda above the health and safety of our society. Let's make smart choices. Isn't that what we're trying to teach our kids?

Robin Wong  
Kauai High School  
Freshman English Teacher  
Lihue, HI  
Cell 917-449-6311
Testimony

Dallas Correa <dallas.correa@k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Aug 17, 2020 at 7:27 PM

Aloha,

As a teacher at Kalani Highschool I ask that for the safety and health of all teachers, staff, and students you please allow us to telework from home while distance learning takes place. As someone with family at home it’s a worry that even if students aren’t in school, staff and teachers could still be spreading the virus as we have already seen! Mahalo!

Sent from my iPhone

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COVID safety

arose46054@aol.com <arose46054@aol.com>  
Reply-To: arose46054@aol.com  
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

In the face of our current spike and because of the students who are testing positive for COVID, I encourage the BOE to make the following changes:

Reinstate 100-percent distance learning for all students across the state, including those in special education, until at least the end of the first quarter.

Require that the DOH and HIDOE to provide clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students' return. Many other places have these guidelines in place. Most teachers and students do not feel safe returning to campus.

I am a teacher with over 20 years of experience, but I am being forced to choose between my health and my career. Please make these changes as we as a State try to get this virus under control.

Abigail Rose
Allow Teleworking

Ben Macklin <gb.macklin@gmail.com>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Aug 17, 2020 at 7:29 PM

Dear Board of Education members,

It seems reckless to bring the students back to face to face instruction given that many of your teachers are working well into the ages that place them at acute risk. Many of your teachers are the sole breadwinners in the family, and many live with parents or vulnerable loved ones who rely on them for financial support. All of us are trying to stay healthy and do our jobs at the same time. We realize that the custodial aspect of our profession serves a great service to our society and economy. But the benefits of our students being at school so that parents can work does not outweigh the risks associated with reopening face to face. Until the community spread is under control, I strongly urge you to allow our veteran teachers to do what they do best in the safety of their homes. We are prepared and have worked overtime to be ready for the highest quality instruction that we could create given the drastic changes we've responded to in the past month. Your teachers are working the hardest they've worked in their professional careers to continue to do our job in the face of a pandemic. Please let us teach online and help us be as safe as reasonable caution dictates.

Thank you,

Ben Macklin,
English 10-11,
Kealakehe High School, West Hawaii
TESTIMONY TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Brian Park <brianji.park@gmail.com>  To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Aug 17, 2020 at 7:30 PM

TESTIMONY TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Testifying on item V. A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.

MONDAY, AUGUST 17, 2020

7:09 p.m.

Board of Education:

My name is Brian Park. I am a Teacher at Moanalua High in the Central District on O’ahu. I am submitting testimony against DOE’s action to reopen schools for face-to-face learning.

I have been teaching Math at Moanalua High for about a year and a half now, but never experienced this type of fear that I am currently having in my life. And what scares me the most is the fact that our students are being placed in the classroom with their lives on the line. Nothing would be more tragic than the death of a student due to COVID-19. With the rising number of COVID-19 cases I beg of you to allow for 100% distance learning for our students. Not only are Hawaii’s teachers more than capable of instructing online with the advanced technology out there, but this would ensure the health and safety of our students. There is no preventative measure better than no contact at all. Students are the voice and hope of our future, so it would not be wise to throw them into a dangerous situation that could easily be prevented. Furthermore, no clear metrics are in place to ensure the safety of our students’ return to school. How do we know when it is genuinely safe to bring back our students? Shouldn’t we figure those metrics out first before naively rushing our students back to class? To me, figuring these things out would be prudent. By whose hands are these students sacrificing their lives for? Could you continue to live knowing the death of a student was caused by your reckless behavior? And please honor HSTA’s contract to allow teachers to telework. How can trust be built when you can’t keep your promises?

Mahalo,

Brian Park, Central District, O’ahu
SPED Vulnerability!!!!

Marilyn Rodgers <marodgers@kamaile.org>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Aug 17, 2020 at 7:30 PM

Please help! I am a veteran 69 year old Special Ed Teacher in a fully self-contained community based instruction program and placement with 8 students and 1 Educational Assistant. I truly am dedicated to these families because I also had a child with special needs in a similar program and placement, and know how vital this is to our mission as educators to produce community contributors, among other things. I am writing because I do not understand why these specific students, our vulnerable students with special needs, are having 4 days a week face-to-face in the classroom with me, when it is just so unsafe. They are required to practice social distancing, wear masks, and sanitize frequently. All fine! However, what do you think they really are experiencing by having to wear masks, stay away from each other, eat, drink, and sanitize from 8 to 3 pm daily at a desk in a classroom? Do you really believe coming on campus into a small classroom is a conducive environment for them to learn? What happens to hands on learning, problem based learning, and providing a safe environment so their amygdala (brain function area for learning) is open and ready to learn? Is there proof that doing this will improve their academic achievement, emotional health, and socialization, during a pandemic? Are we the experimental population being used to see if we can live through this? Come on Board of Education, Department of Education, and State of Hawaii? How would you like to be discriminated against? What happened to inclusion, and teaching in the least restrictive environment? What about letting these students work at home like everyone else where they have a chance to thrive?

Sincerely,
Marilyn Rodgers
808-232-6152
Kamaile Academy PCS
Waianae, Hawai‘i 96792
Inclusion Specialist
Special Education
DWorkRoom

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Marilyn Rodgers
M.Ed., Inclusion Specialist
Teacher Community Based Instruction, D-Workroom
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TEL: (808) 697-7110
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Before 7 am - after 3 pm: 808-232-6152 (cell - talk & text)

"E ha'awi na ka mea na'auao, a e 'oi mau ka na'auao; e a'o ho'o i ka mea ho'opono, a e mahuahua a'ela kona 'ike." - Na Solomon 9:9

"Share with a wise person, and he will become wiser. Teach someone righteous, and he will add to his learning" - Smartguys 9:9
Hello,

Right now, my middle school, Mililani, has, as its plan to reopen, a situation where there are up to 35 students at a time in a classroom, spaced as close to 6 feet apart as possible, and with shields in place in teachers’ desks. Students will stay in the same room, with the same kids, all day long, minus getting lunch and two recesses. Masks are worn at all times except to eat.

Teachers will go room to room, contaminating these large bubbles and being contaminated themselves as they do so, but each room also has an educational assistant, who must stay in the room with the kids all day.

Each of four days per week a different track of students will be on campus, but with the same EA in that room. So that EA now comes into contact with 4 bubbles of up to 35 students, plus the teachers who are coming in and out of the room as well.

While teaching, we teachers have masks, gloves, and face shields on, and we cannot get closer than 6 feet to students, for our own safety and the safety of our families. That means that having me for in front of a room with gear on that makes it difficult for me to be heard and for students to be heard, and without the ability to approach the students to gain insights on the individual level that being in person usually entails, is rendered all but useless.

It also means that because of the safety of all of us, students, staff, and teachers, we cannot engage students in the kinds of learning that research shows allows them to learn best: hands-on learning, group activities, physically collaborative projects, and are now impossible in this type of classroom.

The idea that students need in person learning is true, but when we are encasing them and us in face, mouth and nose, and hand coverings, they are not receiving a personal experience where they get to know their teacher: students are sitting in desks, 6 feet apart, working mostly silently on assignments online or listening to teachers lecture.

None of that is good education. Direct instruction has its place, but no more than 10 minutes of it per class should be the norm: students need to be engaged, and to have access to all of the social aspects of in person learning, or else the relationship-building functionality becomes moot.

While teaching virtually right now, we have several teachers in close proximity to each other because, again, we are a year round track school, so we don’t have classrooms for everyone. For my safety, I will not take my masks off while in public, and many others as well. Nor should we. So even with virtual learning, students are forced to watch us speak with masks on, which removes the ability for them to see their teachers. The point of being able to communicate and see their teachers as human beings and see their faces is again lost.

I have to record my lessons from home at night on my own time because of my concerns for my safety. I don't trust that our schools have plans to effectively protect us from infections, as I have seen the janitorial staff walk around without masks, use rags to clean rooms, etc. Further, there are among teachers many who believe that a face shield is enough, which scientifically is false, and others who have doubts about the virus or who are much more lax about social distancing among their peers.

Each of those people creates a point of failure wherein any plan of in person instruction can go wrong, with very little data to explain it or support why in the end. People will be people.

If we teachers can work from home, which we did successfully this past spring, we can not only be safe for our family and ourselves, but be able to engage students without masks on, with access to the safety and security that home provides. If teachers are scared and stressed, and wearing those masks for 7 to 9 hours a day is exhausting and stressful, even with our best efforts, it will still negatively affect our teaching. We are human. We constantly deal with being underfunded, unsupported, and attacked when we stand up for ourselves and our students. If you want the best from us, you need to let us be safe and secure to do so. Especially if doing so allows us to share our faces with our kids.
Why do we need your help? Because this state has a problem. Everyone keeps passing the buck, hoping each later below will fix things, trying to avoid responsibility.

Ige waits for the mayors, mayors can't cross over to state and federal jurisdiction, so they wait for others, Kishimoto tells the CAS's to come up with plans, the CAS's tell the principals to come up with plans, and what you have left is a mish mosh of crappy plans because there was no strong leadership to provide a baseline for anyone. All so everyone higher up the chain can blame someone else if it goes wrong, and claim to be a great leader of it goes right.

The same goes for distance learning. The Acellus program that my school at least, and I assume many others, are using for distance learning for some or many students, is trash. It's filled with boring videos, lackluster interactions, and videos of people who don't connect to our kids in any way. The DOE had time to create contingency plans for distance learning for 5 months. Instead it pretended like everything was fine, and because of that our kids are starting school late, with mixed signals from all levels of government, and every time the government has to REact instead of be PROactive, they cost time and quality of life for everyone.

We know this thing isn't going anywhere. We know it's going to get worse. We know that there's no magic cure, and that people will continue to spread it, especially here on Oahu. So why are we still risking everyone's lives while waiting for it to get worse and cause breakdowns in the system every time it happens? Every time a student or teacher gets sick at a school, it will shut things down and create chaos. And it will happen, repeatedly, interrupting learning. If we can teach them from home, to their homes, we can stop causing delays and fractures in the educational process.

We need clear guidelines about when to reopen schools, but we should plan for the year to be entirely virtual. Everything the DOE has done, reactively, this fall could have been resolved if they had actually done this right and created a plan for it. Instead, they gave dropped the ball, passing the buck, and hoping someone else will take the fall for either closing schools, reopening them and having an outbreak, or "being responsible for the economy."

We teachers have cared for our kids every day, not because we get paid a lot, not because we should be sacrificed, but because we care, and we love our kids and our communities. We deserve to be safe. Our families deserve to be safe. Our kids deserve to be safe. And everyone deserves the chance to be able to see each other's smiles while we teach and learn from each other. We can do that right now. All of it.

Thank you.

Jacob Cassens
I am a teacher in the Kalihi area. Not only is this area saturated with COVID-19 right now, but I also rely on public transportation (an hour each way) where social distancing is nearly impossible, especially in the mornings! This leads me to STRONGLY advocate for 100% distance learning for our keiki, telework for myself & all teachers (including special education), and I’d like the DOH & HIDOE to provide clear metrics on when my school campus will be safe for our students to return.

Sent from my iPhone
Testimony

Joana Nakandakari <jn.sayuri@gmail.com>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on item V A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.

I am writing as an educator in the honolulu district. I returned to work today with a few parents and students and truthfully had such high anxiety every second I was there. It is sad that as a teacher we have to worry about every space we touch and the fact that children and adults may be exposing us to COVID-19 without us knowing.

I am fully in support of 100 percent distance learning until at least the first quarter. With the increasing numbers and so many in the area that I teach, specifically because the demographics of our school has a high number of covid now. I am kindly asking you to consider allowing teachers to teach for the first quarter online. PLEASE… think of the spread of germs that will be saved and the high anxiety of the teachers. I became a teacher because I enjoy teaching children, but recently I am scared, worried, and frightened that I am putting myself in danger. That isn’t what I signed up for when I decided to teach, I didn’t think we would be put in this situation.

Also, please have DOH and HIDOE set clear metrics on when school campuses are safe to reopen. We are all running around worried and have no direction. Our principals still cannot answer our questions because they do not have guidelines themselves. We deserve to know what we are walking into and when it is clear of the triggers when schools are opened are closed. Please at least give us this comfort.

Lastly, it is stated clearly in our contract that when students are not in school teachers should not have to be in either. By making teachers attend school to do distance learning this clearly violates our contract that was agreed upon. Teachers deserve for our contract to be honored just as anyone from any union’s contract should be honored.

This affects me personally because my anxiety does affect how comfortable I am teaching. I am scared and have become incredibly anxious. I am around vulnerable people in my family and I myself have to be careful for personal reasons. I would really appreciate that distance learning is extended until we have clearance that it is SAFE to return without community spread. PLEASE, if I could beg I would because teachers still want to teach without using all of our sick leave and some of us do not have a bank of sick leave to use. Please think of the teachers that are asking for this… please consider that we care but care about our health as well. No one wants anything tragic to happen in our schools.
testimony

L Ginoza <babyginoza@yahoo.com>  
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>  

Mon, Aug 17, 2020 at 7:32 PM

I would like to submit testimony on - A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.

As the number of COVID cases rise in Hawaii I am very concerned about what we are doing to protect our children, teachers, and kupuna. Other states have opened school in the country and the results have not been positive. There are increases in the number of COVID cases, school's have had to quarantine (it was reported in one Georgia school district 800 people faced quarantine after possible exposure to COVID). Clearly having the students attending school is not working. Let us learn from this example and be proactive in keeping our people safe.

I am asking that you take action on the following. Please ...

• Ensure 100-percent distance learning for all students across the state, including those in special education, until at least the end of the first quarter (especially if stay at home orders are given). I realize that this creates hardship but the alternative is worse. Our students can always relearn what they missed at a later date. If they get COVID however they could be forever be plagued by health issues and worse they could even die. There is no recourse for that.

• Require the DOH and HIDOE to provide clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students’ return. Many states and cities have specific triggers already in place for when schools should be open or closed based on COVID-10 cases, but Hawaii does not. We need clear guidance so there is no ambiguity. With clear guidelines we will know when it is safe and we will know that it is alright to be physically present in school. Confusion will be lessened and hopefully with clear guidelines we can slow or stop the spread of COVID.

• Guarantee that the HIDOE honors HSTA's contract by allowing teachers to work from home (telework) for as long as distance learning remains in effect. If we are serious about stopping the spread of COVID than we need to follow the state's mandates. If the intent is for people to work at home than teachers should be given that option as well. As we are distance learning we have the tools to continue our teaching from the home environment thereby limiting spread.

I ask that you please consider these actions. In doing so you will help to keep our community safe. We can always return to learn another day but if you do not keep our school's safe we will no longer have that option.
As a CTE teacher of Mililani High School who does only hands on projects. I spoke with all my students today through Webex and google emails and all agreed to virtual learning at home for the first semester to begin with until this settles down.

As a teacher of Mililani High School, I feel that there is ample opportunity for teaching at home at this point in time. I do not want to go to a school and catch a virus that has been caught twice on this campus already. Yes, principal did a nice job in working with the teacher on one occasion and student on the other for mitigating the issues. But taking chances with people’s lives on campus even if separated is not a way of conducting business. We as teachers do need to check in and can check in from home working. We can still teach from home. Let’s get the state under control before adding more harm to the community. Please take this into consideration that students want their teachers. They want to learn from teachers that are not stressed as well about a possible virus contact at schools grounds.

Aloha James smith

Sent from my iPhone
Hi I am a teacher and teach at one of the a public schools in Honolulu. I am asking that we move to provide safer measures for students and teachers. I am pleading with the board to allow teachers and students to safely go to 100% distance learning for all students. Until Covid cases decline. I am also asking that teacher be allowed to have the same opportunity to work from home because cases are so high and I do not want to become infected by coworkers or students. I also have an elderly parent that lives with me and am concerned for her health and well being as well. I don’t know why safety measures were not put in place for all teachers and students. And why some principals allowed face to face meeting with students and teachers.
Please understand that I love what I do and just want safety measures put in place for all involved.
Thank you

Sent from my iPad
To Whom it May Concern at the Board of Education,

My name is Shelby Stern and I am testifying on item V. A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication. I teach at Pohakea Elementary school in Ewa Beach, one of the many schools that already had an employee test positive for COVID-19 prior to having any students return to campus. Since then, we have had members of our school (students and families) notify us that they have tested positive. School only officially started today and we are already seeing cases pop up!

Considering how scary of a situation this is to know that we had a person on our campus and families that our school serves test positive, it gives me extreme anxiety and leaves me feeling worried for our staff and greater community to know that the BOE and DOE plan to allow face to face instruction to resume come September 11, 2020. Allowing that to happen is doing a large disservice to our students and our families in which we serve and it is a slap in the face to every teacher and staff member who has put in massive amounts of work already this year and who pulled our students through the end of last school year when we abruptly halted face to face instruction. It is a glaring message to employees and to the community that the BOE and DOE do not care about our health and safety in the least bit.

In order to move forward safely, I would like to request that you vote to require the DOH and HIDOE to provide clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students’ return. Hawaii is one of the states in the US that does not have any guidelines for this, which shows just how unprepared we are to properly tackle this disease. We must get back to school, but we must get back to school safely or it would just spell out disaster for Hawaii. Furthermore, you should ensure 100% distance learning for all students state-wide for at least the entirety of the first quarter. This would allow students to continue to receive an education while allowing the DOH to create the aforementioned clear metrics whilst keeping us all safe.

Finally, I would like to request that you guarantee that the HIDOE honors HSTA’s contract by allowing teachers to work from home (telearch) for as long as distance learning remains in effect, however, I believe that it should be an option for teachers to be allowed to use their classrooms for distance learning if they need to. This could easily be coordinated with their principal so that the principal is always aware of who is on campus at any given time. For teachers who have elementary-aged kids, teleworking would be much more convenient as their children are discouraged from coming to school with them and residing in their classrooms. Furthermore, some teachers have more space to effectively teach online in their classrooms due to the ease of access to supplies and materials (including access to the internet for some educators).

Please make the best choice for the safety of everyone involved. I feel like teachers have had to beg repeatedly to keep us and our students safe, which is truly a shame. We should never be fearful of coming to work in a situation that could be prevented and we shouldn’t have to worry even more about our students than we already do.

I look forward to hearing you make distance learning effective for at least all of the first quarter and to require that the DOH provides clear metrics for a safe return.

Sincerely,

Shelby Stern
Work from home

Jeanine Coombs-Todd <jeaninerct@gmail.com>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  

Mon, Aug 17, 2020 at 8:07 PM

In the light of our recent spike in cases, the HDOE should not have any staff on campus that are not essential workers. It was completely counter-productive to allow any students/parents to come on any campuses. I am absolutely horrified at the lack of care being shown to school staff and teachers. Please correct this bad decision before we have an even greater shortage of teachers due to covid.

Jeanine  
Coombs-Todd  
MWIS/BKM district  
Teacher 7/8
Testimony: August 20 General Business Meeting concerns regarding food service

Nicole Woo <nicole@hiappleseed.org>
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Testimony of the Hawaii Appleseed Center for Law & Economic Justice to the
State of Hawaii Board of Education General Business meeting
Thursday, August 20, 2020, 1:30 p.m.

Comments on Agenda item III.V.A.: Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020 focusing on concerns regarding ... food service

Dear Chair Payne and members of the Board:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony concerning the provision of school meals to DOE students during this new school year.

As you know, about half of Hawaii’s public school students are economically disadvantaged. On a typical school day, nearly 65,000 students in our state rely on free or reduced-price school breakfast and lunch. For many, these are the only nutritious meals that they eat regularly. For their families, these meals help relieve financial stress by reducing their food budgets.

With our state’s economy being one of the hardest-hit in the nation, due to our reliance on tourism and travel, even more DOE families have fallen into economic insecurity and now need the nutritional support of free and reduced-price school meals.

That is why we urge you and the DOE to do all you can to help students access these meals. Hawaii Child Nutrition Programs (HCNP) has applied for and received waivers to give schools the flexibility to get meals to students as efficiently as possible. We recommend:

1) **Allowing students to pick up grab-and-go meals from a school that they are not enrolled at.** This is especially important for families that have children enrolled at multiple schools, as well as for students who are enrolled at schools far from their homes.

2) **Allowing students to pick up more than one meal at a time.** This would reduce the number of trips that students would have to make to pick up meals. Over the summer, School Food Services Branch successfully piloted Emergency Meals to You to provide shelf-stable meals to students in rural areas of our state, so they have experience in providing meals that do not have to be consumed soon after receipt.

3) **When students move to alternate-day schedules, send students home with multiple shelf-stable meals for their distance-learning days.** This not only would make it much easier for students and their families, but it would also enable schools to better maintain social distancing on their campuses and reduce the amount of work in the cafeteria.

Here are the key USDA waivers that will allow the above model practices to be implemented. You can find a list of them on HCNP’s website, with details in their spreadsheet titled "HCNP Waivers SY 2020-21."

- #1 **Non-Congregate Feeding:** This waiver allows SFAs to provide meals in a non-congregate setting to meet social distancing and reduce exposure of the participants. In addition, consuming meals on site has been waived.

- #2 **Meal time waiver:** This waiver allows school districts to serve more than one meal at a time thus limiting people to people contact. This allows schools the ability to distribute more than 2 meals a day. It allows schools the ability to handle staff shortages by limiting the number of pick up days in a week.

- #21 **Offer vs Serve Flexibility for High Schools:** This waiver allows the schools to prepack meals and not allow the students at the HS level a choice of what they can take to make a reimbursable meal. OVS is required at the HS level, so this was needed for the "Grab and Go" and "Multiple Meal" scenarios which could happen when B2S occurs.
We hope this information is helpful, and thank you for your consideration of this testimony.

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Nicole Woo
Senior Policy Analyst
Hawai‘i Appleseed Center for Law & Economic Justice
Honolulu, HI
808.369.2512
nicole @ hiappleseed.org
Aloha,

This email is regarding V. **Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.**

As a public school teacher and a public school parent, I am writing to ask that you protect the health and safety of everyone in our school community by extending full distance learning through the end of quarter 1, and preferably through the end of semester 1.

As cases continue rising across the islands, and the state struggles to respond effectively, it is unreasonable to ask faculty, staff, and students to put their health on the line. We all agree that we want keiki back in school where they will learn best, but not if it risks their lives and the lives of others at school and in the community.

Moreover, the constant upheaval and pivoting has already exhausted administrators, teachers, parents, and students and the school year has barely even started. We need to acknowledge that we will not safely return to school anytime soon and commit to full distance learning. The longer time frame we commit to, the more teachers and students can stop reacting to every new plan put out by the DOE and individual schools and the more we can get down to the business of teaching and learning.

Mahalo for your attention,
Caitlin Ramirez
Librarian, Mokapu Elementary School

Sent from my iPhone
Open our schools

ensoahulani@yahoo.com <ensoahulani@yahoo.com>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
Mon, Aug 17, 2020 at 8:14 PM

Aloha BOE,

I am a parent of 2 public school students and I must first say that we are so pleased with what the BOE and DOE have come up with this far. My children are able to meet their teachers this week and to get acquainted with the online programs that will be used by their teachers. Every family had a choice and so no one was forced and I believe equity was achieved. In my opinion schools should continue distance learning through the first quarter IF the number of Covid-19 positives continues to rise. But if within the next 3 weeks numbers should decrease then I urge you to open schools for families who want their children to go to school face-to-face through a blended model.

I am also a DOE elementary school teacher and as such support the plans that the DOE and BOE, as well as my school administrators have set. We are here to serve our students and families and to provide a free and equitable education for all. So if parents feel it is safe for their children to come face-to-face then we will serve them just like all frontline workers. At our school, if a teacher is high-risk for Covid-19 or feels he/she is unsafe to teach face-to-face, options were given to work it out within the grade levels to have that teacher be in charge of distance learning. There are so many options available. No one has been forced to be in harms way.

I’m writing to testify that the HSTA is only representing a percentage of teachers who are against the reopening of schools, but there are many teachers who are okay being frontline workers and feel proud to do so. I feel that I am well and able to provide a safe learning environment for my students and to problem solve when times get unsure and tricky.

If the numbers decrease, please allow students and teachers to learn the most unrestricted environment possible come September or October. Children whose families are safe should be allowed to come and learn.

Me ke aloha,
Ahuilani Wright

Sent from my iPhone
Ensure 100% Distance Learning from Home

Tai Baird <tai.baird@k12.hi.us>
To: Testimony.Boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Aug 17, 2020 at 8:14 PM

Aloha Board fo Education:

It is imperative that I write to address how serious the issue of educating our students in a safe environment is and how critical it is of us to uphold this. As a special education teacher, teaching the most vulnerable of our student population, it deeply concerns me that the state is asking us to continue to let some of these students continue to choose face to face instruction. We know it is not safe. As these cases continue to spike, it reaffirms how unsafe it is to our keiki. It is also not safe for their teachers. I am one of their teachers. I do not believe that our students deserve that from me as an educator. I believe our teachers should have a safe work environment and that we should not continue to have schools educating students who are at risk. I urge you to consider distance learning for all students until the end of the first quarter.

I currently have my 72 year old father living in my home with me. He is in the kupuna group where they are being asked to shop during certain hours, avoid going out in public whenever possible, and working hard to maintain his sanity among the stress the pandemic has caused. While he keeps on his health, actively works to exercise each day, I still feel like there is the potential to bring something home to him. It is important in our culture and society we remember that in Hawai‘i, many of us are living with our elderly family members, young babies, family members who also cannot do anything about their age or their health. If I bring something home, I have the potential to harm him fatally. Please consider my thoughts on this matter. It matters to me as well as my students. Mahalo nui loa, Tai Baird, SPED teacher, Kahului Elementary

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

Oahu has reached a full blown status of community spread to include DOE campuses. Infection and possible death can happen.

We should have 100-percent distance learning for all students across the state, including those in special education, until at least the end of the first quarter.

I ask the DOH and HIDOE to provide clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students’ return. Many states and cities have specific triggers already in place for when schools should be open or closed based on COVID-10 cases, but Hawaii does not.

Article X of the CBA clearly states that the Working conditions need to be safe. Currently, the working conditions are not safe from imminent infection somewhere on at least Oahu.

Please honor HSTA's contract and as an option allow teachers to work from home (telework) for as long as distance learning remains in effect.

Thank you

Richard Nakatsu, Ed.D
Testimony re: reopening of schools 20-21

Holly Nakamoto <hsnaka13@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Aug 17, 2020 at 8:20 PM

Dear BOE,
I am a kindergarten teacher at Konawaena Elementary on the Big Island. Like other teachers, I have serious concerns about teaching in person at this time. I miss being with my students but I am genuinely worried about the virus spreading due to being in close proximity for multiple hours at a time. I don’t want to teach kindergarten remotely, the idea is terrifying, but I am willing to put forth the added effort to figure it out if it means keeping the community, my students and my own family safe and healthy.

I also feel we need to be bold in the decision. Only saying 4 weeks when we know the virus isn’t going to be gone in that short of time only makes things harder. It makes planning difficult and causes so much confusion when the start date keeps changing. Let’s just commit to the semester, or at least the quarter, and the reassess halfway through.

Finally, I ask that the OPTION of teleworking be considered. Being forced to teach from the classroom is also forcing teachers to share the hallways, bathroom and other common areas. Having access to the classroom when we need supplies or as an option for teachers that prefer it would be most helpful.

I appreciate your time to read my testimony and trust that you will make the best choice for all teachers, students and our community.

Sincerely,
Holly Nakamoto
Konawaena Elementary
Hi my name is Kelly Tanimura and I have been a special education teacher for 18 years. Being a special education teacher, my priority has always been about the students and their needs. At this very time when coronavirus numbers are increasing and are at the highest numbers it would be very dangerous for students as well as staff to be in a confined classroom setting. This virus seems to be getting closer to home each week with numbers increasing and students not even starting yet. If anything was to happen to my students or to my staff it would be a difficult thing to hold in my heart.

I am urging the board to ensure 100-percent distance learning for all students across the state, including those in special education, until at least the end of the first quarter. This will help to reduce the amount of cases and it will ensure that all students are receiving a safe education. I think that our students safety is the most important thing at this time.

We should also require the DOH and HDOE to provide clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students' return. Many states and cities have specific triggers already in place for when schools should be open or closed based on COVID-10 cases, but Hawaii does not. We are already getting into situations when families and staff are asking if it’s safe to return to school when they are exposed to a person who has tested positive. With no guidelines in place we are asking our doctors to determine this and it varies from doctor to doctor.

Please consider the safety of all students and staff! Stay safe

Kelly Tanimura

Sent from my iPhone
Safety for staff and students

Debbie Johnson <ddebj123@icloud.com>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Aug 17, 2020 at 8:25 PM

I am not a teacher but a teachers assistant and I work with a teacher in the Special Educational Preschool at Eleele elementary school. We started a full class today with half students coming face to face in the morning and half coming in the afternoon. We were told that our class will be open for face to face learning every school day for the whole year! Our students are age 3-4 and require close contact to help assist them with daily functions including changing, toileting, wiping face, nose and mouth, assistance with walking, writing and feeding. These students are NOT able to keep their mask on. Today the masks ended up on the floor many times throughout the day, the same for the face shield. The students needed constant help putting the mask back on. I used so many gloves throughout the day that were purchased with my own money for my protection! How will myself and the teacher and the students be protected in this environment where the children are unable to wear masks? A cloth mask on adults part will not protect us from Covid-19 when the students are unable to wear protective gear and require close contact! Currently we will be the only full class open face to face every day for in person learning! The virus does not escape anyone, why are we the only ones doing a full class face to face every day especially when we can not be protected due to needing close contact to provide assistance to these very young students. In addition we have one group leaving and the next group coming at the same time with no time to clean between. This is unacceptable. In reality to perform the unties we perform in our classroom with children unable to wear protection and requiring close contact assistance, we would need a N95 mask for protection, a cloth mask won’t work.

Hi Sent from my iPhone
To the BOE,

My name is Jana Miyazaki, I am a second grade teacher on Kauai. Even though I teach on Kauai and our Covid cases has been relatively low, I don't feel safe or comfortable teaching face-to-face everyday. This is exactly what I was told to do starting today, along with 4 vulnerable students that are allowed to come to school every school day, including the days when I am teaching online to the rest of the class. So even though we are doing 100% distance learning, it's not the case, because I am teaching distance learning to 14 students AND teaching 4 students face-to-face everyday. How does that keep me safe if I am STILL teaching in person? These students are "vulnerable" because they are needy and I'll need to be next to them to help them while I also teach online, I don't see how that's possible OR safe.

In Oahu they keep announcing that additional targeted restrictions are needed to prevent the spread of COVID-19, and further details will be announced in the coming days. I don't know what those restrictions will be, but I'm hoping that there are key health and safety changes at our schools, and I really hope that they are statewide.

We need clear metrics or written guidance from the Hawaii State Department of Health and Department of Education on closing schools due to high case counts and fully reopening school buildings when it is safe to do so. In order to minimize the number of individuals on campus during the pandemic, no students should be physically coming to school and teachers should be allowed to work from home if they choose.

Thank you for your time,

Jana Miyazaki
Teacher testimony: wearing a mask can be detrimental

Jolene Saquilon <jolenealisha@me.com>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Aug 17, 2020 at 8:52 PM

Hello and good evening,

First of all I would like to thank all of you for working so very hard for not only the children of haughty, but the teachers, school staff, and parents as well.

As a special Education teacher, I did what I could to prepare myself and my students for a safe return. I built my own shower curtain partitions, out of PVC pipe. I bought our classrooms own supply of extra hand sanitizers, wipes, Lysol spray etc. We also had to get rid of a lot of desks, games and other items in the room so we could safely be seated as far apart as possible.

Although I was as prepared as much as I could be for today, I was not at all ready for the physical ailment of not getting enough oxygen. I wore my mask… and face shield, starting at 7:30am, when the first adult aides and students began to come in. By 10:30am, after doing a few activities, I felt dizzy, faint and nauseous. I couldn't stand on my own. I threw up breakfast. I felt hot and my face was numb.

Wearing a mask for elongated periods of time can be detrimental to our health and could pose negative long term side effects.

I humbly ask that you consider 100% distance learning, even for FSC students. There are a multitude of resources teacher can utilize to fulfill each students IEP goals. Please help us be the best we can for ourselves, our students and our families.

Thank you for your time in reading my concern.

Jolene S.
Testimony

dwoshiro@aol.com <dwoshiro@aol.com>
Reply-To: dwoshiro@aol.com
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Mon, Aug 17, 2020 at 8:55 PM

I am testifying on item V.A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.

Until COVID-19 is restrained within our community, we will continue to see high rates of infections and a rising death rate. Bringing thousands of our students together with thousands of faculty and staff during this time is irresponsible and dangerous and self-defeating. This action not only affects the people mentioned but everyone who stands behind them: friends, family, neighbors. I don't want to bring home the coronavirus to my wife during her medical treatment. I don't want my high school son to do so either. I don't want to visit it on my elderly mother-in-law for whom I buy groceries. As I'm the only driver in my immediate family, my contracting of the coronavirus would at least cause all kinds of difficulties. At worse?

I firmly believe that distance learning for all is the most prudent strategy for HIDOE to follow until COVID-19 is reduced to acceptable levels. We must establish clear metrics for the return of students and stick to them.

It is the decent thing to do.
Dear “persons” that make the rules,

It hurts my heart to put this request in writing. Not the fact that I have to, the fact that I am made to.... My health and that of my family (two special needs children, husband with Chrohns disease, mother in remission from cancer, daughter with asthma....I’ll stop there) are not to be comprised: I will take FMLA if I am not given the option to telework during a pandemic. I will encourage as many of my co- workers as I can to do the same. I will not compromise my health and safety. You will lose teachers. You will lose a lot of teachers that you can’t afford to replace. I am educated and can (in the near future-post election and COVID) pursue a hundred different careers here....most with much more pay. You will allow Hawaii’s children to fall even further behind. You will make a decision for the keiki of Hawaii, that they will never rebound from.

Make a temporary decision that will guarantees long term teacher satisfaction. It’s simple.

Charity Ebenezer
(Konaweana High School graduate...who came home to give back)
Sent from my iPhone
Please extend distance learning through first quarter

Jackson Coley <jcole_93@yahoo.com>  
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>  
Mon, Aug 17, 2020 at 9:05 PM

Aloha, I wanted to submit testimony asking that distance learning be made available to 100% of students, including special education students, and extended through the first semester.

I would also like to ask that teachers be allowed to work from home during distance learning. I believe that teachers and students should be out of the classrooms and inside their homes during this time to prevent the spread of Covid-19.

If possible I would also like the DOH and HIDOE to provide information on when schools should and should not be open based on Covid-19 cases.

Thank you for taking the time to read this, my partner is a teacher and I am very worried for their health and safety.

Mahalo

Jackson Coley

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone
I cannot fathom the reasoning of the DoE to prevent teachers from working remotely. Its own employees do it. Nearly every other industry adopted teleworking during this pandemic. My friends are corporate trainers, they teleteach just like we could. What difference does it make if I "broadcast" from home or my classroom. Many teachers are struggling (like many parents) to deal with childcare, teleworking can perhaps help this. Are administrators or DoE officials worried we will not work? They never come to classrooms anyway, nor have so far. They can easily observe teachers by joining a google meeting.
Teleworking will also allow for reduced utility costs and may provide flexibility for custodial staffs if every room does not need sanitized every day.
For accountability, the existing form is very detailed and obviously written to prevent any litigation. There is also a section about supervision and specific procedures to check in if they believe teachers will not work when at home.
It seems childish for the DoE to refuse to accommodate those who wish to telecommute. This pandemic requires flexibility and compassion for employees. Being able to telework would be a good step in that direction.
Again, why is the DoE the only institution that is not embracing teleworking during the pandemic.
Mahalo
Derek Monell
Kealakehe High School
Not enough custodian at our school!!!

Marie Aguilar <seaturtle3x@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Aug 17, 2020 at 9:12 PM

To whom it may concern,
The teachers bathroom at my school hadn't been cleaned in 4 days!!! Garbage was piling up and no toilet paper!!! Superintendent says we got it all cover and everything is great!!! Bull to that. Most schools are short handed in custodial help to kept all areas cleaned for COVID. Death sentence for teachers and students!!! Hospitals are not equipped to handle children COVID cases. Put everyone online and let teachers worry about lessons for social and emotional lesson. Plus add one year to exit time of 18 year to 19 year to graduate from high school during effected years. What's one year of schooling compare to a healthy Hawaii. Superintendent needs to get to know her teachers!!!! She is losing teachers respect in her unprofessional manner.

Sent from Marie Aguilar
Bad idea to open full time

Maria Karen Sheff <karen.sheff@k12.hi.us>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

The best idea provides that Covid number do NOT rise is that the we go to a hybrid plan as discussed at our school, Kealakehe high school. That would mean kids see us 2 days of long period classes then 2 days of on line classes. Throughout this hybrid approach all safety measures must be upheld including ensuring extra masks are on hand, sanitizers on hand, and social distancing continuously practiced.

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 to full Board on Acellus Academy curriculum

Kathy Ferguson <kferguso@hawaii.edu>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: Kathy Ferguson <kferguso@hawaii.edu>

Mon, Aug 17, 2020 at 9:17 PM

Dear HIBOE,

I urge the Department of Education to reconsider its use of the Acellus Academy remote learning program. It is a disgrace to force parents and children who have reasonable concerns about classroom safety to utilize this curriculum. According to the research done by my colleague Dr. Nicole Grove, at the University of Hawai‘i, Acellus Academy material was evidently created by a person without academic credentials and it makes wild right-wing claims about American history. Parents and children deserve a better on-line option.

Dr. Kathy Ferguson
Departments of Political Science and Women’s Studies
University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa
Distance Learning

Katrina T Ombac <katrina.ombac@icloud.com>  Mon, Aug 17, 2020 at 9:20 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I want students to be back. ESPECIALLY on the islands who have the pandemic under control. Do not lump sum us into one category as a state. This students need us, and they need their classmates. While it isn't safe for all schools to be back it isn't dangerous for all schools to be back either.
I am providing testimony in reference to item V.

We need to have 100% distance learning for ALL students through the end of first quarter, or until it's safe to return to face-to-face instruction.

I am a special education inclusion teacher at an elementary school. For the fourth quarter of last school year, I saw great success in teaching my students with disabilities online. I was able to teach new academic skills to small groups of students and individuals online.

I don't see a need for students with disabilities to attend in person. They can access education online as well. Bringing them to campus would unnecessarily jeopardize their health. Students with disabilities are often more likely to become severely ill, and they require adults to be near them, guiding them throughout the day at school. These are reasons that it's more important to keep them home compared to general education students.

Also, since I am an inclusion teacher, I share a classroom with the general education teacher. We share supplies (like a telephone) and space throughout the day. I am being unnecessarily exposed by going in to work, when my entire job online-teaching can be done from home. If she and I both have to teach different groups online at the same time, the background noise from the other person will get in the way of our teaching. Also, I will have to take off my face mask to teach online, and would rather not do that with someone else in the room. I don't see a need for teachers to go into work if they are online teaching, and this causes unnecessary risks.

We need to value everyone's life equally--students and teachers, general education and special education--and recognize that there is no need for teachers or special education students to be present at school right now. We can succeed online also.

Thank you
Please do not allow anymore children on campus for the health and safety of all of us! On the ENTIRE big island. I'm at one of two schools going face to face all day for the four days this week. The procedures used to make these decisions are reckless, and probably non-existent. It's not fair that teachers at these schools risk their health and had absolutely no idea or say in the outcome of some schools going suddenly all distance! It's not fair and highly dangerous in the middle of a raging PANDEMIC. There is a rumor going around that there is a positive case at the lanakila government housing residence, the community I serve at Chiefess Kapiolani. I'm terrified to go to school on Tuesday! I was told to take leave if I'm so scared. UNFAIR!!!!!! I was put in a position of face to face this week without a vote or notice of possible change to go virtual like the other schools in my complex!!!!! I felt backstabbed and abandoned. I want to do the best I can for these kids during these times but do not want to risk my health and my dad's health. There should be distance learning at least till second quarter. If any student, faculty member, or family member dies from a link to school... their death is on all of your hands.... an unnecessary and preventable death!!!!!!!!!!!

Sherrilyn Sampaia
Second grade teacher
Sent from my iPhone
Health and safety

Eman Al-Misky <eman110@hotmail.com>
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Mon, Aug 17, 2020 at 10:13 PM

Teachers need to be protected and we must shut down schools! We should not have 100 adults on campus using the same restrooms touching the same doors during COVID-19. My sister is a physician and she said this enemy is invisible and can survive on doors handles, bathrooms, faucets and other shared items at the school. I can do the same job with her home or at school. I do not feel safe at school and at the same time come home to a small child who is vulnerable to this virus! I am almost 50 years old and fear for my life every day! Please choice and protect both the teachers and the children who are most vulnerable to COVID-19! Also there’s not enough space in my room for students to meet within 6 feet distance!

Sent from my iPhone
impossible to keep the students distanced, the masks on them, and things clean enough for us to be safe

our school started with the teachers at home teaching, but special ed. teachers and students expendable. . . so they are at school

one of the PCS's

... Thank you, Robert Beckvall
Love sees what is invisible.  
Simon Weil
Aloha everyone,

I am a permanent school custodian at an elementary school in Honolulu district. I believe the decisions left for the principals to decide what shall happen is just inappropriate, the school administration does not know how to communicate with the school staff on safer protocols. I feel the actions being taken at these schools could either be right or wrong, but it meets somewhere in the middle. School custodians must be able to work in a safe environment, not only the teachers. A school setting is “A” team effort, not an “I” effort. The teachers need the custodians, the custodians need the teachers to make it possible for the kids to learn in a effective environment with love. Close the schools for an entire month minimum and help minimize the spread of virus. Mahalo!!!
ADA paperwork filed, no changes

RAB <robertallenbeckvall@gmail.com>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Due to having lung issues, and some mental health issues I ended up filing ADA requests which they say the head of school can work on or deny
	his I did to try and protect myself and my family, not to mention the kids and others at the school

my wife is also in the 60+ age category and picks me up daily

I am a sped. teacher at a PCS that started Monday, and I have kids daily 8-2:15 M-F, while our regular teachers are at home teaching

these students are not adhering to the masks being on and other protocols as both their special education needs cause, along with being in elementary

my wanting to do the right thing and work with sped kids as a 20+ year veteran sped teacher should not be a sentence of sickness, when it does not need to be

100% distance should mean 100% distance-it does not and now parents are getting scared and telling us so

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Thank you, Robert Beckvall
Love sees what is invisible.  
Simone Weil
Covid and school

David <dberry1954@yahoo.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Aug 17, 2020 at 11:09 PM

Aloha Board of Education members.

As a special education teacher I feel strongly that it is not yet safe for teachers or students to return to school campuses yet. The daily numbers of new Covid 19 cases is overwhelming. We need to be safe. All of us. Teachers should be allowed to work at home if we choose to. We need to feel safe to help our students be safe.

Please do the following:

- Ensure 100-percent distance learning for all students across the state, including those in special education, until at least the end of the first quarter.
- Require the DOH and HIDOE to provide clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students’ return. Many states and cities have specific triggers already in place for when schools should be open or closed based on COVID-10 cases, but Hawaii does not.
- Guarantee that the HIDOE honors HSTA’s contract by allowing teachers to work from home (telework) for as long as distance learning remains in effect.

Thank you.

David Berry

Sent from my iPhone
Acceulus Program needs to removed!

Kelly E Duell, MA, NBCT <maultechgirl@gmail.com>  
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
Mon, Aug 17, 2020 at 11:12 PM

I’ve been in communication with folks at the Hawaii State Teachers Association as well as Hawaii public school teachers and parents regarding serious concerns that we share about the use of Acellus Academy, its founder and owner Roger Billings, and the content of its curriculum. Acellus Academy is the only distance learning option approved by the Hawaii Department of Education for public schools.

I’d posted concerns about Acellus on Facebook and what I’ve found out is truly horrifying. The use of this platform should be of concern not only to Hawaii public school parents, but to any parent with children in public school as Acellus is being adopted across the US because of its low cost.

The first issue is Roger Billings’ questionable education credentials. Billings goes by the title of ‘Dr.’ but this is a title he has awarded himself based on a degree that he created (a ‘doctor of research’ degree) at an institution that he founded called the International Academy of Science, which is not accredited. It also seems that Billings has awarded a number of these ‘doctorates’ to others designing the Acellus curriculum. While Acellus is accredited, the International Academy of Science is not. This raises serious questions about whether or not there are any primaries involved in the designing of the Acellus curriculum who have an actual background in education. We would never hire a public school teacher who had invented their credentials, so it is unclear how Billings’ credentials as well as his associates’ were vetted and approved by the DOE.

Second, while there is actually very little to be found online about Roger Billings and Acellus Academy beyond his own promotional materials, one exception is an article published in The Pitch, a Kansas City weekly, which highlights Billings’ involvement in founding a polygamous cult. Allie Johnson, the reporter for the Pitch article, discusses documents from a lawsuit involving Billings and the Novell Inc. software company, where Billings is said to be the founder of a cult called the Church of Jesus Christ of Zion. Their now defunct website purportedly listed Billings as the church’s “Patriarch and Prophet,” and the Novell Inc. court documents mention Billings taking other people’s spouses as “celestial wives.” On the LDS Freedom Forum, people who report living on Billings’ compound say they helped to design/worked on Acellus. Without needing to know anything further about these bizarre claims, I cannot imagine allowing Acellus Academy and Roger Billings to educate any of our students online and collect data on their school progress. See: https://www.thepitchkc.com/dr-hydrogen/

Third, various posts shared with me by a Hawaii public school teacher and the other by a Hawaii public school parent - are deeply concerning. The first is concerns over part of the Acellus curriculum that states people who were enslaved in America were only ‘beaten’ if they were “bad, taking too many breaks, or were late to work.” The other is a Tweet from Billings himself that has since been deleted, which advocates for allowing COVID to run through the population with the hashtag # MAGA. In addition, FireAngel is the teacher for all the Kinesiology / Physical Education and SEL courses; it is creepy at best. (See attached video clip)

There was absolutely zero vetting of the full Acellus curriculum by the HIDOE. The complaints from teachers about racist, unscientific, historically inaccurate content, and what one can only say is a stripper, suggests that if a vetting did take place, it was not thorough enough.

I reached out to HSTA and was told that the Board of Education directed the Department to have options for families who were uncomfortable sending their children to school. The Department did not come up with options, and instead was intending to force students and parents to choose homeschooling, and withdraw their children from the public school system. After serious concerns were raised about this, the Department quickly tried to come up with a solution and Acellus was what schools were told to use.

What we have now is a two-tiered system among students at Hawaii public schools. We have those who have opted for in-person classes who will still be taught online for the foreseeable future. These students will shortly be able to pick up class materials from qualified educators, and develop relationships with their teachers and peers (albeit online). Alternatively, we have those students whose parents opted for distance learning and will now be taught by Roger Billings and his employees, and who will not be allowed to build a connection to their teachers or peers. This is unacceptable, and accreditation is simply not enough in the case of Acellus Academy.
Our children deserve a real public school education, and teachers and staff deserve to be safe. Instead of being forced to choose between risking their lives or financial ruin, teachers should be supported in directing their energies toward developing a comprehensive online curriculum that includes all students, while providing the social contact and legitimate learning our children so desperately need right now.

Kelly E. Duell, M.A., NBCT
Testimony

Lauralee Owens <lovelyyawaigal@gmail.com>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
Mon, Aug 17, 2020 at 11:16 PM

V. A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.

Board of Education:

I am a special education teacher. I've been teaching for 19 years, five in Hawai'i. I began at WHS in 09/10, until my mother died, then I returned to Hawai'i at MMS since 2016. More than anything, I want to teach the Keiki here and I am excited to do it in person as soon as possible. I miss my students, I miss the hugs, the sweet high fives and other forms of affection we all came to take for granted before COVID. I have sacrificed greatly to be able to remain and teach here in spite of the high cost of living and being geographically far from my grown daughter and son-in-law, especially now.

I love my job and I love living here. But just turning 60, having had an autoimmune disease (Guillain-Barre syndrome) in 2015 after pneumonia that put me in ICU, the hospital, then Physical Therapy, receiving IVIG transfusions for a week. My history of respiratory and immune illness and being obese all serve to make me one of the "vulnerable". Many of my students also have health issues that make them MORE likely to be susceptible to disease, as Corey Rosenlee said, not impervious to infection and certainly not safer than their general education peers!

And yet, we are being told we have to teach in person on a regular basis for 2-3 times a week, in the same room all day. Middle school students in the same room all day. I can only imagine how easy that's going to be to get students to be willing to stay socially isolated from 8-2:30 in the same room, only leaving to use the restroom and get their lunch, then return to the room to eat it. This is a disaster waiting to happen. I love my job, I love the Keiki and I love Hawai'i. Last year, when active shooters were our worst fear in schools, I was willing to lay my life on the line to protect my medically fragile students who couldn't "run away" from imminent danger in the case of a shooter. I don't feel the same about being forced to either quit my job and suffer the same financial hardship my daughter, a small business owner has faced like so many others or putting my own life and that of my students and their families at risk to essentially babysit them? We aren't even teaching new content, we are being instructed NOT to instruct as we have been trained, but to "help them access the general curriculum". A misnomer, since that is our job already as special educators. This entire policy is nonsensical, redundant, and DANGEROUS!

We NEED all of these items that the HSTA is asking:

- Ensure 100-percent distance learning for all students across the state, including those in special education, until at least the end of the first quarter.
- Require the DOH and HIDOE to provide clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students’ return. Many states and cities have specific triggers already in place for when schools should be open or closed based on COVID-10 cases, but Hawaii does not.
• Guarantee that the HIDOE honors HSTA’s contract by allowing teachers to work from home (telework) for as long as distance learning remains in effect.

This is the situation for me. I already have my resignation letter drafted and have, in fact, shared it with my immediate colleagues to give them a "heads up" as to what I may have to do if our schools continue to put us in harm's way.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Mahalo Nui Loa,

Lauralee Owens
To the Board of Education,

I am testifying on Item V. A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.

I am an Elementary School teacher on Hawai’i island. COVID-19 is spreading rapidly across our state of Hawaii. The numbers keep rising everyday. Everyone is vulnerable, no matter what age. Our keiki and teachers of Hawai’i deserve to be protected. To do so, 100% distance learning for all students across the state, including those in special education, needs to occur until at least the end of the first quarter. Even at that time, things should be evaluated without putting a date attached.

In addition, the Department of Health and Hawaii DOE need to provide clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students’ return. Many states and cities have specific triggers already in place for when schools should be open or closed based on COVID-10 cases, but Hawaii does not. Also, Hawaii DOE needs to honor HSTA’s contract by allowing teachers to work from home (telework) for as long as distance learning remains in effect. Teachers are professionals and should be allowed to telework from home.

Fully reopening schools for face-to-face instruction without clear guidance is reckless and dangerous. Currently, my principal does NOT have the manpower and/or equipment to clean, sanitize, and disinfect frequently touched surfaces (handrails, doorknobs, bathrooms, sinks, copy machines, laminators, etc. In addition, our principal cannot answer many questions that we are asking about health and safety protocols that are currently not being done. If schools can not clean, sanitize, and disinfect correctly now without students, how is it going to be different when students return to school?

Classroom teachers should be able to remotely teach from home using technology tools through their distance learning platform and video conferencing. Teachers should be allowed to teleconference from home with their colleagues to collaborate with each other. Currently teachers are in school and it is very unsanitary because frequently touched surfaces are NOT being cleaned, sanitized, and disinfected.

I humbly ask you for your support with this.

Aloha,

Lana Haleamau
Aug. 20th BOE Meeting Testimony

Jen Sarpi <jensarpi@gmail.com>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Re: V. A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.

Dear Board Members,

I am writing to request that you plan for the health and safety of the students and educators of Hawaii. I am an SSC and a parent of 7 children who are attending public schools in Hawaii. I am terrified of my family catching Coronavirus due to our participation in public education.

As I watch in the news the number of educators who are being diagnosed with Coronavirus grow, I am dumbfounded as to why we are still required to go into school. I only see risks involved for no apparent reason or benefit. Please help Hawaii’s education to be safer for both students and educators by allowing students to learn at home until clear metrics are met for it to be safe for teachers and students to return to school.

Hawaii has been willing to put restrictive measures in place to preserve the lives of her children. Please extend this aloha to hard working educators who deserve the respect of being allowed to fulfill their professional responsibilities in safety.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jen Sarpi
--
Jen Sarpi
I am sending you testimony for your meeting:

A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.

I sent an earlier email but did not specify what I was addressing, and so feel compelled to write to you again. You have no idea how costly and difficult it is to provide a safe environment for the students in my caseload.

I am a special educator, and have been for over 20 years here in Hawaii for the Department of Education. I currently have 8 students from 7th to beyond high school age, who are in a fully self contained community based instruction (CBI-FSC) program and placement at Kamaile Academy in Waianae.

Because these students are eligible for special education, they are the one population of students who are offered a free and appropriate education face-to-face during this crisis, rather than being given the same as everyone else, true safe distance education. It is totally unsafe for them to be coming to school everyday!

First of all, there are toxic chemicals being introduced into our poorly ventilated classrooms regularly. Secondly, these classrooms cannot safely accommodate 10 adult-sized people with proper social distancing. Plus, there is no effective way to teach them without coming into close contact with them. We are all at risk of losing our lives, or suffering needlessly.

I want to mention that I only use safe botanical sprays and wipes that are on the N-List of disinfectants/ cleaners registered with the EPA. I am purchasing Soluguard Botanical, from Melaleuca. On occasions in the past, custodians sprayed, cleaned, and disinfected my classroom, and for days we all suffered from coughing, choking, allergic reactions, asthmatic episodes, and other central nervous system effects. My students with autism, intellectual disabilities, and other categories of vulnerability just do not do well with these kinds of irritants. Let me know if you would like to review a longitudinal study about this, or to view a short video about this.

I am forced to put a red X on my door requesting custodians skip my room with their solutions containing chlorox, ammonia, lysol, or other quaternary disinfectants. These just should not be used around children with such amazing frequency, and anywhere on our school campuses for that matter, especially around the most vulnerable of our children. What are you thinking? Look up "body burdens" for the research. Get informed. This is unacceptable. We are poisoning our children.

Please consider the following question yourself, if you were me or anyone of these children. **Why are we having our children with special needs come to school?** Show me the data on how
this is going to increase their academic skills, social and emotional health, and improve their lives?"

Distance education is possible for everyone using a variety of methods. I feel like we are being held hostage to face-to-face programs and placements amidst a pandemic crisis, where everyone else is asked to isolate to keep safe.

What happened to inclusion? This decision is not logical. It is negligent, and it is against all that we propose to be --- a caring and loving community of special educators.

Please be wise, and help us!

**Mahalo,**
Marilyn Rodgers  
M.Ed., Inclusion Specialist  
Teacher Community Based Instruction, D-Workroom  
Kamaile Academy PCS  
85-180 Ala Akau St. Waianae, HI 96792  
TEL: (808) 697-7110  
FAX: (808) 697-7115  
Before 7 am - after 3 pm: 808-232-6152 (cell - talk & text)

"E ha'awi na ka mea na'auao, a e 'oi mau ka na'auao; e a'o ho'i i ka mea ho'opono, a e mahuahua a'ela kona 'ike." - Na Solomona 9:9

"Share with a wise person, and he will become wiser. Teach someone righteous, and he will add to his learning" - Smartguys 9:9
Testimony

DanaLei Koomoa <danalei_fishy@yahoo.com>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  

Tue, Aug 18, 2020 at 12:51 AM

Aloha,
I would like to focus my testimony on Item V, update on the reopening of school. Today was the first day of school for me. I woke up feeling uneasy, nervous, and worried. Not because I thought I wasn’t ready as a teacher but because I still had so many questions and concerns regarding the safety and wellness of myself and students. I do NOT have a full virtual learning class. I have students in my classroom as well as students online. I still don’t feel that the safety and health guidelines of my school are clear or consistent. With that said, I also do not feel like that should be put upon my principal to figure out. Why don’t we have clear protocols for each school (across the board)?
I would love more than anything to have ALL my students with me! I understand the circumstances. Having to teach online while teaching students face to face (simultaneously) was very interesting but mostly I felt not in control. I felt as if I was putting my students (in class) health more at risk by not being able to give them the 100% attention that they expected. It was a constant battle between face to face and online.
I imagine there may not be many testimonies due to the fact that after the first day of school, we, teachers are exhausted. I fully believe that when the time is right our keiki should come back to school but having that plan is very important. Having those perimeters established so that we have milestones to accomplish rather than a “let’s wait and see” attitude is unacceptable. Like I said earlier, I can’t wait for the day to have all my students but only when the time is right! I also should not have to be constantly told by my superintendent to “show up” or “step up” for our keiki. My life is not expendable and nor is my own family or my students. I am a teacher. I step up every year! I step up when there is no money for supplies, when my students need snacks, late unpaid hours, extracurricular, volunteering on weekends, and much more. Knowing that teachers do these things should not be used against me during a pandemic.

Me ke aloha,
DanaLei Ko’omoa

Sent from my iPhone
Testimony on Item V.

Debbie Olive <readinggirlme@yahoo.com>  
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>  

Aloha,

I am a 2nd grade teacher at Kea’au Elementary School on the Big Island. Perhaps the best way to explain why having children return to school under the restricted environment of Covid 19 is not safe or wise is to have you come teach in such a classroom. Imagine yourself for 6 hours having to “encourage” 7-year olds to keep 6 feet apart (especially during recess!) and - by all means- keep those face coverings on! Even we teachers, who have had time to practice for the last two weeks while in school, are unable to maintain those conditions and for less than an hour! I think you can see immediately see how unnatural such a proposition is for our little ones and how nearly impossible to maintain for the duration of a school day.

My invitation to you, Board and Department of Education members, is to come walk in the shoes of a classroom teacher for a week, not a day. Perhaps even more - for a school year under the restrictions of Covid. Hats off to you, if within a week’s time - not one student or even yourself - has violated one of the safe practices mandated by the CDC guidelines. Bruce Anderson, the director of Department of Health, has publicly stated that people will become infected if schools are re-opened.

We do want students back in school. We want to teach under conditions that are safe for all and allow for the maximum learning opportunities for our children. The restricted teaching environment we will need to operate within in order to prevent contamination from the Covid virus is counter to all research-based practices for optimal learning. Therefore, I endorse 100% distance learning in our schools until a "cure" to Covid can be found.

Sincerely,
Deborah Olive
Aloha HI, Board of Ed

Thirty-Six year veteran teacher here, June 1...I recently retired. There is absolutely no common sense to exposing All Humans... in person, at this dire deadly virus times! Please, as a school board... stop this crazy policy... my wife teaches at Kapolei... and 100's of my friends shouldn't have to risk their lives, to educate students... plus kids should be protected! Please do the right thing... distant learning is needed. No campus learning in person. I pray, it doesn't take ONE BODY BAG OR MORE, FOR THIS STATES LEADERSHIP TO PRIORITIZE A KNOWN FACT... LIVES COME FIRST!

MAHALO, Robert E. Walker, M.Ed

Sent from AOL Mobile Mail
Plea For Distance Learning From Big Island Special Education Teacher

Travis Flynn <travis_flynn@yahoo.com>  
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>  

Tue, Aug 18, 2020 at 4:32 AM

Dear Board Members,

I am writing to you from a place of desperation, exasperation, hope, and solidarity.

I am desperate for my employer to provide me with safe working conditions—conditions that won't put me, my students, my children, my wife, and my parents at risk of death.

I am exasperated by inconsistency in rollout plans and insistence by my employer that I regularly work directly and in person with special education students and fellow school employee in this time of rapid community spread of COVID-19.

I am hopeful that that you, your fellow board members, the Governor, the Superintendent will identify with the very real and very significant danger that many of our teachers find themselves in.

I stand in solidarity with teachers and support staff across the state who are placed in positions where they are having to choose between their family's financial survival and the severely impactful decision not to come to work. I stand in solidarity with those who have, those who are on the verge of, and those who are unable to use sick leave, personal days, or even take unpaid leave in order to ensure that their families and the community at large are as safe as they can be.

I come to you with the perspective of a special education teacher who currently works directly with students on campus at Kaumana Elementary School on the Big Island. With current exceptions in place, my amazing students have the right to face-to-face instruction on campus. While I absolutely desire to support my learners and understand that in-person support can be an amazing resource, I arrive to work each day not knowing if we are going to be safe. I wonder if I have done enough, or if enough has been done for my students and myself by the school, to ensure safety. I take many efforts to ensure safety. For example, I have spent over $300 dollars and many hours of my own time crafting transparent plastic barriers that might allow my daily interactions with students to be safer, and I am fastidious about following recommended health and hygiene practices in the classroom. Still, I feel at risk. Due to the nature of virus transmission, I feel my workplace is not a truly safe place, and that it is irresponsible to put so many individuals in a single enclosed classroom.

Please consider the wellbeing of all those that you can impact by judiciously leveraging the power you have to ensure the following:

- instate distance-only learning for ALL students across the state, regardless of classifications such as English learners, students with disabilities, etc.
- allow teachers the right that is guaranteed in their contracts to work from the safety of their homes
- call Superintendent Matayoshi to task regarding her inaccurate and confusing messaging regarding the convoluted reopening efforts, and insist she develop a coherent plan for opening and closing schools that is based on transparently-established and epidemiologically-sound metrics

I have faith that you, the higher power that can establish change, will recognize that HIDOE leadership decisions regarding school reopening have been reprehensible and need remedy. I have faith that you will right this ship before more damage is done.

Most sincerely,

Travis Flynn

-Hawaii Island special education teacher, father of two public school students, spouse of a healthcare worker, and member of extended family that is especially vulnerable to COVID-19
Aloha Board of Education,

I am testifying on item V. A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.

Please take action on the following items to better support the health and safety of Hawaii's keiki, families, teachers, and community.

- Require the DOH and HIDOE to provide clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students' return. Many states and cities have specific triggers already in place for when schools should be open or closed based on COVID-10 cases, but Hawaii does not. Once we have these metrics students, parents, and teachers will feel safer and be more clear on how to move forward.
- Guarantee that the HIDOE honors HSTA's contract by allowing teachers to work from home (telework) for as long as distance learning remains in effect.

We had our first day of school today. It was so great to see the students. I have truly missed working with them. It would be incredible to see the Board of Education and HIDOE visit schools to see what learning looks like during the current pandemic to get a clearer understanding of what is being asked of students and teachers, so that we can work together to provide a positive, safe, and social emotional focused education for all Hawaii's keiki. We are in this together and will be depending on Hawaii's keiki in the future. The choices we make now have to be made with our hearts and aloha.

Mahalo for your support,
Jonathan Kissida

Jonathan Kissida
Teacher at Kilauea Elementary School
PO Box 1237
Kilauea, HI 96754
https://www.donorschoose.org/mrjon

"Yeah, well, I've got a dream too. But it's about singing and dancing and making people happy. That's the kind of dream that gets better the more people you share it with. And well, I've found a whole bunch of friends who have the same dream. And it kind of makes us like a family." Kermit the Frog
With the high positive COVID-19 numbers, the BOE needs to take action to protect teachers and children! I support the following items:

- Ensure 100-percent distance learning for all students across the state, including those in special education, until at least the end of the first quarter.
- Require the DOH and HIDOE to provide clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students' return. Many states and cities have specific triggers already in place for when schools should be open or closed based on COVID-10 cases, but Hawaii does not.
- Guarantee that the HIDOE honors HSTA's contract by allowing teachers to work from home (telework) for as long as distance learning remains in effect.

Sincerely,
Brianne Kuratani
Please continue with distance learning

Jaclyn Wills <keakulina@icloud.com>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
Cc: Jaclyn Wills <jaclyn_96792@yahoo.com>

Tue, Aug 18, 2020 at 5:39 AM

Please continue with distance learning for the remainder of the year. This will help to provide some kind of continuity with instruction and the daily lives of students, families, and staff, while this pandemic gets under control. This may also help to retain teachers who are fearful for their lives should “face to face” return to campus.

If distance learning, teachers / staff should be able to decide to come to their classroom or not, as the working class environment may be more productive than from home if they see fit.

The other day when it was computer pick up day, a preschooler climbed out of the wagon grandma had her in, and walked straight to me to give her a hug.....I am a preschool teacher, and that is what we normally do. I couldn’t push her away, although there were round stickers on the cement to designate 6 foot distancing, so I needed to return that hug. Her brother then climbed out of the wagon, and the older sister and we had to have a group hug. I really miss the families and their children, and I know that it was not the right thing to do at this time, but how can you push a child away and be physically distanced? I later returned back to my classroom and broke down crying like a baby, Including wailing out loud......something I hadn’t done in years ( I am now 64 1/2). At this time I feel for the safety of all, that distance learning for the remainder of the year would be the best choice. We can still see each other on FaceTime, or google meets, be available whenever for families, and for preschool, coach parents and guardians with the Early development Of their children, instead of placing them in classroom where they may inadvertently learn rejection because we need to keep the 6 ft distance. We can no longer let them sit on our laps or give them hugs within the classroom environment due to this pandemic......just until this virus is under control and there is a vaccine......Please for the sake of the children.....mahalo, Jaclyn Wills

Sent from my iPad
Hello,

I am reaching out testifying against line item V. A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.

To ensure the safety of our keiki, teachers/staff and communities it is essential that the board takes action.

We are asking 100% distance learning for ALL students to the end of the first quarter. As a teacher, I have worked so hard to prepare for distance learning for this whole quarter. I am prepared to teach fully online. I am not prepared to suffer the consequences of losing a student or coworker over reckless action of bringing them back into school.

There NEEDS to be clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students return. We need to follow the footsteps of other successful states and provide information on specific triggers in place for when schools should stay closed or reopen.

Lastly, it is absolutely essential that the HIDOE honors the HSTAs contract by fully allowing teachers to work from home for the remainder of distance learning. As much as we can utilize masks, cleaning, social distancing, and other attempts on campus, it still is not enough. Teachers are getting sick and those who are not are coming to work terrified. It’s absolutely insane that teachers are required to be around others during this pandemic. We can do our jobs safely from home. Why won’t you protect your teachers?

I am a 2nd grade teacher at Makaha Elementary. My work from home plan is essentially the exact same as when I work from school. I have 2 state provided devices that I already use daily that I will continue to use. I will feel more comfortable as I am not fearing someone coming into my room throughout the day and possibly getting sick.

Thank you,
Makala Foley
I am a special education teacher and I am at risk daily! If you are all still having virtual meetings why are schools open! We need to worry about health and safety right now!! This is ridiculous!!!

Sent from my iPhone
Testimony on Item 'V'

barrow hutchison <barrow1hutchison@gmail.com>  Tue, Aug 18, 2020 at 6:40 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: Monica Heiser <monimyrmo@gmail.com>, Jacqueline Cramer <Cramerjacqueline99@gmail.com>

Directing DOE to prepare for the opening of schools amid COVID 19.

I am focusing on;
-the need for clear metrics based on COVID case loads as to when to open and close our schools.
-allow teachers to work from home when the schools are closed to support distance learning.
-consideration of the questions in the Area of Concerns, Exhibit B [Aug 20/20] for the treatment of Spec. Ed students "How are students "included" if they are attending class face to face while the general education population is receiving instruction on line?"

Respectfully submitted
Barrow Hutchison
Kona Pacific Public Charter School
Safe for All

Carina Morgan <carinamorganhe@gmail.com>  
Tue, Aug 18, 2020 at 6:46 AM

As a veteran teacher, I feeling so disheartened at the beginning of this school year. We are in the midst of a pandemic with our COVID cases at their highest peak and we are still discussing what to do!

The choices and decisions that have been made regarding reopening of schools has increase anxiety and confusion tremendously in so many. On my first day of virtual teaching yesterday, even I, as a veteran and prepared teacher, was all jumbled up and fumbled at knowing what to do. I can't imagine how our keiki and families are feeling.

We are in the midst of a spike endangering the health of all people in the state. The question remains, "Why would we risk those lives by gathering teachers and children together"? The policies put in place by the governor restrict gatherings, so "why is it any different for our teachers, children, and their ohana"?

We are deemed "essential workers". Yes, I believe that teaching our future generations is "essential", but in defining "essential" during a pandemic, means that a job cannot be performed any other place than the place if work (fire fighter, doc, garbage, HECO, etc). I can perform the duties of my work at home.

I was born with Polycystic Kidney disease and emerging research is showing potential for "severe" illness related to COVID-19. We have already had a positive COVID-19 staff member on my campus and that individual was diligent about safety measures.....BUT IT STILL HAPPENED so these safety measures are NOT ENOUGH!

I WANT TO TEACH.......my students need me (veteran trained teacher) right now......I am being torn apart being in fear of my own health and safety and being there for our keiki.

I am being told that paperwork for request for accommodations may take1 month to investigate and receive an answer and that "teleworking" is not likely. The crisis is Now, not in a month. My students need me Now, not in a month.

The answer seems like a simple answer to me.....I can do a great job from my home and at the same time keep myself, my students, and all our Ohana safe.

Sincerely,
Carina Morgan
Return to learn

Terry Reed <terry_reed@icloud.com>  Tue, Aug 18, 2020 at 7:12 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

This is my 30th year teaching middle school science. I retired teaching on the mainland specifically to come to Hawaii to teach because it is desperate for good science teachers. I work with some amazing teachers but I also work with teachers who are not preparing to teach successfully online. Being unsupervised will make the poor teachers worse. It's not unreasonable for an employer to require employees to work where they can be supervised, especially when the employees can be isolated in their own respective rooms.

I fail to understand why teachers listen to the advice of a union which has successfully negotiated the worst pay in the union.

My two cents

Terry Reed
science guru
Kawananakoa Middle School
To whom it may concern,

I teach in a fully self-contained special education life skills classroom at a high school. There are seven students, 6 of whom came to school on the first day of school. 5 of them have paraprofessionals working with them. They do not wear masks. They do not understand how to social distance, no matter how hard we try to teach them. They are confused, they do not understand. My classroom is often chaotic; there are a lot of different learning styles and behaviors that we're trying to address. My students work so hard on a regular day, they are working so much harder now that they are operating in a world that changes every day, that is out of their routine, and they do not understand.

My administration came into my classroom yesterday to say that we "can't do this!". There were too many people in my classroom, they were too close together, it's unsafe! They offered no legitimate solution to support me or my students, because there is very little to offer, to social distance. They do not understand to not touch their face, we have been working on covering our coughs and sneezes, but it is still inconsistent. So much of the learning for the last ten years has been how to safely interact with those around them and how to learn about being good friends, but now all of that is changed and they don't know what to do. I cannot do my job effectively, I cannot teach them right now, because the emphasis has been on their health and safety. If their health and safety was a TRUE priority, we would not be in school because it is not safe for them, it is not safe for my support staff, and it is not safe for me.

I had to restrain a student yesterday; there is no social distancing for that. He was pulling my hair and it took two other people to support us; there is no social distancing for that. He does not wear a mask.

The health and safety has been a priority for all other students except those in my classroom. I understand they have a higher educational need, I know that they do. But I cannot meet their educational needs in this current educational setting - so much time is being spent policing space and "health and safety" that they don't understand, that they are not learning anything.

I have a pre-existing medical condition. After yesterday, I realized that no matter what I do, I cannot protect myself. With the mask and face shields I wear, to washing the desks every 20 minutes, to washing the students hands, I cannot protect myself. Children are messy, as they should be. Children should learn about health and safety, but I cannot appropriately teach health and safety during a health crisis. I'm torn with a decision of having to quit or continue to put myself at a risk; it's not a decision I thought I would ever need to make.

Teleworking, while challenging for me because my job is typically easier in person, would make a world of difference because it would absolutely ensure the health and safety of my students and myself.

I was hopeful for starting the school year in person. After day one, I am not hopeful. I am scared. I am questioning everything. I do not know what to do.

Thank you,

Emily
Good morning Distinguished Board Members,

I am testifying on behalf of https://hsta.us6.list-manage.com/track/dick?u=31be4c2dbdddb0d80b4b4036a&id=eec1b0bdf&e=3e56411374
I wanted to share my thoughts as someone who is vulnerable to COVID 19 and has return to school to work since I was instructed to. Each day I wake up and say a prayer in hope that my family and I will return home safely and healthy. Every time I see the new case totals, a greater sense of anxiety comes over me. I know that I am only 1 of thousands of people who feel this way. You have the power to keep all of us safe. Please consider having our schools implement 100% distance learning until The COVID 19 cases drastically decrease. Thank you for the consideration. Stay safe and healthy.

Sincerely,

Dr. Rick Yamashiro
School Counselor
Campbell High
Distinguished board members,

I am testifying on item V. A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.

I would like to start by providing the board with a list of what teachers at my school were given to protect their students and themselves in the middle of world wide pandemic upon opening of schools; In the "goodie bag" I was given by my principal (as she called it) to start the school year I was given 3 homemade masks, 10 alcohol wipes, 4 lens cleaning wipes, a bottle 3/4 of the way full of disinfectant cleaner (made by custodial staff), a new paper towel holder filled half way with paper towels and 500 ml bottle of hand sanitizer. This was the only the PPE (if you can even call it that) teachers were given in anticipation of seeing 150 students daily, that were originally scheduled to arrive 8/17/2020. Thankfully my principal chose to convert to full distance learning 8/12/2020.

We’ve also been told we are not to use classroom funds for cleaning supplies. In my 10 years as a science teacher in the DOE I have always had to spend at least half of my classroom funds on paper towels, hand soap and cleaning supplies. I beg for donations at open house every year by putting up a giving tree with “suggested supplies to contribute to our classroom.” Thankfully I have stocked piled hand soap donations over the past few years because NO HAND SOAP WAS PROVIDED IN CLASSROOMS AT MY SCHOOL THIS YEAR.

We were told "Classroom cleaners will not report to work until students are on campus." So while our custodial staff is working harder than ever to fulfill the demands this pandemic requires, they are being given more work and fewer resources. Trash cans are not being emptied, and the components of the MOU that ensure high touch areas are being sanitized frequently are unable to be completed.

IT IS UNSAFE TO BE ON SCHOOL CAMPUSES.

In addition to the lack sanitation, my classroom has a faulty heat abatement system that was just installed 3 years ago. The system in my classroom was the last one of 7
working in the entire building March 2020, and now it no longer turns on resulting in the classroom temperature averaging 86 degrees Fahrenheit.

I encourage you to see for yourself what teachers are facing, please visit campuses so that you can experience how ill-equipped schools are to keep students and staff safe. Please allow teachers to choose to telework while students are distance learning so that we can ALL be safe.

Thank you for keeping our students safe,

Haley van Weemen van Noord, MS, NBCT
Lahaina Intermediate School
Fwd: School reopening

Kelly Ono <kelly.ono@k12.hi.us>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  

Tue, Aug 18, 2020 at 7:37 AM

------- Forwarded message -------
From: Coty <cotylsh@gmail.com>
Date: Thu, Aug 13, 2020 at 6:16 PM
Subject: Fwd: School reopening
To: Kelly Ono <kelly.ono@k12.hi.us>

------- Teachers -------

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Coty George and I am a parent of a SPED Pre-K student at a Leeward district public school. I have so many concerns regarding my child's education and growth, but I am perplexed by the Superintendent's statement, "It's time we all put the futures of our students first." I would rather protect our keiki and school staff from this disease which we don't fully understand yet in order to make sure they have a future to put first.

Maybe I should have prefaced this email with telling you I am a nurse practitioner working at a community health center in which we have seen exponential increases in cases and complacency. Requiring teachers to return to the classroom while watching the numbers climb go against the statement released earlier this year about no return to schools until 4 consecutive weeks of zero cases. I understand things change, but what happened? How are we now announcing more cases in a single day than the previous total from a few months ago, and allowing students to "train and connect with their teachers" in a face to face setting? In the healthcare community, we are struggling to understand this virus. As cases are exponentially climbing, my colleagues and I are appalled that the HIDOE is willing to take such a risk.

I have been working in healthcare for 12 years. I have never had to call out sick as often as I have since my son started school in the fall. I would never blame my son's teachers (they send memos home to parents about signs and symptoms) because I know a lot of parents that have admitted to sending their children to school sick. I even had to take him to the ED twice in the fall last year. How can the superintendent say that this risk is “what our keiki deserve”?

My son needs his services, but he also needs and deserves to be safe; everyone does. I am so concerned for the safety of his amazing teacher and all of the wonderful school staff that have nurtured him these past 2 school years. They don’t get paid enough. Please don’t sacrifice their health and futures.

Sincerely,

Coty George, APRN

Sent from my iPhone

***************************************************************************************************************************************************************************************************************************************

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

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 Katy Parsons and I am testifying on item V. A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.

I am writing this testimony to ensure the following occurs this school year:

- Ensure 100-percent distance learning for all students across the state, including those in special education, until at least the end of the first quarter.
- Require the DOH and HIDOE to provide clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students’ return. Many states and cities have specific triggers already in place for when schools should be open or closed based on COVID-10 cases, but Hawaii does not.
- Guarantee that the HIDOE honors HSTA’s contract by allowing teachers to work from home (telework) for as long as distance learning remains in effect.

I would like to advocate for teachers and students to have a set schedule for at least the first quarter and possibly continuing for the first semester. This schedule should be online to minimise the spread of COVID and provide stability for students and teachers. It is hard to plan engaging online lessons when we only have 3 to 4 weeks to deliver them and are in a wait and see pattern to know if online learning will continue or if we will be back in the classroom. It is near impossible to plan this way. As a single parent it’s frustrating as well to try to plan how to help my son who is at home learning while I am required to come into school to teach and plan in an empty classroom. As a person with many medical conditions that put me in the at risk category for COVID I would feel safer being allowed to telework from home. I would also like to see more clear guidelines on when it will be safe for schools to reopen and what protocols are in place if my school was to have COVID cases on campus. I have a hard time believing that a thorough cleaning will happen when it took over 2 weeks for teachers at my school to receive any cleaning supplies and limited PPE. I am worried for my students, my fellow faculty, staff, and myself during this uncertain time. Please stand behind us and help to make a brighter future for all!

Mahalo for your time and consideration!

Katy Parsons
Jarrett Middle School
Math Teacher
Kids NEED TO BE IN SCHOOL

kristeen roberts <kristeen30@yahoo.com>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
Tue, Aug 18, 2020 at 8:26 AM

I’m writing on behalf of MANY teachers on the Big Island. We want to be in school! Our students need and want to in school. The rise in covid cases in Oahu does NOT reflect our Island!! Let us open!!

Look at the data for the death rate! It’s so significantly small. The national group of pediatrics even says to open schools. Our hospital says to open schools! People on top making decisions need to look at other sources, rather than make everyone comply with your internal fear.

OPEN THE SCHOOLS
Sent from my iPhone
Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony on Agenda Item V. A.

Denise Mazurik <dmazurik808@gmail.com>  
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  

Name: Denise Mazurik  
Title: Classroom Teacher  
Agenda Item: V. A.  
Position: Comment  

Dear Board Members:

I write to you with continued concerns over the planned return to in-person learning and with a new concern over teacher telework. First, while I am relieved DOE schools have now transitioned to distance learning (though some are still seeing students in-person this week), I still have concerns over setting arbitrary deadlines to be back in classrooms. I understand why everyone wants to get back to in-person learning, as a teacher and parent I want the best education for both my students and my own daughter, but their health and safety must come first. Before we are able to safely reopen schools we need each school to be audited for safety (ventilation, maximum occupancy for each room given 6 ft. social distancing, etc.), the Department of Health (DOH) must provide specific written guidance, including what triggers a reclosure, and we need to have an adequate test and trace infrastructure in place. This is not the time to be “winging it” or “hoping for the best.” Absent an effective vaccine we know there will be spread when we return to classrooms, we must have a plan in place to quickly isolate sick students and staff so we don’t have schools being sites of full blown outbreaks. We keep hearing kids don’t get that sick. This may be true but they do spread the virus and we still don’t know the longer term health impacts of contracting the virus. In conjunction with distance learning we need to come up with creative solutions to meet the other needs of children and everyone in the community needs to help. It shouldn’t be all on schools to feed, babysit, provide a safe space, provide mental health care, etc. This needs to be a community-wide effort.

As to telework, please uphold our teacher contract by requiring DOE to offer telework to teachers. Twice now at press conferences both Governor Ige and Superintendent Kishimoto have requested Hawaii employers please be flexible with work arrangements and telework, yet this same flexibility is not currently being offered to teachers. A telework arrangement is the safest, offers teacher parents the flexibility they need, and reduces load on school bandwidth. At my school we’ve already seen what 60+ faculty members on WebEx does to our internet, I’m not sure what will happen when 60+ teachers go live online with 20+ students each this Wednesday. I am personally well equipped for telework as I have a home office with high speed Spectrum internet.

At the school level I have heard Principals are reluctant to offer telework because of anecdotal stories of teachers out and about during school hours this past spring. Here I am as a professional with multiple degrees, again, begging to be treated as a professional. If there was a report about a doctor or lawyer acting in a way that violated their professional code of conduct, those cases wouldn’t follow with widespread punitive action against all in the profession in the given locale or jurisdiction, the individual cases would be investigated and any disciplinary action would be handed down to the individual. If the two stories I heard (a teacher at Target and a teacher surfing) are even true, if investigated it may be that a teacher was using
their prep period to buy supplies at Target for an upcoming online science demonstration or that a teacher was using their 30 minute duty-free lunch to catch some waves as a form of self-care.

Please uphold the right of teacher’s to telework and demand a plan for reopening that is based on health and safety measures, not arbitrary deadlines.

Sincerely,
Denise Mazurik
Keep us safe

Joy & Don Memmer <kickihilo@yahoo.com>
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Keep everyone safe. It makes no sense to do distance learning and then allow students to come to campus, that defeats the purpose of distance learning. Let the teachers go home and work from the safety of our own homes. I have been on campus for three weeks now. I was not given PPE for the first two weeks. We have construction workers on campus who had no masks, I had to ask for them to cover up. The entire staff uses the school copier, and I had to ask for sanitizer to be provided for users of the copier. Now we are handing out textbooks and supplies to students as they drive up to the campus and I am doing my part, but I am over 60 years of age and have hypertension and kidney issues and have not been allowed to do telework from home to keep my self and my family safe. If you don’t care about our teachers and our students and their families, we will have no choice but to stay home. I have three years of sick leave and am feeling compelled to use it. I refuse to be complicit in this spread of stupidity and this deadly virus.

Don Memmer
Hilo High teacher, 37 years
Testimony: Item V

Terry J Low <terry@terrylow.com>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Board of Education,

Thank you for your service in these trying times. I taught at Kauai High School for 24 years, retiring in May 2018. Yesterday while on my way for a morning surf, I ran into another retired colleague out for a walk and we had a short, social-distanced conversation about how lucky we were to not be at Kauai High that morning for the opening of school. Even on Kauai it was too early to start back with any face to face education, as sad as that was. Personally, I’m concerned about socializing with my friends who are still teaching, especially now with their increased contact with students. Hard to imagine how that can be done even with the well-intentioned efforts under way. Still too risky to open now, judging by failures in other places where schools have tried to reopen. Let’s be smart and make safety and health a priority.

I fully support HSTA’s recommendations:

- Ensure 100-percent distance learning for all students across the state, including those in special education, until at least the end of the first quarter.
- Require the DOH and HIDOE to provide clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students’ return. Many states and cities have specific triggers already in place for when schools should be open or closed based on COVID-10 cases, but Hawaii does not.
- Guarantee that the HIDOE honors HSTA’s contract by allowing teachers to work from home (telework) for as long as distance learning remains in effect.

Mahalo,
Terry Low
Kauai

Sent from my iPad
Testimony

Joel Kim <joel.kim@k12.hi.us>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  

Tue, Aug 18, 2020 at 8:51 AM

As a 55-65 year old teacher in an inner city middle school in Honolulu, I feel that it is imperative for teachers to be able to tele-teach from home as long as students are out of the classroom. Aside from the fact that doing so could save some of our teachers in a life-threatening pandemic, especially our older, veteran teachers, many of our younger teachers have children of their own who will be forced to stay at home as well. Finding adequate childcare this late in the game creates another totally unnecessary burden for teachers. I urge the board to make a wise decision and allow BOTH students and teachers to learn and teach through the various distant learning platforms that we have been trained and working on since this pandemic started. This would help to make teachers feel that they are being considered and valued as much as our students.

With respect,
Mr. Joel Kim, Kawanakaoa Middle School

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Testimony

Lauren Black <lb808finch@gmail.com>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  

Tue, Aug 18, 2020 at 8:59 AM

Item V: A Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication. Please take action on the following:

- Ensure 100-percent distance learning for all students across the state, including those in special education, until at least the end of the first quarter.
- Require the DOH and HIDOE to provide clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students’ return. Many states and cities have specific triggers already in place for when schools should be open or closed based on COVID-10 cases, but Hawaii does not.
- Guarantee that the HIDOE honors HSTA’s contract by allowing teachers to work from home (telework) for as long as distance learning remains in effect.

At our school, my team of teachers are not comfortable that even during 100% distance learning, our vulnerable population would still have the option to report to school every single day, even if they do not have class with us. They could also rotate class periods and be around different educators throughout the day further compromising all of our efforts to limit contact and maintain social distancing. It is nearly impossible to social distance with in-person help for our vulnerable population.

I also would like the option to work remote. I have a 2 month old at home and every day I am potentially bringing home an unknown, vaccine less, and sometimes deadly virus to her. I am actually better equipped to do distance learning at home than in my classroom because I have more versatility and more resources to teach hands on, real world, real life science. I would much rather be able to show them say my freezer experiment from my own kitchen or a lab demo in my home, than show them a video online because my classroom has no working sinks nor do we have an abundance of lab materials. I have no reason to commute to my classroom during a global pandemic crisis, with our state adding more and more restrictions weekly due to rising case numbers here. No reason. I would like the option to do distance learning remotely at home. I would feel more safe, sain and ready to teach if there were much more clear guidelines and protocols in place. What happened to consecutive weeks with no new cases? What specific action would take place if there was an outbreak or a positive case reported at our school? How many cases would it take for our school to shut down? Would there be a protocol to shut down and sanitize? So many unanswered questions. We need to be more proactive about this situation and less reactive. This is incredibly stressful on our staff. How do you expect us to give quality instruction under situations constantly changing? We go with distance learning, we should adopt that model for at least an entire quarter. It is incredibly difficult to plan out and prepare quality instruction with things changing every week, even every four weeks is a huge undertaking. This inconsistency is detrimental to the planning and instruction all parents, board members and the community want for their children. Is it hybrid? synchronous? asynchronous? virtual? Wait, who is is contacting the kids that do not
show up while we are taking care of the kids that do? This is a mess. Now we are full
distance learning but only for 4 weeks, but wait some students can show up. What is
going on? (This is pretty much every teacher in every public school).
We should have adopted distance learning from the very beginning during summer. I
can't express how much more organized and seamless that transition would have been
compared to what we are dealing with now. Please stop this insanity NOW.
Testimony

Ginny Hoyt <ginnyhoyt93@gmail.com>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  

Tue, Aug 18, 2020 at 9:05 AM

I feel as though there is a tremendous disconnect between the BOE and what is actually happening in schools. Everyday teachers are sitting at school in complete disbelief over the lack of leadership, decision making, and regard of safety towards students and employees on campus. It is unacceptable that the BOE and DOH have not yet come up with clear metrics for when plans will be put into action. Putting in metrics for safety is a basic component for creating a plan moving forward. Instead teachers are being asked to prepare for all possibilities, because no one in charge can make clear decisions. The amount of back and forth between plans is ridiculous and stretching people too thin. We are trying the best we can to do what is right for our students. I would love to see our leaders do the same and commit to 100% distance learning for all until it is safe!
To Whom it May Concern:

I'm writing to address item V. As a teacher and a responsible citizen in Hawaii, I've spent the last 6 months avoiding potentially dangerous situations. I haven't seen my friends, celebrated birthdays, or seen my nephews since they were born in April. I would love to see my students and get them started on the right foot for this school year. But with elderly parents at home, my own history with asthma and the rampant number of cases in Hawaii at the moment, I don't believe it's responsible to require teachers to work from school, when students are not required to be here. Teachers should be given the choice to work from school or remotely, depending on their own tolerance for risk. They should not be forced to risk their health unnecessarily.

Mahalo,
Chani Matsui
Aloha

I am very concerned as a immunocompromised teacher that is on dialysis. I am unable to retire and I am very worried about allowing teachers and students back to class. I personally know of 4 teachers who were exposed to the virus by being on campus throughout Hawai‘i. How are teachers supposed to protect themselves during this pandemic?

I am currently dialyzing in Hana because I wanted to avoid the cluster of covid cases at Maui Memorial, yet you have chosen to allow students to return face to face in Hana! The people who put me on the machine have children that attend Hana school, and now I am in danger again because of the DOE’s decisions! I do not want to die because of the Department of Education! This is RIDICULOUS! We are talking about LIVES of TEACHERS and CHILDREN. Without either, there will be no Department of Education.

This situation has gotten me so angry! The people at the top who are making decisions that literally affect whether or not I LIVE OR DIE. They have no regard for the people who are on the front lines. Children will not socially distance. They will take off their masks and touch things and touch their faces.

We are on an ISLAND. We have limited resources and limited HOSPITAL resources. We cannot allow these irresponsible decisions to continue. I do not want to put my life in the hands of the DOE, yet as of right NOW, that is exactly what is happening. If I die from COVID, it is the direct fault and responsibility of the DOE.

na‘u no me ka INAINA!!!
Lisa Ann Pauahi Hookano, M.Ed., ABD
245 Wailua Rd.
Haiku HI 96708
–

“Never forget that justice is what love looks like in public.”
– Cornel West
Testimony on Reopening of Schools

Joyce Vea <jjoycevea@gmail.com>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Joyce Vea: I am a counselor at Waimea Canyon Middle School on the island of Kauai and I am testifying in regards to item V.A Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Dept of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication. I am also writing as a parent of a 2nd grader and a concerned community member. In my opinion, our communities are confused, torn, and frustrated. In our schools especially we need guidance - we need empathy - and we need long-term planning. I have been extremely disappointed with the roll-out of decisions and plans; I have come to expect a decision that would impact either my job or my child's education every week, literally. This is not the product of well-thought-out decisions by our state, the HIDOE, and even our union. All stakeholders need to work together to move forward with common goals at hand.

I am anticipating a decision of more restrictions falling on Oahu residents (and educators alike) but how will that impact us on the neighbor islands? Will we continue to force face-to-face instruction that could potentially endanger students and adults? Will the state wait for numbers to climb and situation to worsen (similar to that of Oahu) until proactive measures are taken? I do not understand why schools are exempt from rules that the Governor has signed off on. For instance, on Kauai, there should be no more than 10 people gathering indoors and 25 people gathering outdoors. Are schools exempt from this rule - it just seems hypocritical to say that the rule only applies to certain situations and not others. Schools should not be an exception; especially when we are endangering others.

No one could have imagined the unique situation and issues that have come up due to COVID. And, we have been trying our very best to "pivot" as the superintendent puts it. As a counselor, I do not have a teaching degree; however, I am teaching an elective this year and with the training of mandated videos, I will be teaching virtually for the next month - and I intend to do a good job at it. But I, along with my colleagues, need support and empathy. As a mother, who has a 2nd grader at home, I need to be able to telework so that I can help him as well. I have retired parents (who are Filipino immigrants with little to no understanding of the current educational needs). I feel it would be most beneficial (safety-wise, emotionally, mentally) if teachers would be allowed to telework. If this decision, along with the decision to have ALL students do distance learning for at least the entire 1st quarter, can be made and agreed upon, our schools, families, and communities can plan to move forward. It is not healthy to be coming out with different decisions every week. I can sense that many people will come to a limit where they will find themselves burdened with stress and burn out.

It has been the silver lining of hearing empathy and understanding from parents the past week - parents who understand that we are not totally prepared, they understand that we don't have the answers, and they accept that we don't know what things will look like in a month. But I question the Governor, the Superintendent, the Board of Education...why don't we have the answers? Why don't we have a comprehensive long-term plan? Why haven't we been following the agreed upon MOU with the HSTA to allow teachers to telework? Why are students' lives and teachers' lives expendable? Don't we expect to get answers at this point.

As of today, the expectation is that we are going 100% virtual next week but expected to report to schools. What is the rationale behind this? With this fact being known - that kids will be at home - why force teachers to gather at schools instead of work from home (and possibly care for their own children and support their education). I am appalled by the lack of empathy provided to professionals in our field.

It is my hope that we can move forward but also really look at the issues being presented by the HSTA and doing what is right for all of those involved in public education. Please consider having ALL of our children go 100% distance learning until it is safe to lift restrictions. There should not be exceptions to rules. And, please consider allowing teachers to telework. Teachers should be able to choose what is best for them (and their families) during these times.

Thank you for you time and consideration in the matter.

Joyce Vea
I am testifying on item V. A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.

- **PLEASE** Ensure 100-percent distance learning for all students across the state, including those in special education, until at least the end of the first quarter.
- **PLEASE** Require the DOH and HIDOE to provide clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students’ return. Many states and cities have specific triggers already in place for when schools should be open or closed based on COVID-10 cases, but Hawaii does not.
- **PLEASE** Guarantee that the HIDOE honors HSTA’s contract by allowing teachers to work from home (telework) for as long as distance learning remains in effect.

I have 6 children at home. Both my wife and I are teachers. SAFETY is PARAMOUNT. EDUCATION CAN STILL CONTINUE BY FOLLOWING COVID 19 GUIDELINES - WITH EVERYONE STAYING HOME! PLEASE LISTEN AND ACT TO KEEP EVERYONE SAFE!

Mahalo for your time and service.

Matthew Masuyama
Dear fellow educators,
I teach special education at King Kamehameha III Elementary School in Lahaina. I taught in California for 30 years before I started teaching here 5 years ago.
These are very unique times for public education. There is no great solution to the health situation. I think we should go to all distance learning for all students 100% of the time at least for the first quarter.
I also think staff should be given the option of working from their home. This makes sense health wise, time wise and climate wise. Less cars on the road is a positive thing.
There would be a much, much lower percentage of teachers having to take sick days if they worked remotely.
Thank you,
David Brown

Sent from my iPhone
Testimony

Ryan <ryoshiza@hotmail.com>
To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

Dear Members of the Hawaii State Board of Education,

I am offering testimony regarding item V.

Please consider the accepting the following HSTA requests to keep teachers, staff, students, and the community safe:

- Ensure 100-percent distance learning for all students across the state, including those in special education, until at least the end of the first quarter.
- Require the DOH and HIDOE to provide clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students’ return. Many states and cities have specific triggers already in place for when schools should be open or closed based on COVID-10 cases, but Hawaii does not.
- Guarantee that the HIDOE honors HSTA’s contract by allowing teachers to work from home (telework) for as long as distance learning remains in effect.

I can appreciate that Superintendent Kishimoto knows how students are best educated. But she is not an expert on public health or crisis management. She has repeatedly said she is working with the Department of Health (DOH) to ensure schools are safe. However, the DOH has still not released guidance on when schools are safe or unsafe to open. Dr. Bruce Anderson has even said that “he would bet that there will be cases of COVID-19 in schools when students return.” And despite the skyrocketing number of positive COVID-19 cases in Oahu's communities, Dr. Kishimoto is still insisting that we have face-to-face instruction with students. As educators, we acknowledge that virtual and distance learning cannot replace face-to-face instruction. However, receiving quality instruction is not worth jeopardizing the health and safety of teachers, students, and their families.

Many teachers have expressed their concern to me that they are still fearful for themselves and their families if students are allowed to come back on campus. This is not a question of whether virtual learning can replace face-to-face instruction, it is a question of whether education's importance should be placed above public health and safety. Former Education Secretary Arne Duncan stated that public health and safety should always precede education. And Dr. Scott Miscovich also stated that there should not be any students receiving face-to-face instruction because of the enclosed spaces of classrooms and the current rate of COVID-19 spread in communities.

No business would knowingly place their greatest assets at risk in a time of crisis, because they realize they will need those assets for the recovery afterward. Experienced teachers are the DOE's greatest assets because it takes years for new teachers to gain the experiences they need to develop into great teachers. But that is exactly what the DOE is doing by exposing our most experienced teachers to high risk activities like face-to-face instruction. Please do the right thing and show Hawaii's teachers that they are appreciated and that they are valued assets for Hawaii's Department of Education.

Thank you,
Ryan Yoshizawa
Librarian
Waipahu High School

****************************

Ryan Yoshizawa, Librarian
Waipahu High School
94-1211 Farrington Hwy.
Waipahu, Hawaii 96797
(808) 528-9543
School situation in Hawaii

Ryan Ideta <ryan.ideta@k12.hi.us>  
To: testimony.BOEdoe@hawaii.gov

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Ryan Ideta and I am a teacher at Kea'au Elementary School. I have been teaching for 17 years in the Hawaii Department of Education. This has probably been the most challenging time in my teaching career.

We are experiencing unknown territory and it is imperative to have clear and concise metrics when it comes to our keiki education. Unfortunately, there has been much confusion going on in schools and in the community. I believe there has been confusion for several reasons. First and foremost, the confusion is coming from the leaders above. When listening to live press conferences, a current teacher in the department of education should not be hearing guidelines for the first time like the rest of the public. The governor and superintendent have not been transparent and avoid the hard questions by taking around it. In my opinion, they have been telling half truths. When Dr. Kishimoto talked about the 4 day face-to-face orientation, it was the first time I have ever heard about it. How can a teacher plan with such short notice? The 4 day face-to-face orientation during the first week of instruction just doesn't make sense. Why have distance learning in the first place if the students will be coming on campus right off the bat? Why take that risk? Kids in this day and age know how to use most of the programs. They are very tech savvy. The cost-benefit analysis in this situation is not favoring face-to-face instruction.

I feel like for the safety of everyone, the Hawaii Department of Education should commit to 100% distance learning for at least the first quarter of the school year 2020-2021. There have been too many changes and teachers, parents and students can not plan for anything. After speaking to many parents, a similar message I hear is that they wish the state would decide on something. Other states have committed to distance learning for the entire semester or school year. Why are we holding back?

Furthermore, I believe that HIDOE should stand by their word on our teacher contract which states that if there is potential danger for students to be on campus that allows them to stay at home, teachers should have that same privilege. A contract is a contract and there should not be a debate. As a PE teacher, I can more effectively teach my live Zoom class from home because I don't have a classroom or space to teach at school. Under normal circumstances, I teach my class in the playcourt at our school. Since the coronavirus came about, my classroom has turned into a storage facility and it is impossible to teach in there. At home I have a large concrete area in my backyard that will allow me to teach in a nondisruptive setting so that I can reach my students effectively. At home I wouldn't have to worry about people walking by or the loud noises from construction.

I truly believe that under these dire circumstances it takes strong leadership and gutsy decisions. I urge you to listen to my message and the messages from thousands of others fighting for the same cause. Our keiki deserve no less than the best.

--
Ryan Ideta
Physical Education Teacher
Kea'au Elementary School

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

This written testimony is in regard to item V.A: Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.

My name is Leah Rampolla, and I am a full-time, licensed English teacher at James Castle High School on Oahu. I am highly concerned about the absence of state-wide DOE policies regarding the pandemic. In the interest of protecting the health and well-being of our community, I am requesting that the board consider authorizing online learning, for all students, until at least the end of the first quarter and to provide specific criteria to the community that indicate when it is safe to return to campus.

An area of significant concern is the requirement of teachers to report to campus for online learning. As lectures, meetings, and assignments are available 100% online, instructors should be able to meet their professional responsibilities from the safety of their own homes. Teacher engagement, and adherence to professional responsibilities, can be easily monitored by their activity in Google classroom, one-on-one student communications and engagement via email and Google meets, and updating Infinite Campus gradebooks weekly and as needed.

As a resident of Oahu, where COVID-19 cases are increasing exponentially on a daily basis, and have been for weeks, I prefer to work from home in the interest of protecting my health and the health of others. There are still significant risks of becoming infected, or infecting others, by coming to campus, even with the absence of the student body, due to shared spaces such as: faculty workrooms, restrooms, water fountains, door handles, etc. Over the past few weeks, it has become apparent on Oahu that community spread of COVID-19 is occurring at alarming levels. Residents of Oahu should be able to work from home during this time, if they have the means, to help mitigate the spread of infection. Teachers have the means to work from home during 100% distance learning and should be able to do so in the interest of protecting their health and the health of the entire community. Thank you for your time and consideration regarding these matters.

Sincerely,
Leah Rampolla, M.A.
I am a teacher at Kauai High School and I'm very concerned about delays in reporting Covid cases at schools and a lack of transparency.

There is a perception that the DOE is trying to hide Covid cases at schools so parents will not be scared to send their children to school. At this point it does not even matter if that perception is true or not because the perception itself undermines the public trust.

The DOE must act more quickly and more transparently in reporting cases of Covid-19 associated with schools. And it must be more transparent in how decisions about school closures are made. This kind of transparency is the foundation upon which all other efforts to contain the spread of Covid-19 are based.

Personally, I am comfortable with coming to school and having students come in person as long as I can trust that accurate information about who has tested positive is being released immediately and changes to how the school operates are being made appropriately and transparently.
Aloha
I am a teacher and have taught for many years in Hawaii - I have never taught where I feared for my life. I do now - luckily for me my Principal follows science and has already planned to go with a distance learning model however it is essential that all teachers and students and their families are kept safe:
we need 100% distance learning if not through the first quarter until the virus is under control - I believe the Superintendent said she would not open schools until we had ZERO that is no new cases for FOUR weeks. This should still stand.
We need clear guidelines for opening when why how and under what conditions it is safe to return - FYI it is not safe while a pandemic is raging out of control we have an almost 8% infection rate that is ridiculous and it grows exponentially every day.
We need a guarantee that our contracts will be honored and teachers will be allowed to work from home if needed. We were already experiencing a teacher shortage and I can honestly say that forcing teachers to put their lives, their students lives and their families lives in danger is not going to help recruit teachers in fact I know many who are planning early retirement or will resign.
Have you considered the mental health toll this is taking on teachers and kids and families the stress and anxiety of possibly getting Covid and dying is overwhelming.
Also what about WHEN (a totally preventable situation if we go with distance) but when a kid or teacher dies or a kupuna - COME ON WE MUST DO BETTER !!!
Carol Holland

Carol H Holland, M.Sc. Oceanography, M.A Secondary Education
"Go confidently in the direction of your dreams. Live the life you have imagined." -Henry David Thoreau
I am testifying on item A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.

I am asking that the board does the following:

- Ensure 100-percent distance learning for all students across the state, including those in special education, until at least the end of the first quarter.
- Require the DOH and HIDOE to provide clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students’ return. Many states and cities have specific triggers already in place for when schools should be open or closed based on COVID-10 cases, but Hawaii does not.
- Guarantee that the HIDOE honors HSTA’s contract by allowing teachers to work from home (telework) for as long as distance learning remains in effect.

Without clear guidance on face-to-face instruction, fully reopening schools is dangerous and reckless. School administrators cannot be expected to make decisions that impact the lives of their teachers without clear guidance from the Board of Education. They are monumental decisions that will impact teachers, students, and their respective families across Hawaii. Likewise, teachers cannot be expected to feel safe in their classrooms without clear guidelines from the Board of Education outlining what happens should there be COVID cases in their school or classroom. Furthermore, teachers should be allowed to work from home for as long as distance learning occurs to allow for teachers to properly support their own families in this uncertain time as most teachers are caregivers to their own children or family members. In order to minimize the number of individuals on campus during the pandemic, no students should be physically going to school and teachers should be allowed to work from home. Hawaii is seeing the highest virus reproduction rate in the nation and with more than three hundred new cases a day, no one should be taking risks such as going to school.
I am testifying on item V. **A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.**

August 18, 2020

Dear Board of Education Members:

Appropriate precautions needed to be in place prior to opening of the school year. Instead schools were left to decide independently and come up with their own plan. This has led to many inconsistencies and confusion among staff and the communities which they serve.

Children should be looked at as vectors of the disease. As long as there is community transmission in the adult population, reopening of schools will likely facilitate transmission, as respiratory viruses are known to circulate in schools. But most kids who are infected with COVID typically don't become as sick as adults, and some might not show any symptoms at all (Mayo Clinic, 2020). There are reports of asymptomatic infections (detection of virus with no development of symptoms) and pre-symptomatic infections (detection of virus prior to development of symptoms) with SARS-CoV-2, but their role in transmission is not yet known (CDC, 7 July 2020). Recent studies have suggested that COVID-19 may be spread by people who are not showing symptoms. Therefore, the recommendations of permitting more than 10 students in an enclosed room with 6’ spacing between students and having no specifics regarding the enhanced cleaning of air-conditioned buildings are neither prudent nor pro-active.

According to the CDC, the best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus by physical distancing of at least 6 feet, wearing a face covering to prevent respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks (keeping in mind that these droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs), frequent hand washing, and enhanced cleaning of high touch areas. In one day I made more than 50 corrections for proper mask wearing and physical distancing in my enclosed area.

When reviewing the CDC’s updated list of underlying medical conditions that increase a person’s risk of severe illness from COVID-19, many staff and perhaps students would be at risk. In an effort to maintain privacy of my HIPAA rights, I believe that my medical and other health information is private and should be protected. The Privacy Rule, a Federal law, gives me rights over my health information and sets rules and limits on who can look at and receive my health information. The Privacy Rule applies to all forms of an individual’s protected health information, whether electronic, written, or oral (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services). With the reopening of schools, this would mean I would need to disclose my personal medical information in order to be provided a safe work environment. I feel this will be a
violation of my privacy because by notifying my administration, too many others (custodians, staff members, students, parents) will know my business if policies and procedures apply only to my work area. Unfortunately I needed to disclose to the vice-principal and head custodian that the cleaner that was being used in my area caused my throat to burn with increased mucus production which led to coughing and wheezing. Within 2 days, teachers who I didn’t disclose this information to, knew of my medical issues.

What is currently happening in my work area has resulted in an unknown mixture of students on a daily basis in an air-conditioned building with no changes to maintenance of the air-conditioning system. The windows are not opened to increase ventilation. The preparation of cleaner air shelters and cleaner air spaces being prepared using existing information about the identification and preparation of spaces to protect the public from wildfire smoke. Minimum requirements for air conditioning and air filtration are described in Appendix B of Wildfire Smoke: A Guide for Public Health Officials, will not be considered.

The CDC suggests Preparation of Cleaner Air Shelters and Cleaner Air Spaces (Covid):

Appropriately sized room air cleaners can also reduce particle concentrations in individual rooms, with high-efficiency filters and room air cleaners are more effective with more frequent operation and facilities should have central air conditioning with filtration that is medium or high efficiency, especially at the fresh (outdoor) air intake. Facilities should continue to provide air filtration that is adequate for the expected number of occupants in the space. Portable air cleaners can be used in spaces that can achieve a smoke clean air delivery rate (CADR) of at least 2/3 of the room volume. Air filtration should not be relied on for controlling the spread of COVID-19.

It is my understanding that none of these CDC recommendations have been taken into consideration for buildings utilizing air-conditioning systems. No room air cleaners have been purchased for this purpose nor can there be increased ventilation due to the sealed windows. Air filters are routinely changed once per month, with no enhanced cleaning. There is no documentation which supports the current air-conditioning system as having filtration that is medium or high efficiency with regards to adequate fresh air intake.

The MOU as proposed does not support a safe working and learning environment because it allows changes to the CDC recommendations. I feel I have been sentenced to a Covid death without a trial and convicted, guilty only of being a teacher. Now it isn’t a matter of if, but only when. I read about the release of inmates from the prisons because of overcrowding and yet there is a daily push to fill my enclosed area to capacity. Some teachers have jokingly called me the sacrificial lamb. There are high numbers of Covid positive people living in 96819.

We need clear metrics or written guidance from the Hawaii State Department of Health and Department of Education on closing schools due to high case counts and fully reopening school buildings when it is safe to do so. In order to minimize the number of individuals on campus during the pandemic, no students should be physically coming to school and teachers should be allowed to work from home if they choose.
Currently I have 30-37 students in my area with administration pushing for 50-60 students. This is not a safe environment for the students or myself. There needs to be 100% distance learning for all students across the state, including those in special education, English language learners, special motivation programs (SMP), and all others with no device or access, until at least the end of the first quarter. Currently all of these teachers in the programs listed at my school must have face to face instruction per the administration. There is no reason why students can’t be 100% distance learning until more safety measures are in place.

The CDC’s website provides guidance on “How to Protect Yourself and Others” which states specific behaviors and situations to be avoided. Students and staff would be considered an “Outside Home Contact” by definition of not living in my household. Why is the Board of Education supporting a work environment that is not based on research in epidemiology, especially since they are not experts in Covid-19?

Thank you,

N. Lum
Educator--27 years
Aloha,
As per the HSTA's contract with the DOE, teachers should be able to work from home (telework) for as long as distance learning remains in effect. Although students are staying home, there are still a substantial amount of teachers and other staff members on campus. We are sharing the same bathrooms, lunch rooms, copy machines, touching the same faucets, light switches, door handles, and breathing the same air in rooms that we know droplets have recently been left in. If it's unsafe for students, it's unsafe for staff. Is it really that complicated?
Aloha,

My name is Leilani Yamauchi and I am a First Grade teacher at Waihe'e Elementary on the island of Maui. Yesterday I had 2 SPED students in my classroom all afternoon. It was a challenge to keep masks on. Today, I was notified that one of those student's is sick.

Although it may not be COVID, I am worried as a parent. I cannot control what happens in these kid's homes and because they are in my classroom, I have to deal with any consequences and take it home to my family.

Please consider the following:

- Ensure 100-percent distance learning for all students across the state, including those in special education, until at least the end of the first quarter.
- Require the DOH and HIDOE to provide clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students’ return. Many states and cities have specific triggers already in place for when schools should be open or closed based on COVID-10 cases, but Hawaii does not.
- Guarantee that the HIDOE honors HSTA’s contract by allowing teachers to work from home (telework) for as long as distance learning remains in effect.

Thank you so much for your time.
Aloha,
I am a special education teacher and I believe that a few of our students need to be in school along with a teacher and any supports they need. We (the teams) found that online/distance learning is not beneficial for these vulnerable students, therefore I (we) believe that special education students need to be in school in person to progress academically and socially. Mahalo, Ms. Boeman

Sent from Mail for Windows 10
Dear Board of Education,

I am a first-grade teacher and we had our first day of school for our SPED students. These students are supposed to come for face-to-face instruction.

During the short time I had them, it was nearly impossible to keep them socially distanced and keep their masks on. There are other classes that also had students who would refuse to wear their masks due to medical issues, sensory issues or defiant behaviors.

One of my students already did not come to school on the second day of instruction because he is already sick. Another student has a family member that will be coming back from the mainland and that family member will be living in the household with the student during the quarantine time.

We also had an incident with a staff member who needed to leave midway through the day due to someone in their household having a fever and not being well enough to take care of themselves. This staff member had many contacts with the students and our staff.

This all happened within the first day of school and is causing a lot of concern. This just shows how flawed our planned system of vulnerable students being on campus is.

Please ensure 100% distance learning for ALL students across the state, including those in special education. Our bubbles are not working and we need to put safety first. There are things that are out of our control, but ensuring they are learning from home will ensure safety to our school and our communities.
Aloha,

I am testifying on item V. A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.

I am a 5th grade teacher in an inclusion setting over on Maui along with being a mother of 2. My son is now in the 3rd grade and my daughter is entering kindergarten. Teachers such as myself with children of our own should have the option to telework from home. We have been thankful and blessed that my spouse has been still full time employed during this pandemic. Now that school has gone to full distance learning I am struggling to find who can and will watch my children. Being able to work from home I can ensure that my children are safe and able to log into their own virtual class with their teacher so that they can receive education as well. My worries would end. After losing our 92 year old great grandpa we have become they caregiver of our 79 year old great grandma. With us being home will not only keep us safe but her as well.

Another reason teachers should telework from home is due to the rise of COVID cases across Hawai’i. I also teach in an inclusion setting with a special education teacher. I am concerned for her due to her age and if we are having to work with “vulnerable” students that myself and her especially are at high risk. We have been also trying to figure out how we both can work with vulnerable students let alone teach virtually. How is one capable to do both? Teachers are already being stretched thin, I feel this is one more thing added to our “platter.”

I do understand that we all miss being in school especially students, I see it and hear it from my own children. My new kindergarten yearns to go to school and to make new friends. But all students and teachers should be at home right now at least till the first quarter. Here in Lahaina, Maui we are one tight knit community and the only way to keep us safe is if everyone stayed home. This is the time for parents to rise up! This is the time parents can help one another and to be there for their keiki! Please allow us to telework from home so we can al be safer!

Mahalo Nui for your time,
Theresa M
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Dear Board of Education,

My name is Kevin Huggins, a teacher at King Intermediate school in Kaneohe, and I am testifying on item V. A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.

We need the DOH and HIDOE to provide clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students’ return. Many states and cities have specific triggers already in place for when schools should be open or closed based on COVID-10 cases, but Hawaii does not.

We also need a guarantee that the HIDOE honors HSTA’s contract by allowing teachers to work from home (telework) for as long as distance learning remains in effect.

I ask the Board to ensure 100-percent distance learning for all students across the state, including those in special education, until at least the end of the first quarter. My wife works in an FSC special education classroom and, starting on 8/17, she has had students, and their adult supports, in her classroom from 8 am until 3 pm. This is unacceptable and unsafe for all those involved. To support her decision to bring students back to campus Dr. Kishimoto said in a Hawaii News interview on Monday that they had a very successful summer school program where very few adults/students became infected with the covid19. What she failed to mention was that the average number of coronavirus cases during summer school was 25 now we are seeing numbers in the 200s and even 300s. The daily new cases per 100k during summer school were less than 2 and now it is over 15. The infection rate during summer school was less than 1.2 it is now over 1.4 (the highest in the nation!). The positive test rate during summer school was less than 2 now it is over 8.5!! The coronavirus doesn’t discriminate, it can infect anybody including special education students. My wife is now accepting that it is not a matter of if she will get infected but a matter of when. That is unacceptable, and someone must make a decision to keep EVERYONE safe.

Please be that someone who is not afraid to make a difficult decision.

Thank you for your time and be safe,
Kevin Huggins
Dear Honorable Board of Education Members,

I am testifying on item V. **A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.**

I am a Special Education teacher on the Island of Hawaii, and I have been leaving my young daughters home alone since our return to school because I have no childcare option for them, and I have not been allowed to bring my children to my classroom on campus, nor has telework been afforded to our teachers. Now that school has started, I will have to take the EPSLA leave to support my own children with distance learning, which takes away learning from my students.

Governor Ige, has repeatedly asked employers to be flexible and make accommodations for employees to care for their children. The DOE has given its own teachers zero flexibility, and I do not feel that taking 12 weeks of leave that is federally mandated is what Governor Ige means by an accommodation. I am asking that the DOE allows its teachers to telework or at the very least allow our children in our classrooms.

I feel as if my own children, who are students in the DOE do not matter, and their failures will be the DOE failures if I cannot be with them and support them with distance learning. Also, as a Special Education teacher, I am now putting my students educational learning in a substitute teachers hands. That is completely unfair to my students, and this can all be resolved by simply following the HSTA contract, and allowing us to telework.

I worked more hours during school closures in the 4th quarter, and will continue to do so if I can support my own children as well.

I humbly ask that you honor our HSTA contract and right the wrong that the DOE has done in violating our rights to a safe workplace, and that workplace during a pandemic like this is home.

Thank you in advance for your consideration,

Jennifer Jo
Good afternoon Board of Education,

I would like to submit written testimony on item V.
A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.

I would like the board to ensure 100% distance learning for all students, including those in special education for the entire first quarter.

I would like the board to require the DOH and HIDOE to uphold their part of the agreement on Reopening Schools by providing clear metrics on when schools are safe to open and when schools are safe to return in the event of Covid-19 cases happening upon a school.

I would also like the guarantee that the HIDOE will honor the contractual agreement of providing a safe place for students and teachers and by allowing teachers to work from home, aka telework as long as distance learning remains in effect at a school.

As a faculty rep at Kalama Intermediate on the island of Maui, I have talked to many different individuals on why teleworking should be an option for them as well as other teachers. In particular, I have had numerous conversations from our Life Skills teacher and I can feel in the tears that the state has placed her in a position between her love of her family pitted against her love of her students. I have heard from other teachers that are immune-compromised that the option to telework is a life saver and a relief from worrying about the unknown. The other reason for teleworking is there is no reason for teachers to be on campus when all of their students are working remotely in their google classrooms. On the flip side, I think other teachers should have the option to work on site because of internet connection issues at home and the school site is a better working environment. Overall, teachers at Kalama want the option to telework and do not mind if teachers take that option or not. If we can save one life, then this option should be pursued.

Well, in closing, I hope this written testimony is my last testimony to the BOE because being flexible with all these last minute changes have made me as flexible as the yogi gurus I see on YouTube. Also, if the guys and the girls that run HIDOE and DOH would sit down with the HSTA, then little guys like me wouldn't have to sit down with the principal at my school and have discussions like the option to telework.
Becoming more flexible as I age in 2020,
Yogi Eric
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.
What a truly horrific time to be a teacher. In what was once thought by me to be a career characterized by unparalleled stability, teaching has now become a literal minefield, with possible dangers and risks that we cannot even see all around us. Teachers' concerns are being overlooked, heard but not listened to, and swiftly ignored.

Dr. Kishimoto continues to gaslight teachers in her statements sent out to our school emails even just this past week, contradicting even her own previous statements (e.g., discussing recently how ohana bubbles aren't even possible when that was previously her entire reasoning for why schools are safe and are a "controlled environment"). Backpedaling like this demonstrates a lack of tact and aloha to the core - call it what it is: poor leadership. The "training" she keeps praising was poorly done. Isn't it quite interesting that after asking for more time to prepare, all of a sudden the DOE had over 15 hours worth of training ready to go as if it popped out of thin air? That's exactly the level of quality I would attribute to the training; thrown together, as if a middle schooler was in charge of organizing it. A lot of the videos were fuzzy, disorganized and irrelevant, some were found on random web pages that didn't make sense, and the communication of what was required and how to actually show you watched them all was so disorganized and clearly wasn't thought through prior to assigning such a laborious "training". I would say more than 90% of them were largely unhelpful in actually preparing me for the classroom. Maybe if we actually spent the training time we asked for KNOWING that we were going to be going to distance learning instead of having to wait until literally one week before, we would have been able to do real training that actually prepared us for what we are currently facing this quarter.

The fact that no decision has been made to go to distance learning for the rest of the quarter 1 further confirms this is poor leadership. To be reactive in the face of a global pandemic, not even mentioning the fact that we are the fastest growing covid HOT SPOT of the entire U.S., is utterly ridiculous and will have disastrous and fatal consequences that will go beyond any purported learning loss.

At the last emergency board meeting, I testified about the importance of pushing distance learning for the entire quarter 1, and the board essentially didn't even discuss this as a remote possibility. I heard countless testimonies echoing the same sentiments, and they were swiftly ignored as irrelevant. What is the point of writing in and speaking out if the board is simply going to ignore the voice of thousands of teachers (and countless experts) who are warning against in person learning occurring too quickly? The most disgusting thing of all is the fact that SPED students are being singled out and sent to school as sacrificial lambs in the name of "extra assistance", as if equality and safety is the last thing on your minds. THIS IS NOT 100% DISTANCE LEARNING. I know that you all *say* you want to do what is best for students and teachers but if you agree with sending "SPED kids" back to school, WHICH IS HAPPENING NOW, and then reopening schools in September, your words and actions vary immeasurably.

Even though we are the most flexible workforce on the planet and we can and do handle whatever is thrown at us, DO NOT WAIT UNTIL 3 DAYS BEFORE THE END OF VIRTUAL LEARNING TO ANNOUNCE IN-PERSON LEARNING BEGINNING OR VIRTUAL LEARNING CONTINUING. MAKE THE RIGHT DECISION AND DON'T WAIT - it is impossibly hard to plan when there is no stability, answers or consistency!!!! This affects the kids more than going to virtual learning does because nobody is making a decision about what's going to happen this quarter/semester. I feel worse for the students of our communities
than I do for myself knowing that their health and safety carries such little importance when it comes to planning out how school is taught, under the guise of "doing what's best for the kids".

--
Kileigh Sanchez, M.S.Ed.
Art Educator, Waianae Intermediate School
Vanderbilt University '14, Communications and Studio Art
Johns Hopkins University '16, Master of Science, Education

Classroom Phone: (808) 305-2738

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I am a special education teacher and a parent of a special needs student. I do not feel safe for any of us!!! I had to take leave because I was having COVID like symptoms (it ended up being allergies). I can imagine how many people I could have affected (even with safely precautions in place). I was terrified!!!! I still am. I urge for distance learning for students and teachers. If one person on campus gets it we are doomed. I am really scared. I don’t want to go near anyone on campus and I worry about sharing the same bathrooms with numerous people, that is dangerous. I urge the Board to go full distance learning for teachers too until students can return to school safely.

Michelle Murphy
King Intermediate
Aloha,

I am a special education kindergarten teacher and I strongly oppose my schools requirement that I offer in person services to students. The general education teachers are not required to offer in person services and our lives should be of equal value. Myself and fellow teachers have received the online trainings and are more than capable of fulfilling special education minutes and collecting data using virtual learning procedures. Related services such as speech, occupational therapy, etc all offer services online, without in person meetings.

I am also the parent of a first grade special education student. His special education teacher does plan to honor the school policy of in person education however I happen to know that she has no immune system due to current chemotherapy. I will not allow my son to receive his special education minutes in person. I am greatly saddened that his teachers’ life is at risk due to the schools policy of in person services. While she may be willing to die, I am not willing to kill her. I certainly hope the board agrees and shows it by changing the policy.

My first day with students was a reality check in that there is really no chance these children are going to respect all the numerous safety procedures in place. I service students with communication deficits who use proximity and touch as a means of communication. Trying to work with them safely has been impossible. In addition, during the in person device pick up and in person assessments done this week with general education students it was obvious that the parents are not reading the safety procedures we send home and they are not abiding by them. I was accosted when I politely asked a family to obey known and previously conveyed policies while on our campus. I had to lock myself in my classroom and was unable to proceed safely on campus with my work because the woman was so antagonistic and proceeded to verbally accost an aide, the vice principal, the entire office staff, and the principal.

Another issue is that my older child (just 9 years old) is supposed to be learning from home. The requirement that I be on campus and in my room all school hours and my own child is not allowed on campus is not something I can honor. I am forced to use leave time and will be absent in my role as a special education teacher should the school stick to its current policies and show no flexibility.

Sincerely,
I am testifying on item V. **A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.**

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a special education teacher at an elementary school on Maui. I teach kindergarten, first grade and help in our preschool classrooms. Several of my students are not able to wear masks due to their disabilities and some need RBT’s or EA’s to support their programs, which make for a very crowded classroom with zero social distancing. ALL of my students need hand over hand support. Some are not even able to use the toilet, which means that we are changing pull-ups.

The father of one of my unmasked students works at a location that was just identified in the news as having several positive cases of COVID. Another one of my unmasked students primary caretaker is currently in Los Angeles and will be returning home in a few days where she will once again assume her responsibility of caring for my student. She is required to quarantine but he is not. Los Angeles is currently considered a hot spot. Another one of my unmasked students lives in a household of 30 plus people and growing due to extended family moving in. As cases rise I can’t help but think and worry about which one of my unmasked students is going to infect me.

We had plans in place to safely reopen school that looked amazing on paper but in reality, turned into a petri dish of germs.

Today one of my students didn’t come to school. His mom texted me to let me know that he is sick and began feeling ill shortly after school yesterday...

I am a single mother of three young children. I cannot afford to get sick or worse. My kids don’t have anyone else. I also care for my elderly mother who just got out of a nursing home not too long ago.

The reality is that we are not able to keep our students or ourselves safe on campus at this time. We just can’t.

If something happens to me who is going to take care of my children? Who is going to read them bedtime stories? Who is going to make them dinner? The list goes on.

Aside from the COVID aspect I believe that the environment we are bringing our students into is detrimental to their development. It isn’t natural. They can’t play, learn to share, there are no typically developing peers on campus. There is very little benefit and even if the benefit was great it still wouldn’t be worth the risk.
We tried; we gave it our best shot. We are already short on Special Education Teachers; we can’t afford nor should we be willing to lose even one more due to COVID.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter. Please vote to not allow ANY students on campus until a time where it is safe to do so, especially our most vulnerable ones.
Aloha Board of Education Members,

I’m a 7th grade teacher at Ewa Makai Middle School & 6-year HSTA member. I’m sending this email to question some of the current decisions in place on behalf of teachers, as well as flaws in the current back-to-school/distance learning plan. Above all else, I’m writing to you specifically about the NEED for teachers to have the option to TELEWORK during the time that distance learning is occurring for students.

I’m a single mom of two young kids. I know that thousands of teachers and other educators are currently trying to figure out what to do for childcare. Not only is it ridiculously expensive (especially when you look at teacher pay) but our own children need help & guidance as we all navigate distance learning.

It makes absolutely no sense to me that I am driving every day from my home (Wahiawa Heights) to my school (Ewa Beach) with my kids in tow, only to sit in my classroom & do everything I need to do VIRTUALLY. We aren’t even allowed to have face-to-face meetings with our teams, departments, etc. It is all online --- so why am I being forced to come in? Not only is it a waste of my time, money, & gas; it’s also putting myself & my kids at risk. Although we stay in my classroom; we do walk through the campus, use the same bathroom, printer, refrigerator, etc. as over 30 staff members in my grade-level. Though we wash hands, sanitize, social distance, & wear masks, it just DOESN’T MAKE SENSE why I’m being forced to come into campus only to do what I could do just as well, from the safety of my home.

I think it should absolutely be a CHOICE. Some teachers, such as science or culinary teachers doing labs/demonstrations will need access to certain materials for their virtual classes. If they follow health & safety guidelines, then yes they should be able to come in. However, for the vast majority of teachers, everything we’re doing now CAN BE DONE FROM HOME. I don’t understand how, when the pandemic first started & we shut down campuses entirely in mid-March, cases were in the single digits. We were given a single 1/2 day time slot to come to campus to grab our things, after which no teachers were even allowed on campus. Now, as cases continue to rise at 2 weeks straight of triple digits, we’re not only having some students on campus this week but forcing teachers to report every single day to teach virtually. WHY?

I’d like to point out that our contract specifically states in Article X Teacher Protection: “G. When students are sent home from school or are not required to attend due to emergencies which endanger health or safety, teachers will not be required to remain at, nor report to, said schools.”

IF STUDENTS DON’T NEED TO/CANNOT report to school because of HEALTH/SAFETY issues such as COVID-19, TEACHERS ARE NOT required to remain at or report either! I cannot believe that part of our CONTRACT could so blatantly be violated. With all due respect, I plead with you to consider everything I’ve talked about & allow teachers the CHOICE TO TELEWORK.

Mahalo for your time, attention, & consideration. It is deeply appreciated.

Chelsey Silva

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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 Tyler Hill and I am a FSC Special education teacher at Waialua High and Intermediate. I am writing to implore you to ensure 100-percent distance learning for all students across the state, including those in special education, until at least the end of the first quarter. I have spoken with my parents and 5 out of 7 parents expressed serious concerns about their child coming back to school. They said they want their child to come because they know the importance of being in person, yet they all are concerned about their child's well being. They kept asking me if it was safe and I told them yes. The thing is I can do everything to keep my classroom and students safe and they could still get coronavirus. A few of my students are only coming a couple of times a week because of this. One of them has asthma and the mother is worried about him coming but sending him twice a week anyway. It is a very stressful situation for me as a teacher feeling the weight of the responsibility of keeping my children safe in the classroom. My worst fear is that one of my students will get coronavirus while at school, in my classroom. I don't know what I'll do if the student with asthma catches coronavirus.

I would also implore you to require the DOH and HIDOE to provide clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students’ return. Many states and cities have specific triggers already in place for when schools should be open or closed based on COVID-10 cases, but Hawaii does not. One of my parents has a child in general education and another child in my CBI class. She asked me why is it safe for my son to go, but not my daughter? I am also having trouble understanding as well. Just because my kids are in special education doesn't make them less vulnerable to Covid, it actually makes them more vulnerable. I understand that my kids benefit greatly from in class instruction, but I don't understand why we are putting their lives at risk to do so. I have put together workbooks for each one of my children that correlates to their individual IEP goals so that they are able to work on their goals from home. Being at home is not ideal, but I'd much rather have them healthy and be able to return to school at some point, then have one be seriously ill because they came to school.

Lastly I would implore you to guarantee that the HIDOE honors HSTA’s contract by allowing teachers to work from home (telework) for as long as distance learning remains in effect. My children's health comes first and foremost. After that, I need to make sure that I am healthy so that I can continue to teach my kids who I have been with for the past 2 school years. Please allow for us to stay healthy and at home. If it's too dangerous for students, it's too dangerous for us. Please keep us safe!

- Tyler Hill

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Aloha!

I have wanted to be a teacher for as long as I can remember. Working with children and seeing them grow is what keeps me going day to day. I want nothing more than to be in school with a class full of students, but as we all know, it’s not safe at this time due to the monster that is COVID-19. When the decision was made that all Hawaii schools would be going 100% distance learning, I felt a sense of relief. I immediately started planning how I would be servicing my students virtually. Imagine the shock I felt when I found out that although the entire school would be doing distance learning, my special education students would be coming on campus for in-person instruction. Special education students don’t always understand what’s going on in the world. They sometimes have trouble understanding and processing information. Kids in general don’t understand the concept of social distancing. Some of them refuse to wear masks due to defiant behaviors, autism, or sensory issues. As a teacher, I am terrified that I have to come to work and sit with a student who isn’t wearing a mask. I used to wake up excited to go to work and now I wake up scared to go to work. I love my students and I want to continue to provide them with the education they deserve. This can be done virtually. There is no reason why these students and their teachers should be forced to risk their lives. I’m having trouble wrapping my head around the fact that inmates are being released so they don’t contract COVID, yet we are putting our precious keiki and their teachers back into the school setting with the numbers constantly in the triple digits. Please reconsider and allow teachers to teach virtually so everyone stays safe.

Cherie Serrano

Waihee School Special Education Teacher
My name is Abigail Palmer and I am a Special Education Teacher. I am testifying on item V. **A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.** While I am grateful that students are going to be distance learning from home, I am becoming increasingly worried about having educators continue to report to campuses to work. Within the last two weeks, I have had 20 or more teachers stop by my classroom every day to ask questions about students, needing to collaborate or to discuss school needs. I do not believe having a campus full of teachers reporting on site every day is safe. We try to avoid each other but the bottom line is that we end up interacting with each other throughout the day. With cases continuing to rise, I am begging the board to show compassion for those of us who are extremely worried to report on campus. Every time a teacher walks by my room or a parent randomly shows up on campus and walks in my room asking for the office, my health is put at risk. 50 teachers, 10 custodial staff, 10 office aids and 11 educational assistants are all sharing the same bathroom every day. We are worried. Having us report to campus just to log on our computers and teach students remotely is something we can do safely working from home. At home I do not have to interact face to face with co-workers who might have been in contact with someone who has Covid-19. At home I don’t have to worry about using the same bathroom as my peers who may be infected. At home I can guarantee my safety so I can continue to do my best teaching students remotely. I can focus on remaining healthy so that I will not need to take time off if I become sick. At home I do not have to wear a mask, so my voice will be clear for all students to hear and understand virtually. On campus I have to shout just so students can hear me through my mask. My family is auto immune compromised. Please don’t put me in the position where I could potentially infect family members because I was not allowed to work from home. Give educators the ability to telework from our homes. We are already teaching our students remotely because it is unsafe for them to be on campus, why are we not thought of too? If it is not safe for the students to be on campus, it is not safe for educators to be on campus either. Mayor Kirk Caldwell said gatherings should be limited to no more than 10 people. How is it acceptable that 80-100 staff members should be forced to gather together? We want to stay healthy for our students. We want to stay healthy for our families. We do not want to put our lives on the line when it is not necessary. Exposing us to covid 19 can be easily avoided by having us telework from the safety of our homes. Please show us that we are not disposable. We are humans. We are scared. Please show us the same humanity that you’ve shown our keiki.

Mahalo nui loa,
Abigail Palmer
To Whom It May Concern,

As a very concerned grandparent and former tutor at Laie Elementary School, I want to add my testimony to strongly oppose the use of Acellus Academy in the Hawaii public school system. The founder and owner of Acellus Academy, Roger Billings, has serious questionable education credentials. Much of the content of the curriculum are racist, unscientific and historically inaccurate. When you do a thorough, careful and critical examination of Roger Billings and Acellus Academy, you will find that you do not want the Keiki of Hawaii to be educated by Acellus Academy. Mahalo for your consideration in this pressing issue.

Aloha,

Eloise Tyau
Dear BOE- I am a veteran teacher for the HIDOE. I teach preschool special education on Maui. Due to the rising cases of Covid-19 in the state, I implore you to consider ensuring 100% distance learning for all students across the state, until the end of the first quarter.

I have great concerns about the lack of systems in place at my school, district and statewide. I have been asking my principal and administrators on the district level for clear guidelines regarding mask policies for my young students with disabilities. I have been told it is a teacher decision as to whether require masks in my classroom. I do not have a medical background and in no way am I qualified to make this decision. We need the state to step up and provide clear guidance about basic health and safety procedures for our schools.

In my contract as well as the MOU, it states that teachers will not be responsible for cleaning our own classrooms, but at the school level we are told we must clean desks, surfaces and toys ourselves. I was given cleaning supplies hours before my first students were to attend.

My special education preschool students need close supervision at all times and we are responsible to help toilet, eat, and maintain safety. I am not able to do this from 6 feet away. Many of these children have behavioral, sensory or medical needs preventing them from wearing masks. Nobody on my school, or district level has given me feedback as to whether these children should come to school or should be excluded from face to face instruction. If I cannot get any clear guidance on mask wearing, and I am expected to clean my own classroom, no clear guidance of any kind of health plan or symptom check or any cover-19 protocol has come from my school level. How can I be sure it will be safe here? If I don’t know, the parents in our community don’t know either.

Please require the DOH and HIDOE to provide clear metrics about dealing with covid-19 in the schools and when campuses are safe for student return. It makes great sense to have policies in place for when schools should be open or closed based on cases, and i have seen nothing from the state of Hawaii. I feel procedures are unclear and therefore it is a dangerous situation for students and teachers to remain on our campus.

Lastly, please allow teachers the option to telework as long as long distance learning remains in our schools. It is a great hardship for many teachers with children of their own. Our own children are left on their own daily to navigate our homes alone, while we sit alone in our classrooms. For the safety of our community, please allow teleworking.

thank you for your time.

Carla Hazlet
Special Education Teacher
Princess Nahienaena
I believe that teachers should not be required to satellite teach from their classrooms. Telecommuting is a valid work situation. Teachers should have the option to teach from home remotely. It will allow them additional safety and it should be respected.

Concerned tax payer

Sent from my iPhone
Aloha BOE members,

In regards to Item V on your agenda for 8/20/20:

* Health and Safety: please continue to ask the hard questions. As I type this today, we await the Governor’s most recent 8/18/20 press conference for “safer at home”. It is my hope that common sense and an understanding of a pandemic to an island will be your guiding light.

* Distance Learning: This will not be the first time that I have written questioning the way resources are vetted, purchased and the system for following up on purchases. The process should be transparent and answers readily available. An example from the past, would be Wonders purchase. An example from now, is the use of Acellus in online learning. Immediately when doubt and concern was expressed about this program, there should have been action taken. Like many other situations, parents should be made aware of the controversy and be able to opt out of that program if the DOE is not going to take the step to eliminate it entirely. ANYONE with any understanding of the history of these islands, the use of Eugenics and other racist resources and techniques would be especially careful when vetting any resources for our keiki. As requested before, and I am willing to volunteer, the DOE must have a committee that looks at current resources used in the schools. We can’t have our students only understanding of the world to be that from a Eurocentric approach.

*Educators: As a retired educator, I can see that the current climate is not only stressful but heartbreaking. This line from Ms. Okahashi sums it up exactly and is the reason that you, as BOE should be fighting for the educators who are front line to our keiki: "When we worry about how parents will be able to work If schools don’t open, or how children with special needs will receive services, or how our hungriest children will receive their food, or how to protect children in abusive homes, we shouldn’t be blaming the people who have covered for these situations all along. Our schools have become a panacea for fixing all the problems of society, and now we have a problem that our schools just can’t fix. It’s not the teachers fault. Teachers can’t fix everything. Right now it’s the teachers that needs the community.” THEY NEED YOU to stop the political banter, the threat of furlough and money lost. What more do you want from them?

Every day, they put their lives on the line..willingly for their students.. What will you do?

C. Burghardt
Retired Educator
Dear BOE,

My mom has been a teacher at Kealakehe high school for the past 24 years. It is not fair to force her to go to school and endanger herself, her students, and her loved ones. I urge you to allow teachers to telework from their homes as long as distance learning is in place. I also believe that it is wrong to have any form in person school at this point and strongly suggest that you keep school 100% online at least until the first quarter is over.

Thank you,

Arjun Thompson
I was trying to be ok with teaching the "vulnerables" (not loving that name either), however after 2 days of dealing with pull up mask, no six feet distance, cleaning supplies delayed, no partitions, being sneezed on and etc, I am writing my testimony. It's hard for kids to follow the covid rules, let alone "vulnerables". These "vulnerables" are the ones that are sick the most. I love teaching and kids and was trying to love this new way of teaching during a pandemic but I don't feel safe. I am wondering when I will get sick. Counting the days actually.

I understand "vulnerable", meeting service times and etc. But this feels like segregation or discrimination or something to that affect. How are parents of regular education kids not thinking discrimination or segregation because their kid can't come to school?

Least restrictive environment is not being met even with the "vulnerables" coming to school (basically by themselves)(not that I want more coming here) and meeting on zoom. Depending on the device children can't see their class, just one child at a time. Let's talk about how this is not inclusion also either coming to school or zoom meetings.

We need to go 100% distance learning for all kids (including vulnerables). We need to let teachers work from home.

Thank you for your time.

Special Education teacher with hide
I am a special education teacher in an FSC classroom (elementary). Since most students, including most special education students, are going 100% distance learning until mid-September, I believe that we should allow our FSC students, especially those in elementary schools to have face to face instruction. I know that not all FSC and/or special education teachers don't all feel the same way I do but there are many who do. Let us choose as educators, let us choose to work face to face if we feel comfortable. For those who don't, let the HQTs at our schools who are comfortable do it. We have to work together for our students and our community.

Since most students will be 100% distance learning, there won't be crowds at the schools. We can stagger FSC/SpEd schedules. There are so many things we can do. Not all special education teachers feel uncomfortable doing face to face instruction. No one hears us. Listen to us now. We want to do this.

What is fair is not always equal. Give our most vulnerable and youngest students, a chance. Give us FSC teachers who want to teach face to face a chance to help our students. PLEASE.
TESTIMONY for General Business Meeting 8/20/20 relating to Distance Learning

August 18, 2020

Dear Members of the Board of Education:

We are educators at Kainalu Elementary who have been preparing for the 20.21 school year. Like everyone else, we have had to change our plans a few times. After many videos and online training, we are looking forward to finally being able to work with our students.

Teachers, like students, have many different family situations. We realize that many educators are asking to be able to work from home, however, we would like the option to work from our classrooms. For some of us, working from home is a burden. Based on our fourth quarter experience, we feel that we are more effective teaching from our school classroom. We believe that health and safety measures have been established at our school like many other essential places of work in the public and private sectors.

Thank you for consideration and the opportunity to submit our written testimony.

Sincerely,

Joyceline Lee, Teacher
Kathleen McAngus, Teacher
Kalei Chu, Teacher
Nicole Sakuda, Teacher
Terry Kaiahua, Educational Assistant
To whom it may concern:

Why is it ok for special education teachers to be exposed to this pandemic and all its underlying issues and everyone else gets to work from the safety of behind a computer and away from other individuals??!!

I have been teaching for 12 years as a special educator in this island and I do not want to get sick from this virus because we need to meet federal mandates. My life and my students’ lives are not worth any less than their general education equivalents.

People will die. The numbers of active cases will go up if you expose us to this predicament. It is unfair and not safe. Please reconsider.

Thank you for your time.

SY Im
Board of Education Members,

I am testifying on item V. A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.

I am a teacher at Queen Kaʻahumanu School. I believe the plan to reopened schools was dangerous, rushed, and not based in science. The health and safety of keiki and teachers was not at the forefront of the plan. The ever-changing plans, that we find out from the press, have created more chaos as we constantly change course to meet the needs of our students.

To ensure a safe school year, I testify that:

- Schools need clear metrics or written guidance from the Hawaii State Department of Health and Department of Education on closing schools due to high case counts and fully reopening school buildings when it is safe to do so.
- In order to minimize the number of individuals on campus during the pandemic, no students should be physically coming to school and teachers should be allowed to work from home if they choose.
- The DOE should ensure 100-percent distance learning for all students across the state, including those in special education, until at least the end of the first quarter.
- HIDOE must honor HSTA’s contract by allowing teachers to work from home (telework) for as long as distance learning remains in effect.

I am trained, technologically literate, passionate, and well-equipped to teach from home. Teachers and families are in a better position now to handle distance learning. We can use all that we’ve learned from the last quarter of SY 19-20 and the new trainings on distance learning to support our students at home. Teachers, staff members, and students should not have to get sick and/or die first before you create substantial change.

Thank you for your time,

Anjelica Ayers
Item V

Aloha,

Please reconsider face-to-face for SPED students. My mom is a SPED FSC preschool teacher. Preschool students do not understand about social distancing or how to keep others safe. My mom is in the high-risk group so she wears a mask and a shield at all times except for lunch.

I asked her if she has to take off her shield to eat lunch with the students, can she social distance? Well anyone with a preschooler knows you can't social distance while they are eating because they will throw food, run around or bother others. That is typical preschool behavior. Another student slobbered all over her but she couldn't clean it off in a timely manner because he was running away.

I've already lost my father to pancreatic cancer. I could not bear to lose my mother too over something that can be prevented. In addition, I have an infant daughter at home (we live with my mom). I live in fear that she will contract it from my mom. Please also consider how the students will feel if they contract Covid-19, pass it on to a grandparent or relative living in the same household and the relative dies as a result. That is a horrible burden to place on a child.

Please put yourself in SPED teachers' shoes. They want to provide services for their students because they care but at the same time they don't want to die. Why do we even have to consider risking people's lives?

Respectfully,
Janice Boychuk
Dear Board of Education,

I am writing testimony in support of the following matters:

Clear honest communication between HSTA and Superintendent Kishimoto. Please know that the parties you represent depend on the fact that we all have the best interests of our students, families and teachers in mind. This is not a usual negotiation. We are in the middle of a severe health pandemic. We live on an island. Many of us live in multi generational households. We do not want to expose ourselves or our families unnecessarily. Further, our Hospitals and medical facilities may not be able to withstand a mass return to school buildings. We can’t drive our loved ones to another state. This is Hawaii and the way we must plan and prepare is very different than the continental mainland. I urge you, please stop looking to other states for educational models. You must think outside the box and you must understand that on an island we are all interconnected.

We will not be returning to normal for a very long time. In the history of vaccine has there ever been one that has been injected to a global population without long term study?

are we going to depend on unfounded herd immunity? Or the false notion that children cannot get or spread the virus?

Starting now, you must plan as if this will be with us for quite some time. You May have to think about dissolving districts, you may have to think of rerouting federal and state money. You will have to acknowledge that there are children and families who desperately need to be in school. You will also have to understand that there are teachers who want to teach in school. You will also have to take into consideration that there are families, students and teachers that simply cannot return or prefer not to. Neither side of this debate should feel persecuted or shamed. Rather, you should be accessing the nature of the teachers and families here. We are kind, we are unselfish and we tend to be quite agreeable when treated with respect.

I urge all of you to start over. Think like you’ve never thought before. That is what you signed up for when you chose to become a member of leadership. Just remember, this is not your usual union vs. admin fight. We are on the same team.

Sincerely,
Tammy M.Holt
Aloha,

In reviewing some of the materials and videos of this online program, I feel this should not be an option for our students. There are many questionable or untrue statements. Just watch the PE introduction and the speaker is inappropriate—she seems to be inviting the student to watch her for other reasons!

I've also been reading some things about Dr. Billings who has a PhD from his own University which he founded and isn't accredited...no educational background. Please remove the Acellus program as the online course or even an option. I'm sure we can do better than this! (Eg...slaves were only beaten if they were bad or late for work!)

Sincerely,

Maelani Valentine
Dear Members of the Board of Education,

I am a special education preschool teacher on the island of Oahu. I have dedicated the past 5 years in the special education department on two school campuses. Today, I am writing to testify on item V. **A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.**

Today, I urge you to please ensure 100% distance learning for all students across the state, including those in special education, until at least the end of the first quarter. I love my children with all of my heart and will admit that distance learning a 3-5 year is highly ineffective; they need to be in school. However, most of my students are medically fragile with pre-existing conditions and diseases, and with the alarming rate of which COVID-19 is rapidly spreading, I worry for the well-being of my students. I do not have any children of my own to take care of, but 10 months out of the 12-month year I do. I know if they are at home and distance learning, they are guaranteed safety and health, but in my classroom I cannot make that same statement.

Board Members, I want to point out that the system that is in place right now – for special education students to come to school campus to receive face-to-face instruction over the general education population, is the first time that government officials --since COVID knocked down our front doors, have put students with special needs first. This is the right move. I will say that one more time: THIS IS THE RIGHT MOVE. However, the timing is completely wrong. Our state is not yet ready to open back up our schools even for a small population of students. Right now, I urge you to ensure 100% distance learning for all students including those in special education until the end of the first quarter. When the first quarter is over and our numbers are decreasing (or at least steady), then we need to invite students with special needs back on campus first for face-to-face instruction. These are the students who need it the most. After 3-4 weeks of heavily monitoring with no COVID cases on campuses, then the majority of the population we can welcome back.

I speak for all teachers in saying that we want our students back in the classroom more than anything. Distance Learning requires more time and more documentation and also provides way more learning barriers. But how are students suppose to learn when their health and social emotional well-being is at stake? Imagine your first day of school ever – as a three year old and your parent leaves you with an adult whose face is covered by a mask and a shield. How can we build relationships with our students if they cannot even recognize our faces? As a special education teacher, I need to establish strong social-emotional relationships with my families and students before we can effectively address other goals and objectives.

In speaking with the families of my preschool students with special needs, they are filled with worry too. They are also exhausted from the constant change, and lack of decision-making and direction as we have already heard from teachers over the past few weeks. Some have even been exposed to the virus.
I am very concerned over the fact that the Department of Health has not followed up with faculty and/or families to ensure they are quarantining or getting tested. Everything is on the honor system and right now I write to you with the deepest concern that this is what our community is lacking right now – trust. We’ve been misguided and misled. This is even prevalent in the number of people who are violating state-mandated quarantines, closed beach parks and trail heads, and exceeding groups larger than 10.

The BHS of our school e-mailed us the flow chart from the DOH; so, there has in fact been progress toward nailing down a protocol. But this has not been formally shared with the community and the protocol lacks strength with many pukas, including a scenario in which a family member contracts COVID, not the student. There is nothing in place to prevent parents from sending their child to school if this happens. Asymptomatic children will not show up on a thermometer reading, but could easily pass it to the ka’puna who continue to dedicate themselves to school institution. Even today, August 18, 2020 -- just hours after Governor Ige delivered his most recent press conference, Director Andersen expressed that officials have not yet created a system with an appropriate response time for detected cases and testing. If this system is not put in place, prior to any child returning to school campuses, it would be like sending our army into battle with any ammunition. Our government is setting teachers, administrators, and the public school institution up to fail.

Lastly, I would like to request that teachers continue to have access to their classrooms during distance learning. I understand that this goes against our contract and what HSTA is asking you to reconsider. However, to effectively provide distance learning instruction, I need the materials in my class. As I stated before my students with special needs cannot learn through a computer screen. They need physical materials and manipulatives – counting bears, pecks, card games, special pencil grips, tracing materials, and other supplies, just to name a few.

Mahalo Members of the Board of Education for reading and listening to my testimony.
Aloha B.O.E,

My name is Keokeana Elaban, I currently have a 4th & 6th grader that attend Kihei Charter School on Maui. I have sincere health concerns for my children as well as concerns with the DOE & KCS current reopening plans. I am writing in support of HSTA and their complaint in which they filed with the Department of Labor. I believe that reopening schools for face to face classes at this time is reckless and dangerous, especially for the many students, teachers and community members that have compromised immune systems. I believe that decisions are being made that are not taking the severity COVID-19 into account.

My 4th grader has had severe asthma since he was 6 months old. A normal cold that his classmate may have effects him 20x worse. When my son catches a regular cold it leads to hours a night on a nebulizer machine and additional steroidal medicine so that he is able to breathe. I do not feel that school is safe place for my son to be right now with COVID-19. Yet, prior to the HSTA filing their complaint with the department of labor, my 4th grader was expected to return to full face to face classes, Monday through Friday from 8:00am to 2:15pm. I had been given zero options at the point to protect my own child and protect his education. Prior to Thursday, I had pleaded with my school to provide me with the opportunity to do distance learning, I made them well aware that I was not looking for additional teacher support but simply the opportunity to have my son perform his school work at home. I offered to pick up his work daily and bring it back to the school daily or weekly if needed. Instead I received the response that the only option being offered is face to face classes, Monday thru Friday.

What this meant and will mean if schools are allowed to reopen under these circumstances to our family is that if I did & do not want to risk the health of my children that I would need to unenroll them from their school. My sons have been at Kihei Charter since they were in kindergarten. This school is their community, they have personal relationship with the educators and staff at the school, they have life long friends that have been their classmates since kindergarten, they love their school. By unenrolling my children, it would mean that they would loose their current spot in our school which hosts a wait list for all grades. This choice of "health" vs. "unenrollment" is completely unfair to our children.

The DOE's plans to resume with face to face classes does not protect students, teachers, or community members like my son who have compromised immune systems. The following reasons that I do not believe that school is a safe place to be is for the following reasons:

1. Masks are not mandated to be worn the entire time children are in school.

2. The public is being advised to remain 6 feet in distance and to be in groups of 10 or less, so why are children, teachers and school the exemption.

3. Most children are not capable of properly wearing their masks, especially grade 5 and under for 6 hours.

4. The school is not taking temperatures, they are relying on parents to do so.
5. I have seen several parents state on social media that while they are home sick, at least they can rest while their child is at school (for schools and preschools that have already reopened) This proves to me that you can not trust other families to protect your child’s health.

6. My school does not even have a school aide with proper medical back ground training which should absolutely be required should a student come down with symptoms. I have emailed the DOE and the State Charter School Commission to ask if is required for schools to have a school health aide and what medical requirements that school health aide is required to have to hold that position. Neither have responded. This is not the time to cut corners!

7. The cleaning protocols with in the school rely on students to do the sanitizing in between classes to sanitize items such as their workspace desk, chair and computers. I know for a fact that although a child may sanitize the area correctly for the first few times, human nature will kick in and eventually the process will not be executed properly. I know this because it my profession which has high standards for sanitation, even adults sway from this type of perfection that will be expected for kids to handle and it takes on going constant reminders, coaching and training to keep standards high. Our schools are not ready to handle this and teaching.

8. The concept of "co-horts" and "bubbles" sounds nice but is impossible in practice if proper quarantine tracing and notification is involved. The reason that this is NOT a safe option is the average house hold sizes of Hawaii families. Most 'ohana have more then 1 child in Hawaii. For example:

If my 4th grader was exposed to COVID-19 from a classmate, then essentially my son in 6th grade would be exposed, they live together and are together every single day. We have 'ohana that lives down stairs from us with a 2nd & 5th grader that attend another school. They are cousins, they play together everyday. That alone would essentially expose 4 grade levels at 2 schools from 1 child. More then half of my 4th graders classmates have at least 2-4 siblings at elementary, middle school, and high school. The DOE needs to realize this! My sister has 3 kids in Oahu with an elementary student at KS, another child in a different elementary school and another child in a different middle school. That is 3 schools in 1 family. Co-horts are not a sustainable or safe solution! This is a disease that is spread through air droplets.

9. There is no medical advisor coming in to check to make sure that classrooms are indeed safe. This needs to be done for every single classroom in our state to make sure that all public & public charter schools are in place.

10. There are no metrics or protocols in place for our state that says "no matter what, if we hit this many positive cases there will be no face to face school".

11. There is NO one supervising the schools actions, plans, or decisions. A friend of mine was in tears the other day because she had to send her child in for orientation because she was so scared for his safety and their families safety from COVID-19. No parent and No Child should ever feel this way!

12. Families need a firm plan that is NOT going to change for a least a whole quarter at a time. We are trying to operate jobs, childcare and education and we need to be able to develop sustainable plans for our families. Our schools were not ready for this change and it is very apparent and I certainly hold the DOE responsible for not properly preparing their schools to have a solid plan for their teachers and students. They should have first and foremost rolled out a solid distance learning program, followed by taking time to fully develop a safe and thought out return to school plan instead of a rushed, reckless plan that is different for every school.

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. I hope that you make the right decision to keep our teachers, children and community safe. I hope that when we reach a realistic point of reopening our schools that the plan is meticulously thought out and takes into consideration those who may not have the same comfort...
level of safety. I ask that when the face to face plan is created, that there are the same requirements at every single school with no exceptions as long as our community is battling COVID-19. I ask that there is a task force put together on every island with medical leaders that have the exact same standards and expectations for school requirements. As parents we should never have to fight our kids schools to protect the safety and welfare of our children.

Sincerely,

Keokeana Elaban
Maui, Hawaii
To Whom It May Concern,

I have been teaching Special Education Preschool for 21 years. Every year I am exposed to germs from my students because they are unable to control their bodily fluids. Most kids are not toilet trained, do not know how to sneeze in their shirt, or cover their mouth when they cough. I have to get down low to talk to my students, to change their diapers, and to help feed them. My Educational Assistants have always sanitized the classroom toys, surfaces, and highly touched surfaces. Every year we all get sick, which also means I get my family sick. We live with my mom who goes to feed my dad twice a day in a care home. The last thing I want is to bring COVID home to my family, and have my mom infect my dad and his entire care home.

I start face to face school tomorrow with my SPED preschool class. I have taken out carpets, furniture, rearranged my room, and set up for children to be seated 6’ apart. But have you ever been in a preschool class? Do you think 3-5 year old children with special needs sit at a desk/table all day? I know that my children need to be in school, so do all the other children. Is it fair that my entire school voted for 100% distance learning and did not even meet face to face for the first four days, except the fully self contained (FSC) classes? Is it fair that just because I teach SPED preschool that I have to risk my life and my family when all the other teachers on campus can provide distance learning? It shouldn't matter what we teach, all teachers should be treated equally. All teachers in the entire state should be distance learning the first quarter, not just regular education.

Clearly you do not want teachers and students to get COVID and die, correct? Then you need to stop in person school for 100% of students until it is safe for Hawaii to gather in groups of 25 or more (like a classroom). This is not forever, just until our numbers decrease and it is safe to go back to school.

The DOH and HIDOE need to provide clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students’ return. Many states and cities have specific triggers already in place for when schools should be open or closed based on COVID-10 cases, but Hawaii does not. You need to guarantee that the HIDOE honors HSTA’s contract by allowing teachers to work from home (telework) for as long as distance learning remains in effect.

Mahalo,
Jamie Blake
I first have to say that I’m appalled at how Superintendent Kishimoto has handled this pandemic. Her lack of compassion, planning, as well as complete disregard for the health & safety of teachers and students has undoubtedly contributed to the dire situation our public schools are currently in. In the midst of surging Covid cases and community spread, it is unacceptable to still allow certain students on campus to work face to face with their teachers. These students are on campus all day and reporting to all of their periods throughout the week. This does not follow the health advice that experts are repeatedly giving the public. Why are teachers or special education/high risk students somehow less susceptible to getting sick or dying? People’s lives need to be prioritized.

We need a real plan. Teachers can’t keep planning and replanning. Trying to float between distance learning and hybrid learning within the same quarter is making it impossible to plan for assessments and future learning goals. Distance learning should take place for at least the first semester. Why is our state planning by being reactive instead of proactive? This whole approach to reopening school makes no sense and it’s unfair to everyone.

I’m also very frustrated that our HSTA contract and MOU are not being upheld. Why are teachers being forced to report to campus for work? Governor Ige is telling employers to be flexible and allow employees to work from home, yet he doesn’t extend this same courtesy to teachers? He is instead putting it on individual school principals and forcing teachers to navigate through a maze of bureaucracy. Our morale is at an all time low. Teachers are struggling with lack of childcare and family strife because we’re being forced to report to work and risk exposing our family members to Covid. I do not feel safe being on a school campus. I am beyond capable of working from home. Teachers will be much more effective educators if they are not subjected to undue stress that can be easily alleviated with telework options. Hawaii is already suffering a critical teacher shortage! Please treat teachers like the professionals we are and allow us to telework. A contract clearly exists for a reason. Help teachers so we can help our kids, our community, and the public!!!!
Aloha Board Members,

I am writing this email in regards to safely opening up the school. Before opening up, schools need clear metrics or written guidance from the Hawaii State Department of Health and Department of Education on closing schools due to high case counts and fully reopening school buildings when it is safe to do so. In order to minimize the number of individuals on campus during the pandemic, no students should be physically coming to school and teachers should be allowed to work from home if they choose.

To ensure our schools are safe for our keiki and our educators.

We ask that the Board of Education take action on the following items:

- Ensure 100-percent distance learning for all students across the state, including those in special education, until at least the end of the first quarter.
- Require the DOH and HIDOE to provide clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students’ return. Many states and cities have specific triggers already in place for when schools should be open or closed based on COVID-10 cases, but Hawaii does not.
- Guarantee that the HIDOE honors HSTA’s contract by allowing teachers to work from home (telework) for as long as distance learning remains in effect.

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Mahalo, Sarah Kalawe Sent from Gmail Mobile
Testimony BOE

I am testifying on item V. A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.

- Guarantee that the HIDOE honors HSTA's contract by allowing teachers to work from home (telework) for as long as distance learning remains in effect.

"If you can work from home, we want you to work from home" - Mayor Caldwell, August 18, 2020. Per both the Governor and the Mayor, they both are requesting employers to allow employees the flexibility to telework. UH at Manoa is allowing their employees the "Covid work from home option". https://www.hawaii.edu/news/2020/08/04/work-from-home-in-august/

I am a classroom teacher who wishes to work remotely. I have set up three spaces in my home so I am able to professionally conduct my 7 classes. I have been taking extra precautions to make sure my family and I have limited exposure to COVID, which has rapidly turned into community spread. My school has had numerous cases of exposure in less than a week. If students are not allowed on campus, teachers need to be given the option to teach on campus or at home but ultimately should not be allowed on campus, either. There has been no flexibility from our employer to take care of what matters first, our health and safety.

I am also a parent with school aged children in the public school system. As a mother, I have done my very best to keep my 3 children (ages 5 - 1 years old) safe from exposure of Covid. I also live in a multi generational home. I need to keep my family safe. I, like many other teachers, have to take care of my own children but also need to take care of my students. There has been no flexibility from our employer to allow us to do both. That is NOT fair.

My childcare provider has tested positive for Covid twice within the past two months. Both times I had to scramble to find childcare. The plus side was that my school did not have to call in a substitute to teach my classes online since students did not return to school yet. Teachers need to be given the option to telework from home so we can take care of our families as well as our responsibilities as a teacher. If this is not an option, students will lose because who will conduct their online classes effectively? The school will also lose because they will be spending more money on substitutes when the teacher is able to teach online just not in the classroom.

Please give the teachers the option to telework. Have empathy for your teachers and consider all our situations during this pandemic.

Thank you.
T. Imai

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.
Dear Board of Education-

I am Lee Ann Oshiro, public school teacher, and I am testifying on item V. A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the covid-19 pandemic.

I have a lot of concerns regarding the health and safety of the students and the teachers—myself, being one of them. Many of my students reside in a nearby public housing area and many families have come forward sharing that there are cases of covid-19 in their area. Families are afraid and many have actually opted to have their child participate in distance learning for the entire quarter. In my class of 23 students, 9 families opted for distance learning. They are hesitant to have their child return to school and I don't blame them. All students and families should be given the option, even those in Special Education. We have many "high-needs" groups of students that would benefit from being physically in school—but it's not worth the risk. Special Education teachers are rockstars, they should be able to provide distance learning opportunities for their students just as any educator. Why put them at risk?

Reopening schools without clear guidance puts teachers at risk. There are many inequities that exist within each campus. Some schools put safety as a priority, teachers are given PPEs, masks for students, and desks are retrofitted with plexi-glass shields, while others make face shields for their own students as an out of pocket expense. Some schools enforce wearing of masks, while others not so much. Some schools require their teachers to show up for events even when we should be minimizing large gatherings of people. The guidance given to us is interpreted in many ways, resulting in a type of chaos that is stressful and discerning. Please allow for the safe reopening of schools, and for distance learning opportunities to be provided by all teachers, including Special Education educators.

Teachers should also be given the option to work from home, as long as we provide and take care of our students. We want to come back to school, we look forward to the future. If we don't return to school, there will be frustration from the public. Let's do what is right, knowing that we don't want to see the wrongs that could possibly happen if we return without thinking.

Thank you for your consideration,

Lee Ann Oshiro
Dear Board Members,

Aloha. I am a high school public school teacher in the DOE, Central Region-Waialua. These past few weeks have been very stressful to say the least.

I would like to ask that you:

1. Ensure 100 percent distance learning for all students across the state, including those in special ed, until at least the end of 1st quarter.
2. Require the DOH and HIDOE to provide clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students’ return. Many states and cities have specific triggers already in place for when schools should be open based on Covid-19, but Hawaiʻi does not.
3. Guarantee that the HIDOE honors HSTA’s contract by allowing teachers to work from home (telework) for as long as distance learning remains in effect.

I ask these things because I believe that we need clear guidance and direction from you and clear rules so that schools do not allow principals to make their own decisions based on their personal opinions. This week, our school was one of the few who opened the doors to students to return to campus for face to face learning. Students are on campus for approximately 5 hours per day in groups. They attend classes in those groups, meaning that the 1st half returned on Monday, 2nd half Tuesday, 1st half Wednesday, and then the 2nd half on Thursday. Many teachers were hesitant to return, but our principal based her decision on her own opinion and did not take teachers into consideration. We were not allowed to give input as to whether we were in agreement with her decision to teach face-to-face. But rather, we were told her “personal opinion” that we have a small school, and that students learn best face-to-face, and that students would be coming on campus in groups, and that many were choosing to opt-out because attendance would not be mandatory. I understand her “opinion” but why were we not able to take a vote, or even give input on what we thought was best for us, and our own personal health and safety?

For the first two weeks of teacher training, many teachers were unaware that we were able to attend staff faculty meetings on zoom. On the first day of school when we were in our first meeting in our school gym, we were given the opportunity to ask questions. One of the staff members asked a question, but because we were in the gym, and the person did not have a microphone, all we heard was our principal raising her voice on the microphone saying to that person, “ENOUGH, ENOUGH.” That set the tone for those first two weeks.
On the last day of teacher training, our principal had a “talk story.” with any faculty who wanted to attend. Yet her “talk story” consisted of her talking and us listening. She surrounds herself with YES people who will not go against her will, or against her authority.

Also, on that last day, she claimed that she had given us the opportunity to attend all meetings over the course of the past two weeks online via Zoom rather than in person like we had assumed was a requirement. She provided “proof” by showing a slide of the contact persons that we were supposed to email if we had wanted that Zoom option and said that she was providing the information for our union rep. If she claims that we were always given the opportunity to attend faculty meetings online since the first day why did she only show us that “proof” on the last day of teacher meetings?

Thank you for your time and attention to this email,

HHB
If the principals, superintendent and the board of education cared about our teachers and want to keep our teachers safe and wanting to continue in their chosen careers, than by all means let the teachers who are able to work from home follow the advice from our government leaders and do just that - work from home. If they don’t need to physically be on campus why take the risk and keep them there. There has already been at least a dozen covid cases in various campuses. Why wait till more cases pop up? Principals need to be told to take care of their campuses and moreover their teachers.

Jo Ann Inouye
To whom it may concern,

I am testifying on item V. A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.

I am writing to urge the Hawaii State BOE ...

- Ensure 100-percent distance learning for all students across the state, including those in special education, until at least the end of the first quarter. The health and safety of the community is the foremost concern and we need to implement strict social distancing in order to control the spread of the coronavirus. Students do not properly social distance in school. Full Distance learning is the only solution to keep students, teachers and staff safe during this pandemic.

- Require the DOH and HIDOE to provide clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students’ return. Many states and cities have specific triggers already in place for when schools should be open or closed based on COVID-19 cases, but Hawaii does not. There needs to be a clear definition for “Safe Campus.” The coronavirus threat is invisible. Even if there were only a few covid cases at a school, the Coronavirus could be all over campus, on surfaces throughout the school even if students say they wiped and disinfected their area. The virus is highly undetected, having up to 45% of Covid cases assymptomatic. Hundreds of students could be infected and contagious and not even know they have the coronavirus. One death of a student or teacher due to the coronavirus would be too many.

- Guarantee that the HIDOE honors HSTA’s contract by allowing teachers to work from home (telework) for as long as distance learning remains in effect. If students are ordered to stay at home and telework for safety reasons, teachers should be allowed to telework in the safety of their homes if they want.

Thank you,
Darryl Miyasato

Sent from my iPhone
To the Board of Education,

I appeal to you to help in the control of the spread of the Corona virus by doing the following:

- Ensure 100-percent distance learning for all students across the state, including those in special education, until at least the end of the first quarter.
- Require the DOH and HIDOE to provide clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students’ return. Many states and cities have specific triggers already in place for when schools should be open or closed based on COVID-10 cases, but Hawaii does not.
- Guarantee that the HIDOE honors HSTA’s contract by allowing teachers to work from home (telework) for as long as distance learning remains in effect.

Sincerely,
Sandy Linskey
Castle High School
E Ola Pono Project
Dear Members of the Board,

I am a public school teacher at Mililani High School and the parent of two children who attend Mililani public schools (Middle and Uka). I am writing to provide testimony on item V.: A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, and focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements and communication.

As a mother and a teacher, I believe that it is necessary to remain in a 100% distance learning platform throughout quarter 1 and until clear, specific, and research-based (not arbitrary) metrics are provided to the DOE and HSTA regarding when it is safe to return and EXACTLY the procedure for when a student, staff member, or family member of someone attending school tests positive. Distance learning should be for everyone at this time, even students with special needs and students who are struggling academically. It is unreasonable to insist that teachers be in enclosed spaces with several people, in some cases more than 10, for extended periods of time. Of course, when it is safe, these students who need additional supports should be the first that are brought back into the physical campus.

Some teachers, particularly those with health concerns, at-risk family members, and/or school-aged children, would prefer to teach their classes from the safety of their homes. If they have adequate internet access and are able to do this, it makes sense to allow them to do so. The fewer people on the campuses, the safer they will be. If schools are deemed unsafe for students, it stands to reason that they are also unsafe for teachers and staff.

I would much prefer to teach my students in person. I would much prefer my children to attend school in person. Face to face instruction is better for most of us. But with Hawaii’s current case levels, positivity levels per batch of tests, and rates of transmission, I understand that my preference is not safe and possible at the moment. We should not be cavalier with people's health and safety, and we should not use approaches that are ad-hoc to appease the public.

Sometimes teachers have to tell people the hard truth, and right now that truth is that it is not safe for people to be together; not in restaurants, not in gyms, not in stores, and not in schools. It goes against what doctors, scientists, and current research are telling us.

Please insist on specific and data-driven metrics for our return to hybrid learning, please allow teacher to teach from home if they are able to do so, and please continue to implement 100% distance learning for all students until it is safe to return.

I appreciate your time and the work that you do.
Sincerely,
Kimberly Lauzon
Please allow all teachers including big island teachers to work from home as long as kids are home via zoom as to not be exposed or on campus.
Good afternoon Hawaii Board of Education,

I am testifying on item V. A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.

My name is Shirley Yamauchi, a twenty-first year teacher at Kapolei Middle, Leeward district. I am pleading with you to ensure that our HIDOE schools are safe for our keiki and our educators.

On Tuesday, August 18th, 2020, Kapolei Middle was open to our special education and/or fully self-contained students. As I walked from my seventh-grade building, I looked to my left where the gr. six building is located. I saw a special needs child, wearing no mask, grabbing at the shirt of a female employee. While the employee was wearing a mask, the young child was not and there definitely was no six foot spacing between the two. Just last week, I was instructed by my PCP Dr. Bradley Lee of Kapolei, to undergo Covid-19 testing at Pali Momi, following an alarming announcement from my school administration. A long time coworker of mine had tested positive, and I had just followed the person into their building on Thursday, August 6th. Though we were both wearing masks, I could not recall if I had touched the swinging door as the infected person had, or I had touched my face or washed my hands immediately afterward. I am considered to be of high risk, with respiratory issues since 1978, along with the responsibility of being the breadwinner to my family. My husband has been on medical leave for weeks now and will continue on for nearly another two months from today. I cannot afford to become ill with Covid, die, and leave behind my five-year-old son.

I am begging the board to take action on the following items:

- Ensure 100-percent distance learning for all students across the state, including those in special education, until at least the end of the first quarter.
- Require the DOH and HIDOE to provide clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students’ return. Many states and cities have specific triggers already in place for when schools should be open or closed based on COVID-10 cases, but Hawaii does not.
- Guarantee that the HIDOE honors HSTA’s contract by allowing teachers to work from home (telework) for as long as distance learning remains in effect.

Shirley M. Yamauchi
HSTA Leeward Chapter President
Hawaii State Teachers Association, Leeward

https://yesforourkeiki.com/why/
https://www.stitchfix.com/referral/13325745
http://www.isecretshop.com/register/1112247
To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Shay Zykova and I am a teacher on the Leeward Coast. I am writing this testimony to urge the board to support 100% distance learning, even for students in special education, to provide clear metrics on when campuses are safe, and to provide teachers with the option to telework.

Firstly, as a special education teacher, I think it's crazy that you are putting our most vulnerable students in a place with the highest risk. I understand that there are some accommodations and modifications that are difficult to provide at home, but that doesn't mean that it is impossible.

In fact, I'm curious if you are familiar with the most common accommodations and modifications? Visual supports. Preferential seating (ie. near teacher). Chunked assignments. These are easily provided through a distance learning curriculum. Yes, it will require extra prep/effort on the teacher's part. Yes, they will probably need individual tutoring. But to say that these supports must be provided in-school is ridiculous.

When it comes down to it, my students are precious to me - and the fact that I am essentially forced to put their lives and the lives at their families at risk is disheartening. Even if they are in school, how am I, as a teacher, supposed to do anything to help when I cannot get within 6ft of my own students? If this is the case, then what is the difference if they are at home or in class? I truly believe that SPED teachers should be working hard to see how we can provide support through distance learning rather than scrambling to adjust our supports and classrooms to accommodate your dangerous requirements.

Secondly, I think that if schools are unwilling to pay to provide teachers and students with appropriate PPE and other protections, then they should remain closed. As PPE, teachers at my school were given a small bottle of hand sanitizer, a bottle of ozonated water (which your very own PD said was inadvisable to use as a cleaning product), a solution of water and bleach (which needs to sit for 10 minutes to be effective), and a handful of masks/paper towels. That's it. As a result, nearly every teacher I know has had to use their own money to pay for additional supplies. The idea that teachers would not be cleaning their classrooms is folly. Our school advised teachers to allow our kids to clean to avoid that loophole, and now, as a result, teachers have just taken on that burden.

The lack of preparation that the board, department, and schools have done is being felt - especially by teachers. While mandated that desks be six feet apart, I can think of almost no classes in my school that are compliant with this. My own class is not. It could not be. Teachers are ending up stacking desks in corners of their classrooms or outside because the desks literally won't fit in the classroom and the school doesn't have enough storage. More than that, doctors have expressed the COVID travels in a circle, so students truly need a six-foot radius around them, which is impossible in current classroom conditions. Teachers would invite these "bubbles" constantly as we step around students, check work, etc. The only way to maintain social distancing in schools would be to have everyone, including the teacher, stay in their "bubble" and not move. At which point, why even have kids in school?

I just don't understand why specific metrics can't be decided on in order to determine when campuses are safe. How can we be in an "orange" zone (AKA partial students on campus) with daily infection rates in the triple
digits, while during the first 100% shut down in the "red" zone, our cases were only in the double digits? How can we possibly be safer now than we were then?

Finally, telework should be an option for teachers, especially for those who are at risk of COVID or the spread of COVID. Recently, we heard that admin at another high school was allowed to telework after being possibly exposed. Earlier that week, a family of mine was exposed. When I reported to my school, I was told to still come into work and to stay to myself in my classroom. I was not given the option to telework. Luckily, my family member tested negative. However, I wonder what will happen when kids are on campus? Teachers do not have the option to telework and were told to use our sick days (which don't even cover a full quarantine period) if we are at risk of being sick. This is incredibly short-sighted and will undoubtedly lead to far more risk than is necessary.

My family and I all have a history of underlying health issues that increase our risk for COVID. My grandfather was even recently diagnosed with cancer. I simply cannot afford to get sick or get my family sick. Please put student/teacher safety and the safety of our families first by either moving to 100% distance learning for both teachers and students or at the very least, investing in schools to help us make our campuses truly safe. I am tired of contracts not being honored, or agreements that are thrown to the wind, and generally being treated like the health and safety of myself and my family should be sacrificed for the "greater good."

This is not a normal school year, so stop expecting us to resume school in the normal way. Please treat the pandemic with the seriousness that it commands.

Sincerely,
Shay Zykova
Dear Chair Payne and Members of the Board,

The Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) appreciates the thoughtful and concise manner in which the Board has organized areas of concern for today’s discussion regarding the reopening of schools for the 2020-2021 school year. While SEAC attempted to read all testimonies from past Board meetings to raise our awareness of the concerns of various stakeholder groups, it has been very helpful to have the comments and concerns of school principals organized into topical areas.

SEAC shares many of those same concerns with a special emphasis on the needs of students with disabilities. While SEAC is comprised of a wide variety of special education stakeholders, including administrators, we pay particular attention to the voices of parents of students with disabilities. The following comments represent a consensus of our members.

Health and Safety
While the course of COVID-19 in Hawaii has necessitated numerous revisions to educational planning to maintain the health and safety of students and staff, uneven planning has sometimes resulted in reactive rather than well-thought out solutions. SEAC believes it is both possible and necessary to create a contingency plan for all public schools that spells out in advance clear triggers that necessitate a move to total distance learning. This would enable a shared understanding and allow families more time to anticipate upcoming changes to their child’s educational delivery mode.

Distance Learning
SEAC has three major concerns regarding distance learning:
1) As we stated in our testimony of July 30th, there is still confusion
and potential misapplication over the terms used to describe distance learning and online learning. SEAC finds the Board’s own definition of distance learning—where the teacher delivers instruction virtually or online through web-based or internet-based mediums or delivers instruction through other remote mediums—particularly mind-boggling for lay persons. The Exceptional Support Branch has reached out to SEAC and other parent organizations to try to come up with explanations of the terms that make sense to families. The sooner we can vet and circulate those explanations, the closer we will be to a shared language and understanding across the State.

2) It is still unclear whether the devices, the software and the learning platforms being offered to students with disabilities contain the accessibility features to meet their unique learning needs, and whether educators responsible for delivering instruction to these students have received adequate training in identifying and maintaining access to these features for students who need them to benefit from their education.

3) SEAC is aware that at least some schools are misinterpreting requests by parents of students with IEPs for 100% distance learning in order to maintain the health of a child with preexisting conditions as refusing the school’s offer of a free and appropriate public education. Parents have been told that by opting for distance learning, the school will no longer be responsible for providing related services and specially designed instruction. This is a clear violation of IDEA.

Personnel
SEAC is extremely concerned that the Department’s capacity to provide qualified special education teachers may be severely impacted by teachers taking early retirement or paid leave in order to avoid the risk of exposure to COVID-19 while on a school campus. We also worry about the minimal training being given to substitute teachers who may end up becoming long term subs. It is our belief that they will need more adequate training and support in the new health and safety protocols and learning modalities related to COVID-19 to adequately serve students with disabilities.

Communication
It is clear from the administrators’ comments that they have been seeking guidance on how to ensure the rights of special education students. SEAC holds that the only way to ensure equity and excellence for students with disabilities is to have state leadership deliver timely, comprehensive and cohesive guidance to all public schools that results in comparable services statewide.

Like administrators, SEAC wants to be part of the solution. We appreciate this opportunity to provide comments and we stand ready to work collaboratively with the Department and the Board to find creative solutions to the delivery of quality educational services to students with disabilities.

Respectfully,

Martha Guinan
Chair

Ivalee Sinclair
Legislative Committee Chair

Mandated by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
Aloha Board Members,

While you are looking at distance learning and teleworking for teachers, please consider making telework an option and not a requirement for all teachers.

Teaching distance from home will severely limit what I am able to offer my kindergarten students. Working alone in my classroom would allow me to be as effective as possible during distance learning.

Thank you for your consideration.
I am a special education teach at Wailuku Elementary. The last two days I have had to do hand over hand instruction with a student who is “vulnerable”, and refuses to wear a mask. The 1st graders in our classroom cannot wear their masks for more then 15mins without pulling them off. I was not provided any gloves to handle toleting my student. We still do not have hand sanitizer stations throughout campus. My coteacher and I have been struggling to teach the students social distancing. They have no activities to do at recess. They are struggling with online learning and navigating the controls of a computer. It is all very depressing and unsafe. Already we have two students who have coughed/runny nose and still are in school.

Danica  
Sent from my iPhone
Testimony BOE

From: Richard Stange <richardstng83@gmail.com> on behalf of Richard Stange
Sent: Tuesday, August 18, 2020 6:21 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To the Hawaii State Board of Education,

My name is Richard Stange. I am an English Language Arts teacher in Hawaii.

I am testifying on item V. **A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.**

I think that the following conditions are necessary for the health and safety of all of our students and school staff:

- Ensure 100-percent distance learning for all students across the state, including those in special education, until at least the end of the first quarter.
- Require the DOH and HIDOE to provide clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students’ return. Many states and cities have specific triggers already in place for when schools should be open or closed based on COVID-10 cases, but Hawaii does not.
- Guarantee that the HIDOE honors HSTA’s contract by allowing teachers to work from home (telework) for as long as distance learning remains in effect.

According to CNN, multiple children, including a **nine year old girl, have died from COVID-19.** We definitely do not want to follow Florida's lead in this pandemic. I have asked this before, and I will ask it again. If **ONE** keiki in Hawaii is harmed due to COVID-19 in a school, who will assume the personal liability? Who can parents send their hospital bills to?

Also, Page 2, Line 34 of the **MOU agreement** between the HSTA and the Hawaii DOE specifically states "In-person schooling will resume in conjunction with **written guidance** from the Hawaii State Department of Health (DOH)." That is a contract between the Hawaii DOE and the HSTA. Since this contract was signed by Superintendent Kishimoto and HSTA President Rosenlee on **6/27/2020,** the DOH has NOT provided that **written guidance** which was agreed upon by the Department of Education and the HSTA. That was signed on June 27. Today is August 18, and there are **STILL no guidelines in writing, nearly two months later.** I ask the Hawaii Board of Education a question: HSTA members will not strike, because we honor our contract; but when will the state honor **theirs**?

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Sincerely,
Richard Stange
To Whom It May Concern

I am writing this testimony for item V A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.

My name is Shay Zykova and I am a teacher on the Leeward Coast. I am writing this testimony to urge the board to support 100% distance learning, even for students in special education, to provide clear metrics on when campuses are safe, and to provide teachers with the option to telework.

Firstly, as a special education teacher, I think it's crazy that you are putting our most vulnerable students in a place with the highest risk. I understand that there are some accommodations and modifications that are difficult to provide at home, but that doesn't mean that it is impossible.

In fact, I'm curious if you are familiar with the most common accommodations and modifications? Visual supports. Preferential seating (ie. near teacher). Chunked assignments. These are easily provided through a distance learning curriculum. Yes, it will require extra prep/effort on the teacher's part. Yes, they will probably need individual tutoring. But to say that these supports must be provided in-school is ridiculous.

When it comes down to it, my students are precious to me - and the fact that I am essentially forced to put their lives and the lives at their families at risk is disheartening. Even if they are in school, how am I, as a teacher, supposed to do anything to help when I cannot get within 6ft of my own students? If this is the case, then what is the difference if they are at home or in class? I truly believe that SPED teachers should be working hard to see how we can provide support through distance learning rather than scrambling to adjust our supports and classrooms to accommodate your dangerous requirements.

Secondly, I think that if schools are unwilling to pay to provide teachers and students with appropriate PPE and other protections, then they should remain closed. As PPE, teachers at my school were given a small bottle of hand sanitizer, a bottle of ozonated water (which your very own PD said was inadvisable to use as a cleaning product), a solution of water and bleach (which needs to sit for 10 minutes to be effective), and a handful of masks/paper towels. That's it. As a result, nearly every teacher I know has had to use their own money to pay for additional supplies. The idea that teachers would not be cleaning their classrooms is folly. Our school advised teachers to allow our kids to clean to avoid that loophole, and now, as a result, teachers have just taken on that burden. Would you feel safe letting your own grandchildren attend school under these conditions?

The lack of preparation that the board, department, and schools have done is being felt - especially by teachers. While mandated that desks be six feet apart, I can think of almost no classes in my school that are compliant with this. My own class is not. It could not be. Teachers are ending up stacking desks in corners of their classrooms or outside because the desks literarily won't fit in the classroom and the school doesn't have enough storage. More than that, doctors have expressed the COVID travels in a circle, so students truly need a six-foot radius around them, which is impossible in current classroom conditions. Teachers would invade these "bubbles" constantly as we step around students, check work, etc. The only way to maintain social distancing in
schools would be to have everyone, including the teacher, stay in their "bubble" and not move. At which point, why even have kids in school?

I just don't understand why specific metrics can't be decided on in order to determine when campuses are safe. How can we be in an "orange" zone (AKA partial students on campus) with daily infection rates in the triple digits, while during the first 100% shut down in the "red" zone, our cases were only in the double digits? How can we possibly be safer now than we were then? Please come up with measurable guidance on safety so that schools can create solid plans to prepare to re-open.

Finally, telework should be an option for teachers, especially for those who are at risk of COVID or the spread of COVID. Recently, we heard that admin at another high school was allowed to telework after being possibly exposed. Earlier that week, a family of mine was exposed. When I reported to my school, I was told to still come into work and to stay to myself in my classroom. I was not given the option to telework. Luckily, my family member tested negative. However, I wonder what will happen when kids are on campus? Teachers do not have the option to telework and were told to use our sick days (which don't even cover a full quarantine period) if we are at risk of being sick. This is incredibly short-sighted and will undoubtedly lead to far more risk than is necessary.

My family and I all have a history of underlying health issues that increase our risk for COVID. My grandfather was even recently diagnosed with cancer. I simply cannot afford to get sick or get my family sick. Please put student/teacher safety and the safety of our families first by either moving to 100% distance learning for both teachers and students or at the very least, investing in schools to help us make our campuses truly safe. I am tired of contracts not being honored, or agreements that are thrown to the wind, and generally being treated like the health and safety of myself and my family should be sacrificed for the "greater good."

This is not a normal school year, so stop expecting us to resume school in the normal way. Please treat the pandemic with the seriousness that it commands.

Sincerely,
Shay Zykova
Aloha,

It's heartbreaking to know that my child won't be going to school in person and just hang out with his friends like we and his sisters did when we were his age. To make new friendships, to foster old ones. To make that face to face, personal connection with hardworking, dedicated teachers. But my son says he's really fine with not going to school in person because he's afraid of getting sick or getting his grandpa sick if he brings it home. This comes from a twelve year old. If there's one thing this pandemic, our community, and the entire school system can teach him, it's this: We need to care for each other. So while it's hard knowing that my child will not have all the special things that in-person school would provide him, it's a sacrifice we're willing to undertake.

We're asking the Board of Education to ensure 100% distance learning for all students across the state, including those in Special Education at least until the end of the first quarter. Giving students, teachers, parents, and the community a dedicated "one quarter" time frame allows us to plan our lives and work schedules appropriately. Focusing on one teaching method, i.e., online rather than hybrid, will allow teachers to focus their attention on how to best provide instruction/education. For those communities that don't have internet access, please work harder at obtaining necessary connections and supplies for them, as well as the resource/IT support needed so that no child falls behind.

We're also asking the BOE to consider having more support for students who come from known at-risk homes, as I've heard that there's been an increase in abuse in homes that are unstable. Please support teachers and Behavior Therapists in calling or following up on all of these cases.

We're requiring the DOH and HIDOE to provide CLEAR metrics on when school campuses are safe for students’ return. Unlike many states and cities that have specific triggers already in place for when schools should be open or closed based on COVID-19 cases, Hawaii does not.

Finally, please guarantee that the HIDOE honors HSTA’s contract by allowing teachers to work from home (telework) for as long as distance learning remains in effect. For those teachers who request access to their classroom and resources, please don't limit them if they choose to go into their areas.

Unprecedented times require unprecedented fortitude to do what's right. It requires a true look into what's most important: health and safety. Our students and state are resilient, and we can all learn through distance learning. There's no real reason right now for students and teachers to meet face to face as previously scheduled.

Mahalo for your service,
Dee Tyau

"being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Romans 5:1
Dear Sir/Ms.,

Please take action on the following items:

- Ensure 100-percent distance learning for all students across the state, including those in special education, until at least the end of the first quarter.
- Require the DOH and HIDOE to provide clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students' return. Many states and cities have specific triggers already in place for when schools should be open or closed based on COVID-10 cases, but Hawaii does not.
- Guarantee that the HIDOE honors HSTA's contract by allowing teachers to work from home (telework) for as long as distance learning remains in effect.

I am the art teacher at Kalakaua Middle School, and we are required to participate in face-to-face instruction soon. I teach in Kalihi, which is an area that has been spiking with numerous covid-19 cases. We have not even met with the students and their families much yet, and hav already learned of a couple of students with covid/covid exposure, as well as learn that many Micronesian families do not believe that covid-19 is a real threat and continue to not wear masks and catch and spread this dangerous virus.

Please do not put hard working, caring educators and their students at risk. It would make more sense to plan on keeping the 2020-2021 school year as distance learning, so that we can keep a lid on Hawaii's soaring coronavirus cases.

Thank you,
Valerie Harmon
Art Teacher
HSTA Head Representative
Kalakaua Middle School
To the Members of the Board:

I am testifying on Discussion Item A: Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.

I am a teacher at Waianae Intermediate School in the Leeward district on the island of Oahu. I want to start out by saying that the administrative team at my school has been doing an amazing job given the incredibly difficult tasks they have been dealt. Our principal has gone above and beyond, for months, to prepare for this return to campus. Measures have been put in place to ensure our health and safety, and enough technology has been purchased to ensure 100% virtual learning is possible for our students.

He has kept a step ahead by coming up with a Plan A, Plan B, Plan C, etc. depending on what new decision is made by the DOE and what is approved or not by this board. He has also complied with all the MOU agreements, including allowing meetings to happen virtually. I am so incredibly grateful that I made a transfer to this specific school because the administration at this school has very clearly kept the best interest of both staff and students at the forefront of all their decision making and directives. I must also mention that students have only been on campus for organized outdoor registration events (mostly with their parent/guardian and before August 4) where social distancing and mask use was strictly enforced. Despite all this, the entire staff was informed yesterday that one staff member did test positive for COVID-19 late last week.

As I mentioned, I am so very grateful I made the transfer to this particular school. I have finally had the opportunity to see, firsthand, what a truly strong administrative team that has the best interest of EVERYONE at heart can do for their schools. I am one of the lucky ones! I have also seen how truly heartless and apathetic some administrators can be thanks to the stories that fellow educators have shared with me of what is happening at their particular schools. Dr. Kishimoto continues to push a false narrative, claiming that we are in 100% distance learning mode when the fact is that we are not. To clarify, my school IS in 100% distance learning mode. What is unacceptable is that many other schools are not.

For example, a good friend of mine is a STEM teacher and the STEM & Electives Department Head at a Leeward intermediate school. She is a PAEMST finalist and the winner of the 2020 Pono Award. She has also helped her students write a bill this year. Out of 8,000 National GSAs, the GSA she advises won 2020 GSA of the Year! To say this woman goes above and beyond for her students is a massive understatement. Her entire life is dedicated towards empowering her Title 1 students through both academics and social/emotional needs. My claim of her magnificence is supported by the fact that multiple private schools (on island and on the mainland) have been actively enticing her
to “jump ship” for years, but she keeps turning offers down (despite the significant salary boost) because she **believes in public education.** Yet she is being forced into unsafe conditions every day by being mandated to have students in-person. She was also informed that this will continue to happen over the course of 100% distance learning because students on her roster have been deemed is “vulnerable” based on her principal’s interpretation of the language in the latest decision made. She has SpEd students. She has EL students. She had homeless students. All of these categories fall into the “vulnerable” label and therefore are being mandated to attend school in-person and therefore she is mandated to teach them in-person. I, too, have the above-mentioned categories of “vulnerable” students in a school where 85% of students receive free or reduced lunch. Yet the difference is that I can count on the leadership of a principal who has been proactively preparing and has truly kept the best interest of all at the forefront of his decision making. I have not met any students in-person, but I have met most of them virtually for our designated class times. Phone calls and/or email have been made regularly by multiple staff members to get in touch with the parents of students who have not yet made contact.

Teaching virtually is not easy by any means. It requires a tremendous amount of preparation, training, and time. I have been working **12-14 hour days,** since teachers have returned to campus, **every single day!** (I did have to keep today to “only” a 10-hour work day so that I could write this testimony to you before the deadline.) But I will continue to go **above and beyond** if that means that I will not spread COVID to anyone and that no one will unintentionally give it to me. It’s what I am willing to sacrifice, for as long as I am physically and mentally able to so, in order to ensure the health and safety of **all.** The DOE has made it clear, thanks to Dr. Kishimoto’s lack of leadership, that teachers are expendable and lazy. Her “Mahalo emails” are a slap in the face to each of us after she used such divisive, condescending language in her previous emails that border on propaganda. But I am not writing to discuss her emails. I am writing to tell you what I am experiencing and what I am hearing and seeing other “less fortunate” teachers and students are experiencing. The friend I mentioned in my anecdote is not alone. I have been hearing first hand from teachers at various other schools of what they are being directed to do. She is not alone. When it comes to administrative directives, I am a minority in this situation and am beyond grateful for this fact.

How will we keep our teachers safe? How will we keep our students safe? How will we even be able to gather real data if there are so many **variables that are not concrete?** How will the DOE keep the teachers they have if safety measures are not enforced? When teachers get sick or die (**none of us signed up to be martyrs**) how will the state then deal with the increasing teacher shortage crisis that we already face annually?

My request is that we revert back to the declaration that Dr. Kishimoto made in April that stated that students and teachers would not return to campus until there is “no recent evidence of community spread” based on the clear metric of “no new cases for four weeks (two incubation periods of the virus) on the island”. The DOH has failed to
give updated, clear metrics of when it would truly be safe to return to in-person schooling. They have had four weeks to prepare a team to assess the situation and create the concrete metrics from which to base our safety. As of today, they have failed to even put together a team to do so. This is unacceptable! Teachers and students need to be guaranteed safety before we are directed to be in close, confined spaces together. I am, yet again, begging you to make the right decisions for us. Our lives depend on you making a sound decision that is not economically based, but based, rather, on valuing each of us as a human life instead of a statistic. Additionally, following Dr. Kishimoto’s April decision of “no new cases for four weeks” would allow me to continue to devote my personal time to preparing and assessing quality education for my students who very much deserve it. My valuable time should not be spent repeatedly begging the BOE, via testimony, to make the right decisions to ensure mine and my students’ health and safety. Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,
Anne Alves
People are being cavalier about masks...in Hilo parks and on beaches...all it will take is a couple mistakes and the cat is out of the bag. I was assaulted verbally at Liliuokalani Park for rolling up my window when an unmasked person and her son stood and right by my car window. I was told...stay home next time.

Sent from my iPad
Although I am confident in my school for doing the best they can with giving me a mask and trying to find a classroom with desks 6 feet apart, The DOE has required me to teach students In person with special needs who are considered vulnerable students. I am sad for the exposure and predicament of a dangerous choice the DOE is asking parents to make, in a time where the pandemic is rapidly growing and not slowing down. My class may be 13 to 15 students, and next month we will be in a library with no sink, only hand sanitizer due to lack of space on our campus for the larger general classes. I am HighRisk, pregnant, and Yet the Superintendent has not allowed any telework options! I might feel safer working/ teaching virtually but with me still reporting to campus in a socially distanced office space, but having students in person with covid cases growing and the DOE not being forth coming is terrifying. Teachers will not be covered by the DOE for our medical bills if we contract covid at work, so the potential for Additional covid related high cost prenatal bills and possibly a ventilator would devastate me financially. Vulnerable students and teachers lives should be protected with the same guidelines that Governor is calling on for other employers and the community.

Virginia Ellison
Dear Board of Education Members,

I am a second grade teacher from Hawai‘i Island. As I wrote the subject line in this email (School Reopening Plan), I couldn't help but think, "what plan?!". School administrators have been an incredible amount of responsibility without clear guidance and resources in making crucial life or death decisions at their schools. What the state says is happening at schools is more than often, false and incredibly frustrating. As a teacher we have been put through the ringer and gone back and forth so many times as "plans" changed. We teachers are on the front lines fielding parent concerns and frustration with state leadership. We see the truth because this truth becomes our day to day life. Before we head back to face to face school, we need CLEAR guidance and metrics on what happens when covid cases do come up. Our principals cannot be tasked with doing their own contact tracing. I know for a fact this has already been happening. DOH has taken too long to contact anyone, so they need to take it upon themselves to protect their students, staff, and campus. The more I spoke with parents over these two weeks, I have been hearing reports of people being sick with covid symptoms and not getting tested. There have been cases of parents not wanting to test their children because they need to be able to bring them to school to go to work. I can't corroborate these claims, but I am hearing them from multiple sources. I have two children of my own that I care for. My life is devoted to children and supporting them in their learning, but my life is worth more than just being open because other people need to go to work. This is not our problem alone to fix. Our lives and my students' lives are worth clear and standard metrics on how to move forward in terms of how many cases shut down a school or how many cases in the community keep the school buildings closed and students doing virtual learning. Here on Hawai‘i Island, I don't feel we've even had adequate testing. I have no faith in our numbers. I work at a Title One school and know for a fact our families lack the access to necessary healthcare in order to even get tested if they felt ill. We also need to have confidence in our contact tracing department at the DOH before we can even consider opening up for students to learn face to face. My students deserve better. Please consider keeping all Hawai‘i schools on virtual learning until the DOH provides the DOE with clear guidelines on how to reopen.

Thank you,
Irene
From: Micah Pexa <micahpexa@gmail.com> on behalf of Micah Pexa
Sent: Tuesday, August 18, 2020 7:27 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

V. **A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.**

Dear Hawaii DOE,

My name is Micah Pexa and I am a teacher at Kalakaua Middle School. I am writing to ask you move to 100% distance learning for ALL students and teachers, including vulnerable populations in order to keep everyone safe. This virus is too new and too much is unknown about it in terms of the long term health benefits. I recently requested that my principal move me out of my former EL teaching line and into a math line, simply because the math line is 100% distance learning. I was not willing to risk staying all day in a classroom with students. One of my students from last year just finished quarantine after having 4 positive cases in his household, and another just lost her father to covid. It is crazy to have people in the classroom right now. Learning hubs on campus where technology is being provided to those who cannot afford it is also very unsafe. We have 30 students in our library each day now. These are students from our most financially challenged families, many of whom live in overcrowded homes where covid is fast spreading right now. To bring these very students into an enclosed and poorly ventilated space all day is asking for a covid outbreak. It is not fair to the health and safety of the student or of the staff that must be in there to monitor them. Computers and internet need to be provided to EVERY student in the state, otherwise the have-nots just keep getting left further and further behind.

We also need to allow teachers to teach from home. Many of us have kids who are not in school right now, forcing teachers to bring their children with them to school. Bringing in all the teachers each day is unnecessary when we are teaching online anyways. Trust your teachers to be professionals and teach their classes from their own homes. Bringing further people on campuses is just further covid risk.

Finally, we need some kind of solid metric to measure when schools will open. It seems that the DOE is chomping at the bit to get kids back in school at every turn, and it is a fight every time to get you to do the right and safe thing. We need a solid number for when schools will be able to safely reopen so that it is not a guessing game each time. In the spring the DOE said that Hawaii schools would not open until we had zero cases of the virus for 2 months. What happened to that?

Please make these changes for the sake of the health and safety of our teacher and students across Hawaii. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Micah Pexa

--
Micah Pexa
1856 Kualono St.
Honolulu, HI 96817

Cell Phone: +1 (808) 747-4601

Email: micahpexa@gmail.com
Aloha Board of Education Members:
I am a 28+ year teacher at Pahoa High & Intermediate School (PHIS). Our administration decided to go face to face from August 17 through August 20. The school was divided into 4 alpha groups and each group attends school face to face one time this week. My largest class is 8 of which 4 have opted to go virtual and the small class is 2. Starting next week we are going all virtual. This plan our school used may seem functional, but it is not safe nor does it adhere to any of the understandings between the DOE and HSTA. I can easily control what is going on in my classroom, but outside of the room is another story.

1) There is no routine sanitation on common areas happening as far as I can tell.
2) My classroom has not been swept since August 29, 2020. Nor has it been moped. In the past, students were hired to be room cleaners. Now custodial staff have to do their normal duties, plus sweep and disinfect. They are overwhelmed.
3) I am trying desperately to wipe down students desk and chairs between classes. Or provide students Clorox wipes for their laptops if I have to touch it. Because of my bad eye sight, I often have to bring the Chrome Books up so I can see it. Peering over their shoulders 6 feet away is impossible for me to see their screens in order to help them add extensions or figure out why their URLs are not working. Although I have a mask and shield when I do this - it is not safe for either one of us.
4) We were provided KN95 masks made in China instead of N95 masks.
5) Students are constantly reminded to stay 6 feet apart when walking to classes.

The DOE should take a stance one way or the other and guide our administration. Many parents questioned, why some school in Kau Keaau Pahoa Complex were going all virtual, yet PHIS was face-to-face. You need to:

- Ensure 100-percent distance learning for all students across the state, including those in special education, until at least the end of the first quarter.
- Require the DOH and HIDOE to provide clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students’ return. Many states and cities have specific triggers already in place for when schools should be open or closed based on COVID-10 cases, but Hawaii does not.
- Guarantee that the HIDOE honors HSTA’s contract by allowing teachers to work from home (telework) for as long as distance learning remains in effect. At least provide us with options. In my classroom that is street level to a busy intersection, students and I can hear street noises, the county of Hawaii re-paving the road, weed whacking on two sides of the building, power washing in the parking lot and the normal county/State lawn mowers. The noise is so loud and constant I cannot hear my phone ring, nor hear students who have their mask on. I’m not talking about monthly noises, I seriously mean DAILY noise. And, this room is located next to the leach field and the smell of sewage is prevailing every afternoon. Provided with an option to telework, I would do it and appreciate it.

Please continue to support teacher and student safety measures.

Sheryl Ogawa
Teacher

Sent through ʻopeʻapeʻa express
Aloha,

Thank you for reading my testimony. I am writing in regards to agenda item V.A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication. There are several factors that I would like the BOE and DOE to consider as we continue to move forward with the 2020-2021 school year.

First, I think it is imperative that HIDOE honors HSTA’s contract by allowing teachers to work from home (telework) for as long as distance learning remains in effect. I would like to explain my teaching situation to you so that you fully understand why I am asking this. I am a co-teacher in an inclusion classroom, which means that I share the classroom with my co-teacher. My co-teacher has also given consent to share our situation. We have been working together for 4 years and have been sharing a classroom for 3. We work together seamlessly and under normal circumstances, would have absolutely no problem sharing a space. We teach in an air conditioned building with one classroom door that opens into an air conditioned hallway that is shared with the cafeteria where students are frequenting. We have 4 half windows that open exactly 6 inches (we measured when we were setting up desks 6 feet apart). Our desks are on opposite sides of the room. We try to disinfect almost everything we touch multiple times a day because our classroom has not been disinfected like we were told it would be during the HIDOE mandatory training videos. We both wear masks whenever we are in the classroom. The only times we don't wear it is if we are taking a drink of water or eating our lunch (one of us usually leaves the room so that the person can be alone). While we teach digitally, whoever is speaking is unmasked so our students can see our mouths move and our faces. The other remains masked. We do this out of a mutual respect for each other and because we care about the health of the other. We also are extra cautious because of the news article that came out of Arizona where 3 teachers were sharing a classroom during summer school and one died from Covid. I'm sure you've heard about this. My co-teacher and I don't want to be that news story here in Hawai’i. The solution to this problem? Allow for telework. We wouldn't have to risk the health and safety of the other person. We wouldn't have to flip back and forth between masked and unmasked teaching live classes online. We wouldn't have to be anxious about where the other person has been or who they've been in contact with. We wouldn't have to disinfect things such as our one shared classroom phone.

There are only two reasons I can think of why HIDOE has not allowed for telework during this time. The first being that being off the HIDOE WiFi network would not allow IT to track what we are doing online. The second reason would be that HIDOE doesn't trust teachers and educators to do their jobs from home. Either way, those are not reasons why I should be risking my health everyday to teach virtually. My co-teacher and I only see students online. Why can't we do that from our respective home work spaces? I am a professional; my colleagues are professionals. During the closure, I attended every single virtual meeting that was called. I held meetings as Department Chair in which my department faithfully attended every week. Since July 29th, I have attended every meeting that has been required of me. I attended virtually as per the MOU. I collaborated with colleagues virtually. I participated in the virtual training that the HIDOE provided, again all virtually. Please tell me why I couldn't do these things in my home work space. Please tell me why I had to risk my health and safety and the health and safety of my colleagues in order to do work that I could have easily done at home.

Katie Hearl
katie.hearl@gmail.com
been told that the resource teachers at our district office have signed paperwork that allows them to work from home 4 out of the 5 days of the week. How is this equitable? How is this fair? Why is their health and safety prioritized over other teachers?

There is a lot more I could say but I will refrain because I've said it all before; this is the 4th email I've sent about the reopening of schools. My viewpoints have not changed since I first wrote in early July. There is still a lack of transparency and leadership and as case numbers continue to soar, I am as anxious as ever to be teaching in a shared space. I urge you to do the right thing to ensure the safety of our communities, which still includes the adults who work on school campuses.

Thank you,
Katie Hearl
This testimony is for the 20 August 2020 discussion regarding the agenda item: acellus academy for online learning.

I am a parent of two students that are enrolled in the board of education system at Waimea Elementary School in Kamuela, Hawaii. My name is Kerry Wells. I am submitting this testimony in opposition to using the acellus program for the online remote learning curriculum due to COVID 19. It has come to my attention that researching the founder, he was involved in polygamy. Please see this article from the Desert News from 2004: Publicity follows Billings' brother

We only have the choice of utilizing this program during the school year. I propose that we have an option to utilize worksheets provided by the teachers similar to the format of the last semester of the previous year and webex meetings. If the board does not give us this choice then I will elect to fully homeschool my children with a group of parents that are also enrolled at the school. We have given the program a trial run this week. The videos are very poorly done and one of our 4th grade students found several spelling errors in a story she was reading. I believe our children would learn more from the parents involved in our small homeschool hui with supplemental materials provided by the school then from these poorly developed videos.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.
Very Respectfully,
Kerry Wells
Dear Board of Education Members,

I am testifying on item V. **A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.**

I am a teacher at Lokelani Intermediate School. Every day this week, half of our students have attended face-to-face classes. Compliance with and enforcement of mask wearing, 6-foot distancing, and directed movement have been inconsistent. For the next three weeks, starting on Monday, August 24, the plan is for 60 students (SPED, ELL, high need, and parent requests) to attend face-to-face classes all day, five days a week. According to the current plan, these students will attend 7 different classes each day, transitioning through the campus every 45 minutes. They will participate in recess and physical education, and eat lunch in the cafeteria.

With cases rising on Maui, I do not feel safe with that level of exposure. I am in a high risk category due to my age, and I live with two people who are immunocompromised. I love teaching, and willingly give my love, time, and resources to my students. I have never been asked to risk my life, but that is the decision I feel I am now faced with each morning.

Please require 100% distance learning for all students through at least the first quarter, specify clear metrics that must be met before schools resume in-person learning, and allow teachers to work from home (telework) according to the terms of the contract between the HiDOE and HSTA.

Thank you for your consideration,
Ann Schultz
8th Grade Math Teacher
Lokelani Intermediate School

Sent from my iPhone
Aloha,

I'm a Teacher and Parent on the big island of Hawaii. We are lucky enough that our principal has made Just a Pick up for our families. This week, we will then start lessons next week Monday online. In asking that Doe set clear expectations and guidelines before re-opening schools. I also think that our families have been through so Much unknown, that if we say distance learning statewide will happen till at least the end of first quarter, it will allow for students, families and teachers to get into some kind of routine. Our families are getting computers which our families and kids have never used before, they are learning different programs and once they get comfortable they might have to change up their whole routine. Trust me, I want the kids learning face to face so bad, however safety and health is top priority (mental and physical health) if we set something at least for a bit, Then at least families can have some kind of rest. I have 6 kids and my mom will be monitoring them all day, Then I will come home after teaching my class and work with my own kiddos believe me school would be easier, however I would be heartbroken if them or anybody contracted the virus while at school. Extending till at least fall break will bring a sense of relief, I feel, to at least some people that have had unrest.

Mahalo for listening

Hanalei Conda
There is a large amount of trust placed on the schools our children attend. We want everyone involved to succeed - our children to love to learn, be invited to be curious, develop critical thinking skills and follow their dreams, and teachers and administrators to feel the positive impact they are having on the children in their community. And now parents and the community are asking teachers and administrators to do the impossible - do it all in the middle of a pandemic where no end is in sight.

But I believe there are certain situations in which parents are required to take a stand even when it creates difficulties for the school district. I believe that the use of the Acellus Academy is negligent on the part of the district. I have seen examples of the curriculum which includes racist and sexist examples of why slavery existed and why women need to learn math. I also have no faith in the credibility of the organization behind the Acellus Academy. I've read news articles from reputable sources about the founder Roger Billings which portrays him as a polygamist cult leader. Why does this man have any right to take up space in our public schools?

I wrote the superintendent and the principal of my children's school and my concerns were summarily dismissed because they had asked Acellus if any of the claims were true and as written in their response to me, "according to Acellus, the claims have been tied to a competitor and have not been substantiated, therefore we are unable to speculate." One does not just end their due diligence by asking the accused if an accusation is true or false. I do not believe that the required due diligence occurred to measure the business behind Acellus and the man who founded it. I cringe that any of our money from Hawaii is filling the pockets of this organization.
I am testifying on the Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.

Health and safety: has the DOH or the DOE provided a statewide written plan on how to inform the public on school covid cases, closure, isolation of cases on campus etc? If so, on which website can we find this information?

Distance learning: call it to the end of the quarter! These kids need consistency. Re-evaluation at the end of 4 weeks at a time is stressful. Stating distance learning will be till the end of the quarter will allow both teacher and kids to be more fluent in the program if ever a school needs to be shut down, or if they need to be quarantined. Parents would also appreciate time to plan so they can keep their jobs. Not every parent falls under the protection of the Cares Act.

Personell: give all departments time to present and combine their plans and adjust accordingly. Ex: how many times the bathroom should be cleaned per day, how to stagger meals in coordination with learning groups to allow 6 ft at breakfast or lunch. How to give teachers a duty free lunch break.

Food service: not everyone lives in the area their child attends school. Nor do these kids all have a driver let alone any supervision to get those meals. Have the schools set up registration for meals for students that are on geographic exception so meals can be picked up at nearest school, not enrolled school. With distance learning the kids that are approved for free or reduced lunch will be home more than in school. P-ebt anyone??
Dear Board of Education,

I am writing to you to address V. A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.

On Wednesday, July 29th, our first day back to work, a DOE employee from another school came onto my campus and stayed in the cafeteria for an extended amount of time. That DOE employee came into very close contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19. Throughout Thursday and Friday, July 30th and 31st, we had multiple faculty meetings in the cafeteria, doing our best to social distance with one person per table. We also moved throughout the whole campus for small break out sessions; groups not exceeding 10. On Friday, July 31st, my administrators were notified of this person. That is two whole days later after this suspected person was on our campus and my whole faculty and staff had come into contact with the potentially infected areas and spread it throughout the whole campus. I received notification while I was in a break out session with several other staff members. One can only imagine the fear that was coursing through my body when I was immediately sent home with instructions to strip down and put all my belongings into the provided garbage bag prior to entering my home. I was absolutely terrified for my life.

On Monday, August 3rd, I was directed to stay home because the campus did not receive the required deep cleaning that should have occurred over the weekend.

Tuesday, August 4th, I reported to work as usual. Midday, our principal called for another urgent Webex meeting. He notified us that two of our staff members had come into close contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19. Without clear guidelines, my principal did his best and told us to stay tuned and stay in our own offices and classrooms. He soon called for another meeting where he told us to immediately clear the campus for another deep cleaning. I had not even been at work for a week and there were already two times we needed to be sent home because of this deadly virus.

Friday, August 14, my principal notified us that one of our staff members were getting tested because they also came into contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19. We were direct to continue to social distance and stay in our own rooms, but this time we were not directed to vacate the campus for deep cleaning.

As you can see it is too soon to reopen schools. We are not ready to welcome hundreds of students on campus when we are not even able to keep our staff safe. My greatest fear is that I will bring this deadly virus home to the people whom I love the most in this world. I live with both my parents who are elderly. I also care for my grandmother who is almost 90 years old. On the outside I am a seemingly healthy adult, but this virus does not discriminate. I too have pre-existing medical conditions that put my health at risk. My office is in the school’s main office, which is where most of the foot traffic is occurring. It would be much safer for everyone if teachers are given the option to telework because it will limit the amount of foot traffic around the entire school. I am being forced to work in an unsafe environment and the emotional and mental strain is taking a toll on my overall well-being.

At this time, health and safety needs to be our main concern. I cannot teach and counsel students if I am sick, dead, or caring for a loved one who is sick. Students cannot learn if they are sick. There is only one way to ensure that students,
faculty, staff, and parents stay safe, as well as having education continue. We need to continue distance learning at least until the end of the first quarter. This will help teachers and students because teachers will be able to plan far in advance which will in turn enhance overall learning for students. I am working tirelessly to ensure that I am able to provide my students with safe, remote learning. My school has provided laptops and hotspots to students who do not have internet access or devices at home. We are ensuring that students have their books and necessary tools to access a quality education from a distance.

We also need clear health guidelines because in all three situations, we were provided different directions and given varying guidance on what we need to do. It is evident that there are no clear guidelines for schools regarding COVID-19. Schools across the nation are shutting down because of outbreaks within the schools and districts. I do not want this to happen to us. We need to do our best to stay ahead of this virus and from where I stand we are merely treading water.

Sincerely,
Concerned educator, daughter, and community member
I don’t see how the BOE can go on not abiding by our contract. COVID 19 is a scary thing that we are all dealing with. What I can’t believe is that we are letting prisoners out of prison because being in close proximity to others is dangerous but it is ok for a teacher to be in close proximity of 9 plus students in a classroom (even with staggered schedules) for over an hour at a time. Now today our governor asked that all employers please let their employees work from home if they can. Well starting next week we are all distance teaching and I can do just as good a job (if not better) from my home. Also teaching from home will greatly reduce the chance of me getting or spreading this disease.

V/R
Anthony Arneson
Sent from my iPhone
Dear BOE

I'm writing to you as a concerned parent and educator. While I love my school and my principal, I feel it's important to share with you the TRUTH that is going on at our school levels.

Superintendent Kishimoto has NOT been truthful and at times has LIED to the public and to the BOE!!! It is important that you hear from those who are working in the "trenches". WE are the ones who see what goes on and what doesn't get delivered!!!

Please DEMAND her to speak the truth! Please consider allowing teachers the OPTION of telework! Especially in light of the Governor's new mandate of SAFER AT HOME. We share bathrooms, common areas, and I don't feel safe! Here's a breakdown of Kishimoto's LIES.

Fact 1: She claims that cleaning procedures have been taught to all faculty and staff and that strict sanitizing is being currently adhered to. This is NOT TRUE! According to our trainings, high touch surfaces should be cleaned twice a day. The truth is I have YET to see anyone clean anything. Yeah they may spray our bathrooms once a day. But our classrooms haven't been cleaned for weeks!!! We SHARE bathrooms. How am I supposed to feel safe sharing a bathroom that I have no idea was cleaned or not!

Fact 2: she also claims that PPE, and all necessary cleaning supplies have been provided. I call BS. We have received 1 face shield!!! No masks. No gloves, and NO DISINFECTANT!! I'm not afraid of cleaning my own classroom but what am I supposed to use?! I have purchased my OWN cleaning products, gloves, and anything else I feel I need to feel safe! This is unacceptable.

Fact 3: She claims that Distance Learning platforms were provided by the State. Again, BULL. Our school and our principal had the foresight to purchase the Accellus program! This was supposed to be purchased by the DOE, but it wasn't! So individual schools are using their own funding to purchase the things necessary for their schools to function!

I am SICK of her lies and the media only covering HER side of the story. She has a complete disregard for the teachers and staffs of schools! Months ago, she was thrilled with the idea of 'ohana bubbles and had the audacity to throw it in our faces that WE, the teachers didn't care about our students because the 'ohana bubble would work perfectly. Yesterday on the news. .she says the complete OPPOSITE.

I don't trust what comes out of her mouth. She has been completely unsupportive of all of us. She can say whatever she wants from the comfort of her HOME and via zoom. But she expects US to come to work? How does that make sense??

I BEG you humbly to please speak on behalf of the ones who actually do the "work"! For our keiki and for our families who live in fear daily.

Please get to the TRUTH and do not allow more bureaucracy to rule.

Mahalo a nui for your time.
I wish to remain ANONYMOUS due to fear of retribution.
I am testifying on Discussion Item V. A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.

With the dramatic rise in positive COVID cases in the State of Hawaii, it is more than understandable that teachers, students, and parents have mixed feelings in regards to the reopening of schools. As a special education teacher in a low poverty community, I was, and still am very apprehensive about students returning to school in person. Since I returned to work on July 29, 2020, I have switched grade-levels three times as our special education department tried to figure out how to best service the needs of our students. That’s three times in three weeks that I have had to adjust and make new plans within our department. But this does not include the numerous changes occurring on a daily basis within the school and across the State, causing high levels of frustration and anxiety for many, including myself.

My most recent placement is teaching the fully self-contained (FSC) classroom which includes students of multiple disabilities that often require adults to be in close proximity and very hands-on. While I am confident in my abilities to work with these students, I am extremely uncomfortable being in such close proximity to others and risk possible exposure, not only for myself but for my students and support staff. Students in this setting are considered “most vulnerable” and “high risk” - they are oftentimes unable to independently care for themselves and have trouble communicating their needs. This is a big concern and while I completely understand that students need to return to school, health and safety should be the priority.

Although the majority of the positive cases are on Oahu, I think it is important to set and enforce the same guidelines state-wide. Therefore, if the DOE is stating that schools statewide will implement 100-percent distance learning due to health and safety concerns, this should include ALL students (general education and special education). In addition, rather than allowing each school to make their own decision, which causes a lot of confusion amongst everyone, one decision needs to be made for all. Due to the increase in numbers and health and safety concerns, I am asking that 100-percent distance learning for ALL students is implemented statewide until at least the end of the first quarter. The lack of direction is monumental and wrecking a lot of havoc. There are no clear guidelines in place. Principals are working tirelessly around the clock, trying to keep up with the daily changes. Teachers are putting in countless hours trying to create some type of routine for students while trying their best to be flexible with changes and remaining positive. We understand that students need to be back in school, and as a teacher, I want my students back in school. I know people are concerned that students have regressed over the last few months. But really, who hasn’t? Everyone has, adults included! The bottom line is this: health and safety trump education. Children are resilient - we are resilient. We will bounce back from this, with time, but we need to put the health and safety of everyone at the top of our priority list.

Again, I urge you to ensure that 100-percent distance learning for ALL students is implemented statewide, including those in special education, until at least the end of the first quarter. Reopening the schools after the first quarter should be assessed and should only be allowed if the health and safety of everyone can be ensured.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my comments. I am looking forward to your positive response in support of those relying on you.

Sincerely,
Amy Masaoka
Pahoa Elementary School
Special Education Teacher
To Whom it May Concern at the Board of Education,

My name is Yvette Rapozo and I am testifying on item V. A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication. I am a 2nd grade teacher at Kapa’a Elementary school in Kapa’a, Kauai.

I work at a school that has returned to face to face instruction this week and our Pre K, K , 1st graders will back again next week in person. Although our numbers are no where near Oahu’s, our cases have increased. With that increase comes the possibility for spread and an increase in numbers. It scares me to think that each and every day that students are with me, I could catch it from them or vice versa. We could be asymptomatic and not know it. Can you imagine how quickly it will spread in a school setting? Although we space their desks 6 feet apart and we wear a mask all day long in a hot classroom, kids have a difficult time staying that far away from each other. They are doing the best they can, but just one mistake can lead to possible exposure and spread. Students also need help and assistance throughout the day and I have to get near them to help them. There is no way around that in the classroom. It baffles me that we shut down schools in March when our numbers were much lower, but haven’t done so in August when the numbers are climbing so quickly.

In order to move forward safely, I would like to request that you vote to require the DOH and HIDOE to provide clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students’ return. Hawaii is one of the states in the US that does not have any guidelines for this, which shows just how unprepared we are to properly tackle this disease. We must get back to school, but we must get back to school safely or it would just spell out disaster for Hawai’i. Furthermore, you should ensure 100% distance learning for all students state-wide for at least the entirety of the first quarter. This would allow students to continue to receive an education while allowing the DOH to create the aforementioned clear metrics whilst keeping us all safe.

I would also like to request that you guarantee that the HIDOE honors HSTA’s contract by allowing teachers to work from home (telework) for as long as distance learning remains in effect, however, I believe that it should be an option for teachers to be allowed to use their classrooms for distance learning if they need to. This could easily be coordinated with their principal so that the principal is always aware of who is on campus at any given time. For teachers who have elementary-aged kids, teleworking would be much more convenient as their children are discouraged from coming to school with them and residing in their classrooms. Furthermore, some teachers have more space to effectively teach online in their classrooms due to the ease of access to supplies and materials (including access to the internet for some educators).

Please make the best choice for the safety of everyone involved. I feel like teachers have had to beg repeatedly to keep us and our students safe, which is truly a shame. We shouldn’t have to beg for people to do the right thing and we should never be fearful of coming to work in a situation that could be prevented.

Sincerely,

Yvette Rapozo
Dear Board Chair Payne and Members,

My name is Logan Okita and I am a National Board Certified Teacher at Nimitz Elementary School. Instead of teaching first grade this year, I am supporting our kindergarten, first grade, and second grade students who have opted for full distance learning for at least the first semester. Thank you for taking the time to review the testimony that I have submitted at many of your meetings over the summer. It took me a while to decide what I want to tell you for this meeting because there is so much going on.

Should I tell you about the fear I felt returning to my campus at the end of July? Or should I tell you about how every morning I wonder if I am causing harm to my grandmother by simply putting on her compression socks before I leave for the day? About how I talk to her through a screen door when I return home because I don’t want to bring any possible contamination into her home?

Instead I will ask you to consider the current infection rate in our community and make the tough decisions that are needed in order to keep us safe. My school, and many others, are trying desperately to make the decisions that will keep everyone safe. We are a fleet of ships without a lighthouse to guide us. Please make the decisions that are not being made in a timely manner by the HIDOE in order to keep our communities safe and provide everyone with some sense of stability.

We need to extend the decision to go to full distance learning until the end of the first quarter. During that time, the Department of Health must work with the HIDOE to provide clear metrics to determine when school campuses are safe for students’ return and when they need to close. Teachers should be allowed to telework while distance learning remains in effect in order to minimize movement and interaction in our communities.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,
Logan Okita, NBCT, MEd
To Whom It May Concern:

Today I am testifying on item V, **A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.**

I was once told that your first year of teaching is like building an airplane while flying it. I never knew what that really meant until my first year of teaching, and believe me, it was exactly like trying to fly an airplane while building it.

This is my 8th year teaching and it feels like I'm back on that airplane, building it as we go.

But the difference here is, I keep getting thrown through loops. As soon as I get the airplane running, someone or something throws a wrench into the mix and I am back at square one. I cannot plan quality instruction and be the best online teacher that I can, if we keep throwing wrenches into the mix. I am only starting to feel like my plane is back on track, please let me fly my plane a little longer than just one month.

Granted, these are uncertain times and definitely not what we're used to but I believe we can make it easier on students and teachers by declaring 100-percent distance learning for all student across the state including those in special education, until at least the end of first quarter.

Why do you ask?

I can give you multiple reasons but I'll stick with one.

The first, and most important reason is safety. Our keiki deserve a safe return to school and when I say safe, I mean returning to campus without fear that another student could infect them with a disease they cannot see especially when the number of cases are rising. The news is flooded by stories where groups of people get together and a majority of them get COVID. It will be impossible for me as a teacher to stay socially distant from my classroom of younger children, even more impossible for special education teachers who need to come into close contact with their students as well. No one, I repeat, NO ONE is immune to this virus. It all comes down to one question, what is a child's education worth? Is it worth their life or the life of their teacher?

Some may argue that it's only a small percent of students that will die. But how would you feel if that small percentage included your child, grandchild, or friend? Wouldn't that small percentage mean so much more?

It is discouraging to listen to those who feel like we do not want to teach. We WANT to be back in the classroom with our students. We WANT everything to be back to normal so we can reach students in a way that distance learning cannot. BUT we also WANT our students to be safe. No matter the percentage, one death is one too many.
Thank you for your time.
I am testifying on item V. **A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.**

Please take action on the following items:

- Ensure 100-percent distance learning for all students across the state, including those in special education, until at least the end of the first quarter.
- Require the DOH and HIDOE to provide clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students’ return. Many states and cities have specific triggers already in place for when schools should be open or closed based on COVID-10 cases, but Hawaii does not.
- Guarantee that the HIDOE honors HSTA’s contract by allowing teachers to work from home (telework) for as long as distance learning remains in effect.

Schools should not be open without clear guidance from the department of health. Our schools are not ready for face-to-face instruction. With the recent surge in Covid cases, I am terrified to report to work but I have a family to support. I am saddened that my children are not physically going to school, but at least I know they are safe.

As a classroom teacher, I am caught in the middle of choosing my safety for my family and supporting my family financially. Unfortunately, I cannot afford to take off from work. Every day I take a risk of going into my classroom not knowing if other faculty members have come into contact with a person that tested positive for Covid-19. Some teachers have been recently sent home and this has added more stress and anxiety to the already stressful situation. Teachers did get some training but not enough. We were planning for blended learning and then all of a sudden we had to plan for distance learning. Teachers were scrambling just to prepare. Did we really have enough time to watch all those training videos? Think about it......

I really hope the board considers 100% distance learning for the entire 1st semester of school.

Sincerely,
Chrystie Isaacs
To the Hawai‘i Board of Education-

My name is Alex Nelson and I am writing to testify on behalf of V. A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication. I teach at Kauai High School and love my job. The best part is working with students and watching them learn and grow. But learning cannot happen in an unsafe environment and that is currently what we are faced with. With rising cases and transmission rates around the state, I believe that the decision needs to be made to go 100% distance learning through the first quarter and allow for telework to limit the number of staff at each school site on a given day. The current plan to reassess on 9/8 and have students possibly return to school 9/14 does not give educators or students enough time to adequately prepare for that transition. Distance learning and hybrid teaching look incredibly different and it is not reasonable to expect educators to made the switch with 3 days notice again. Reassessing and returning after fall break gives educators an extra week (because we all know we work over our breaks) to prepare and gives students and families some time to make the adjustments necessary.

Telework for all employees should be an option. If teachers/staff could choose certain days to work from home and certain days to work from school, we can limit the number of people at each work site and limit our possible exposure. For example, these last 2 weeks I have worked in my classroom by myself and had virtual meetings, but have to share a bathroom with 14 other people and access common areas. If each school could set a schedule/rotation for who is on campus, we can prioritize the work that must be done on site and get a lot of work done from home. This would also allow for more regular and timely sanitizing of frequently touched surfaces and ease the workload of our amazing custodial staff. We know that staying home and distanced works to stop the spread and we should be doing everything we can to curb our rising numbers.

Thank you for your consideration and understanding on this matter.

Best,
Alex
9th Grade Science (Physical and Biology)
Kauai High School

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

My apologies for the lengthy email but there is a lot that needs to be said that 2 min and 30 secs can never cover.

I am providing testimony on item A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.

With the SIGNIFICANT rise in numbers, I am BEGGING wit you all to please have 100% Distance Learning FOR ALL students (including on IEPs) to begin IMMEDIATELY (or if anything starting Monday, Aug 31). Please delay student start, we need to keep our teachers and their families safe, even our student’s families. Please do what is in the best interest of the STUDENT OF HAWAII.

I am a Special Education Elementary (K-1) teacher at Mokulele Elementary School in Central Chapter of the Radford Complex. I am writing to you on many different topics. I want to give you a board picture of what is going on in the schools as the picture that our Superintendent has not been 100% factual.

Please understand, that we teachers, miss our students, we want to teach but it’s not time to be in the classroom yet. When it is safe, we want to hug and hold our students. If we can’t do that now, then it’s NOT SAFE.

SUPERINTENDENT

If whomever is reading this could ask this question: How are you (DOE) supporting the employees on their child care needs based on the Governor’s request to have the employers (DOE - you) support your employees (teachers, eas, etc)? There are many reports that Admin is saying no to telework and their child may not be on campus, even if teacher on campus for Distance Learning. This should not be left up to the Principals only but the DOE is the employer, as their paycheck does NOT have the school’s name on it.

I truly feel that once her contract is up, that you seek a new superintendent for the State of Hawai‘i. For this Ready to Learn Plan, she didn’t have HSTA, HGEA or UPW at the table discussing this plan. WE are the ones that have to be there on campuses, she doesn’t.

She attacks us through her messages and her videos. She isn’t the one spending her personal money to buy student supplies, to buy sneeze guards to put on desk, paying for storage container because we have to get our stuff out of the classrooms, and she is NOT supporting teachers.

Teachers across the state are begging you, the Board of Education, to hear us out. To listen to our cries of hurt, anger, anxiety, depression and sorrows. WE MISS OUR STUDENTS but we value LIFE. We want our students to stay alive and healthy. We want our coworkers to stay out of harms way if they are high risk. We want to teach SAFELY. We can’t do that with this Ready to Learn Plan.

She emailed all DOE employees, not just teachers but ALL DOE employees bashing our HSTA president, bullying us, and showing absolutely no Aloha.
PLEASE ASK HER WHY SHE SENT AN EMAIL USING DOE SERVES TO SEND A PERSONAL ATTACK. HERE IS THE LINK OR HERE (tinyurl.com/DOEaug13) I truly felt harassed and bullied by my employer. Please address her comments and what was her PROFESSIONAL intent for this email.

August 17-20
The Ready to Learn plan states that students are not going to be on campus for instruction and learning but to allow students to meet their teachers, gather their belongings to be prepared for distance learning, get their account information for the online programs, and possibly get technology to sign out to borrow. It states that vulnerable students are to be on campus to the greatest extent possible, which includes my Special Education students.

Here are the concerns:
At my school, Monday-Thursday, I have 5 students in my classroom with one additional adult (EA). Based on their IEPs, they are to receive 750 minutes per week of Specially Designed Instruction. By them being with me for 4 days, I would be in contact with these students for 22 HOURS.

My admin doesn't want to set up the schedule (because not getting CLEAR guidance from DOE -- SUPERINTENDENT) to where I provide my students with the required Specially Designed Instruction per their IEP and having them go home. Fridays are our virtual day - where we were told there is no new instruction to be occurring - which is RIDICULOUS! I want my parents to see that Distance Learning can be provided adequately to their child.

OH, here is a kicker - my admin WILL NOT allow parents to opt out the next 4 weeks to do distance only during that time. It is either, be there or mark absent with no instruction.

August 24-28
Again, I'll be with students for 22 hours with masks on for some type of learning and instruction.

THE STUPID "TRAINING"
I'm sorry, there were so many videos that were SO uncalled for us to watch. I took notes while watching. I got the email on July 31 (FRIDAY night) and I started watching to see what they were about and to get ahead. I am copying and pasting my notes from watching.

I WANT IT KNOWN>........ The Special Education Videos were OUTSTANDING! So informative, thoughtful, clearly understandable, well put together and overall valuable to listening to.

Did you know that we were told to prepare to have Face to Face instruction. We had all these modules to watch. There are so many teachers that spent HOURS prepping their room for Face to Face, that they didn't have time to prepare for Distance Learning. To shove these videos down our throat that we had to decide how we were to use our prep time to watch the video, ensure 6 feet distance, remove personal belongings, redesign the room, meet with grade level colleagues, have faculty meetings, and more faculty meetings, and just not having time to prepare for distance learning.

August 17-20 should have been better used to do packet pick up, schedule specific webex time with parents and students, do test trials of how to turn mic on and off, webcam on and off, ensure that the students and parents know attendance is mandatory, to have a quiet and productive area to work and to prep for Distance Learning.

We watched 7 stupid videos from youtube on how to wash our hands. The videos weren't even for school based, many for medical. 7 YOUTUBE videos - SUCH A WASTE OF TIME

DOE informed us that we had to submit something in PDE3 as of August 13 NOTHING!
We had to do a final survey that was put out in the memo for Superintendent to get feedback - please compare the topics we were to give feedback on compared to the REQUIRED videos. Plus, we can't access memos since we lost Lotus Notes. WHY WASN'T THAT SURVEY EMAILED LIKE THE REQUIRED VIDEOS WERE EMAILED TO US?

The red asterisk (*) were required to be watched.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Training title</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Intended audience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Distance Learning</td>
<td><strong>Distance Learning Readiness: Onboarding Course-7 modules</strong>&lt;sup&gt;*&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>7 hours</td>
<td>All Educators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance Learning</td>
<td><strong>Distance Learning Readiness teaching and learning resource</strong> (OCID Learning Design website)</td>
<td>Self-paced</td>
<td>All Educators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance Learning</td>
<td><strong>Distance Learning Readiness - Training Opportunities and Recordings</strong></td>
<td>As scheduled</td>
<td>All Educators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance Learning</td>
<td><strong>Distance Learning Readiness - Continuity of Learning tech integration resources</strong></td>
<td>Self-paced</td>
<td>All Educators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance Learning</td>
<td><strong>Supporting English Learners in the Distance Learning Environment</strong>&lt;sup&gt;*&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.5 hours</td>
<td>All Educators</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Module 1: 42 mins**
I want to learn about BrainShark for presentations. I liked that there was a Guestbook. Was taking notes so I like the fact that you have to go back into the video for the next section to play. Helps ensure that you are actually there and not just letting it play through. I agree with checking on students individually once a week, especially elem level. Agree: EL learning English and now having to learn new independent skills with Distance Learning

**Module 2: 58 mins**
Need to create school system for shared responsibility between EL teachers and core content teachers- i agree that is HIGHLY important especially middle school level
Giving them voice & different ways to submit their work (website, paper, video etc)

**Module 3: 26 mins**
Make sure to be explicit - the science lesson example
SY 19-20 data is available to review
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Supports</th>
<th>Ohana Help Desk Informational Briefing</th>
<th>Available by Aug. 10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health &amp; Safety</strong></td>
<td><strong>General Cleaning &amp; COVID-19 Cleaning</strong></td>
<td>45 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No video for this? The Webinar Q &amp; A hasn’t been updated since JUNE? Seriously? All of July you didn’t update! No wonder teachers and Admin asked for more time to prepare, that is because DOE isn’t prepared!</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health &amp; Safety</strong></td>
<td><strong>Health and Safety Resources</strong></td>
<td>12 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ridiculous having 7 YouTube videos explaining how to wash my hands, how about having videos that teaches kids how to wash hands?!</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health &amp; Safety</strong></td>
<td><strong>Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility - COVID-19</strong></td>
<td>30 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May video, why did they have open mics where you can hear the guy sneeze? The presentators weren’t close to their mics and there were SO MANY gaps of not hearing the guy talk. Maybe learn from TEACHERS on how to give an engaging Webinar?! Why are the cleaning documents back from 2015 and not current? Yes, make sure the bathrooms look clean, don’t worry about the CLASSROOMS being ready for students. The presentators or DOE should have listened to this presentation to know that it should have been re-recorded due to the mic issues! Professional Cleaning Crew will come if there is a confirmed COVID case, who pays for that? Better not be the school with the Student Weighted Formula, should be from the Sup’s personal pocket for thinking we are ready for opening our schools up</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health &amp; Safety</strong></td>
<td><strong>Cleaning and Disinfecting Webinar Q and A</strong></td>
<td>pdf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referenced by Admin on 8/4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health &amp; Safety</strong></td>
<td><strong>HIDOE Health &amp; Safety Handbook</strong></td>
<td>Self-paced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 6 - Students - Recess - How are students supposed to keep their masks clean? Videos you had us watch on washing our hands, it says to wash your hands before you put your mask on but how can they wash their hands if they can’t go to the bathroom/classroom without a mask on and they can’t put on their mask because their hands</td>
<td>Completed 7/31</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed 7/31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
are dirty from playing. PLEASE GET THIS CLARIFIED SO DOE KEEP THE KIDS SAFE

Does EVERY single school have a School Health Assistant (SHA)????

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health &amp; Safety</th>
<th>The &quot;Nuts and Bolts&quot; of COVID-19 Safety &amp; Health Guidelines w/ Anna Elento-Sneed*</th>
<th>1 hour</th>
<th>All Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HSTA lawyer gave presentation!</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Privacy</th>
<th>Student Privacy and Data Protection*</th>
<th>20 mins</th>
<th>All Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Course is from 2012</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Completed with certificate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SPED</th>
<th>SPED: Reopening Schools - Students with Disabilities Return to Learn*</th>
<th>30 mins</th>
<th>All Educators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I appreciate an updated presentation! Presentator speaks clearly. Didn’t know about the “Act with Care” Level of Care. I appreciate the example given to us. Must meet by Quarter 1 for all IEPs - but how is this done by meeting minutes *** How to Prioritize THANK YOU FOR ANSWER MY QUESTION! THANK YOU FOR EDDIE’S EXAMPLE!!!! AND KIM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If a student is out due to being high risk, out for 10 or more days should consider HOMEBOUND for change of placement.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop school contingency plan for SpEd students for access &amp; participate for Distance Learning - Needs to be uploaded in eCSSS COVID tab. Create a plan for children.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Distance Learning Plan if school cannot meet IEP needs for opted Distance Learning - create with family</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Really like the Feeding Children poster - please send to FSC teachers across the state as well as the Toileting/Diapering</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SPED</th>
<th>SPED: COVID-19 Impact Services - Section 504*</th>
<th>15 mins</th>
<th>All Educators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Appreciate a 504 presentation like the IEP! Again, they did an excellent job on their presentation!</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SPED</th>
<th>SPED: COVID-19 Impact Services - IDEA*</th>
<th>30 mins</th>
<th>All Educators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Again, appreciate this presentation! Excellent presenter
New thing learned: “No Fault”

Where is the skill lost template?? How do NEW Care Coordinators run meetings if they don’t have the baseline date (ie new to school or 6to 7 gr or 9to 9) Do we show parents the template at the meeting?

Good to know COVID 19 Impact services can be offered online and after school hours!

Impact Service Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Audience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SPED</td>
<td><strong>SPED: Addressing Learning Loss and Provision of COVID-19 Impact Services</strong></td>
<td>25 mins</td>
<td>All Educators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPED</td>
<td><strong>SPED: Addressing IEP Goals via Distance Learning</strong></td>
<td>1 hour</td>
<td>All Educators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Support</td>
<td><strong>Supporting the Continued Learning for English Learners and Students With Disabilities</strong></td>
<td>45 mins</td>
<td>All Educators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Support</td>
<td><strong>Positive Behavior Digital System and Computer Science</strong></td>
<td>20 mins</td>
<td>All Educators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Support</td>
<td><strong>HIDOE’s Trauma-Informed Practice Virtual Series</strong></td>
<td>3.5 hours</td>
<td>All Staff</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mahalo for always being willing to listen to us, teachers, we appreciate you being there for us and we hope you will continue to be there for us.

P.S. If it isn’t safe for BOE to meet face to face, why is it safe for schools?

MAHALO
Amanda Lacar
Testimony BOE

From: Karrie Smith <karriemsmith@gmail.com> on behalf of Karrie Smith
Sent: Tuesday, August 18, 2020 8:57 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for the right to offer accommodations for those seeking to support victims of sexual abuse.

General Business Meeting
As a member of the Hawaii educational community I have been very concerned that our schools are using the program Acellus Academy as the primary learning tool for our keiki. I want to make the school, district and community leaders aware of the harm that the creator of Acellus Academy, Roger Billings, has caused. There are several reasons why this program should not be used for students in Hawaii or anywhere. Roger Billings is the proclaimed prophet and leader of a cult in Missouri. This cult practices polygamy and forces its members to become polygamists. A member of the Sunset Beach community has family members that joined this cult. They took their family there and were told by Roger Billings, that the husband must take on another wife. They tried to push back stating he was already married and that this practice is not only unwanted but also illegal. Roger Billings forced it so much that they left the cult rather than commit this illegal act. As a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints we do not believe in this practice and are asked in our religious belief if we support or promote any teachings, practices, or doctrine contrary to those of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. These teachings and practices go against our religious beliefs and we can not support this person.

A close family friend who is a member of our community and has kids that attend Hawaii public schools shared with me experience with Roger Billings. When my friend was a child, she joined the cult and took. While living within this group my friend was molested by Roger Billings himself. She was able to get away later and has since contacted the police and there has been an investigation into Roger Billings himself. For me that is a hard line. I can not support anyone who sexually abuses children, period. While this program is not this man he is the owner and creator of this program and directly benefits from our tax dollars being spent on this program. Being a member of our Hawaii community has shared trauma with some school principals. While some principals believed and swiftly took actions to remove this program from their school other principals have chosen to separate the actions of the man for the potential benefits of the program in their schools. While we do advocate for the complete dismissal of this program from all Hawaii schools, we recognize that many may harbor the same zero tolerance stance on allowing accommodations. As a member of the Sunset Beach community with two children who attend school there we asked if the school would work with us and our children so we could use another program or do paper packets so we would not have to use the Acellus program. We are seeking reasonable accommodations and have offered to personally pay for another program approved by the state of Hawaii or have our children do paper assessments. We have offered to help align the curriculum to minimize additional workload for teachers, and personally take responsibility for teaching when home learning environments are being utilized. While our principal has been empathetic she feels that any of these accommodations would be too large a disruption to other students and her teachers and has zero tolerance for these accommodations. Our only options are use the program and violate our moral and religious objections, or homeschool our children and forego the possibility of group learning among our children's peers.

We were told that when looking into these allegations that the people they went to for answers were the Acellus program. as inclosed in an email received from our principal.

Hi Karrie, Thank you again for reaching out with your concerns about Acellus. I understand what a stressful and difficult time this is for families! Guidelines and recommendations for reopening schools are changing so
quickly, and we have all had to continually adapt to the changes. Be assured that when we make school level
decisions, we will always put what is best for our students in the forefront of our minds.

Our school and complex area administration have been made aware of the allegations circulating online
regarding Acellus. According to Acellus, the claims have been tied to a competitor and have not been
substantiated, therefore we are unable to speculate.
These people are not competitors, they are members of our community with nothing to gain.

I think it is important to stand with victims, especially children who are most often overlooked, and not allow
pedophiles to profit off of our children. I further believe it is our right that in supporting these victims we should
be allowed reasonable accommodations so that we do not have to use the Acellus program.

Thank you for your time.
Dear BOE,

With the alarming rising numbers of Covid-19, the new guidelines and enhanced restrictions set forth by the Governor and Mayor were announced this afternoon. Due to limited gatherings and face-to-face contact, I believe teachers should have the option to work from home. If I can perform all duties necessary to my teaching job from home, then I would feel much safer if I could do it with as little physical contact as possible. If able to work from home, a lot of the stress would be alleviated, thus allowing me to have better peace of mind and focus my energy on quality teaching, learning, and planning. Since all team, department, and faculty meetings will not be in-person anyway (rightfully so), there really is no reason whatsoever to be on campus. The more people come and go, the more likely unnecessary possible contact and spread may occur. This is not the time to play loose or take chances. We need to get this under control as quickly as possible. Schools play a major role in this, and we should not underplay it. The entire state should ensure 100 percent distance learning until at least the end of the first quarter. I ask that you guarantee that the HIDOE honors the HSTA contract by allowing teachers to telework as long as distance learning remains in effect. Thank you for your consideration.

Mahalo,

Hanna Na
Niu Valley Middle School
To the Hawaii Board of Education:

I support the Board’s desire to allow our vulnerable students to attend school face-to-face. They, of all students, thrive under the regular care of their teachers and assistants. My colleagues, who worked all summer until July 27, were so enthusiastic about their students’ progress, that they did not seem to mind that they only had one day of rest before returning to the new school year on July 29. One of them beamed and told me, “I just loved being able to work with them.” Some of the instruction was online, but some of it was in-person. The families appreciated the extended services. The reason vulnerable students have the extended year is to have trained educators support their students’ growth. I have seen the joy on the students’ faces as they stand in a circle in the yard for adaptive PE activities in the presence of their peers. I have seen the excitement in their eyes as they press the correct button on the iPad to contribute to a class chart on the board.

While I understand that the protean virus is worrisome, I am confident that schools have taken the precautions necessary to ensure student and staff safety. My administration ordered protective equipment and supplies for us, asked us to require masks indoors and outdoors and of course, reminded us to space our desks apart. The many training videos we watched—including a series of no fewer than three videos on how to wash our hands—more than prepared us for what to expect and how to remain safe. To deny these students the opportunity to learn in as safe and professional an environment as possible (and least restrictive) is shameful. In the same vein, restricting access to campus facilities for our at-risk population (and even teachers) undermines the mission of the department's commitment to equity.

This thinking also applies to my fellow teachers. We want to see our students, but if we can’t, we at least want to be in a setting that will help us channel the “vibe” of school. Teachers should be on campus and in their classrooms teaching. The hysteria I heard during the few minutes I tuned in to of last week’s YouTube union session seemed up whip up more fear than reason, and it was alarming. There is no evidence that the very few cases that occurred at our schools over the summer were actually contracted on campus. Our lives are more complex than just our place of work, and to jump to such conclusions is dangerous and demoralizing. The fact that these infections were not part of a campus cluster suggest the school was not the culprit. If we can teach from our rooms, we can connect online with our students with the familiar view of desks, whiteboards and file cabinets in the background; maybe our students will be able to imagine themselves being in school. What I know for sure is that going to campus will be a luxury my students will not have. In this respect, I do not agree with my union’s call for teachers to work from home. For those of you who have done it, you know it is not the same as actually being in your workspace.

In closing, I ask that the Board block out the noise from the periphery and do all it can to support schools to have the hard, honest conversations with their stakeholders and to remember that students are supposed to be the winners in this race to the top. Handicapping any part of the whole will have lasting consequences.

Sincerely,
Dear Members,

I am at awe as to the heartless actions of our state and county leaders including superintendent Kishimoto for allowing schools to stay open to students and the public! With the most recent rule of five or less in a gathering, schools are once again left out! What’s wrong with distant learning through the first quarter? I’d suggest this be for all Hawaii schools for consistency and to eliminate confusion! If you haven’t sensed it yet, teachers are tired and frustrated with video sessions and changes! I was asked to sit through a 7 hour session of 7 modules to prepare me as a substitute teacher. You call that training??! So how do you think teachers feel by watching training videos besides having to do their work? Recently some teachers have complained about the superintendent getting into people’s DOE emails and sending negative messages! If that’s true, that’s very unprofessional and inappropriate for someone in this work capacity! Please think from your hearts for the health and safety of everyone! Learning will not stop! Give our state time to heal!! Thank you!

Sent from my iPhone
My name is Vanessa Knoepfel I am an educator testifying on item V
A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.

I believe reopening schools for face-to-face instruction without clear guidance is reckless and dangerous. It is also unfair that SPED teachers must meet face to face with students, they are not immune to COVID 19. Please help get a better system in place to hold the Department of Health and DOE accountable for guiding schools.

Mahalo,

Vanessa Knoepfel
Aloha,

I am testifying on item V. A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.

I am a special education teacher on Maui. I have been instructed to teach face to face in the midst of a global pandemic but I have no other choice without your help. I don't want to die. My grandmother just got covid on the mainland. It is real. I have a 3 month old at home. I want to watch them grow up. My wife is furloughed. I can't get sick but I don't have a choice but to work and come into high contact with students who don't grasp the reality of what is going on every day. I can't even lecture while teaching without my mask falling down exposing my nose or my face shield fogging up and I am one of the safer ones at my school. You can do all the safety protocols in the world but there are too many people on campus and it is not safe. Touching door handles of my classroom, bathroom doors and stalls, doors of the office, teachers lounge, microwaves, etc. you can only wipe down so many things. An outbreak in our schools is inevitable if we continue this reckless course. I noticed my students have been wearing the same masks everyday too, continuing to wear a contaminated mask can't be good.

My colleagues are all freaking out because a lot of them are in similar positions. Spouses laid off or not working, no other choice but to come in and try to not get sick while still making ends meet. It's shocking that we are seen as martyrs and forced to continue to teach in the classroom while the rest of general education teachers are allowed to go to virtual instruction. One of my colleagues is a high risk pregnancy and it is shocking that she is forced to teach in person and possibly expose herself and her unborn baby when an easy change to go 100% virtual could be made. Please ensure our safety. We already have a special education teacher shortage. We don't need to lose more sped teachers because they died while forced to teach face to face in the midst of a global pandemic that has killed over 777,000 people. Don't be negligent, do the right thing and close our schools and let us teach 100% virtually from home. Mahalo,

Glen Eastman
I would like to add to my previous testimony the following inquiry which still received no response from the Hawai'i State Department of Education & Hawai'i State Public Charter Commission.

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: Keokeana Elaban <tianaelaban@gmail.com>  
Date: Sun, Aug 16, 2020 at 7:16 PM  
Subject: Safety Requirement Questions  
To: <oeinfo@k12.hi.us>, <info@spcsc.hawaii.gov>

Aloha Hawai'i State Department of Education & Hawai'i State Public Charter Commission,

I have been reviewing my Charter schools safety reopening plans & the Hawaii State Department return to learn school reopening Health & Safety Handbook that is in place for face to face classes when the time resumes. I have some questions that I would like to get some clarification on.

1. Is every school required to have a School Health Aide on campus ?
2. What certifications are required for a School Health Aide to have and have they all received additional COVID-19 training?
3. The handbook notes that devices need to be cleaned by the next user if they are shared. In our school, the children are handling this sanitation. Are there guidelines of who will be sanitizing objects?
4. If children are indeed supposed to be responsible for sanitation of desk areas, seating areas, and sanitation of devices does the DOE feel that this can be done 100% properly, 100% of the time?
5. Is the Health & Safety Handbook a requirement for the schools to follow or just a suggested guideline?
6. Who is ensuring that Charter Schools in Hawai'i are following proper Health & Safety protocols beyond their governing board during this pandemic?

I look forward to your response.

Aloha,

Tiana Elaban
Dear Board of Education,

I am testifying on item:

A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, and all personnel on school campuses.

As a parent, aunt, sister, niece and friend of workers that work on school campuses, I am pleading with the Board of Education to think about all on school campuses

Ensure 100-percent distance learning for all students across the state, including those in special education, until at least the end of the first quarter.

Next, Require the DOH and HIDOE to provide clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students’ return. Many states and cities have specific triggers already in place for when schools should be open or closed based on COVID-10 cases, but Hawaii does not.

Thirdly, Guarantee that the HIDOE honors HSTA’s contract by allowing teachers to work from home (telework) for as long as distance learning remains in effect.

Finally, the community as well as staff, students and parents should be informed by schools of positive case as soon as it is notified. Not delayed information plus by schools and not by school complex.

Sincerely,

Trisha

Trisha
Sent from my iPhone
Aloha,

I am testifying on item V. **A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.**

My name is Andrea Stanton and I am a preschool special education teacher on Oahu. I think that with the numbers being so high everyday that school should be 100% distance learning for the safety of everyone until at least the end of the first quarter. Today was only the 2nd day of school and I had to send 3 students home today because they were ill. Parents are still sending their children to school when they are sick even though there are signs everywhere saying not to. It is not working and this is putting the other students and teachers working with them at risk. I already have 10 students on my class list which is very high for a preschool classroom and it is still growing in size. I only had 6 students show up in the morning today and by noon I was left with 3. That says a lot!

If and when schools go to 100% distance learning there needs to be clear guidelines on when a school would be safe to open again for face to face learning.

I don’t really understand how schools, movies, malls and other places are open but all outdoor activities like hikes, beaches, and parks are closed. It just doesn’t make sense! Now, especially with the new rule of no groups larger than 5. What makes school any different and safer than those activities?

Mahalo for your time,

Andrea Stanton
8/18/2020

Dear Board of Education,

4th plea for a safe working environment. I am a special education teacher at Aliamanu Elementary School. 80% of our student population is military - whom I’ve heard at one of your earlier BOE meetings, do not have to report their cases due to security. The remaining 20% belong to the ethnic groups of the highest COVID-19 infection. Additionally, Aliamanu Elementary School is currently in a zip code that is deemed “red” in regards to the coronavirus spread.

It would be SO MUCH EASIER for us to do our jobs if we ignored this pandemic and brought the students back to campus. Teachers are CHOOSING to fight to make their jobs harder for the sake of safety. Our job duties have literally doubled. Yet we continue to fight for what makes our own lives hard because we value the health and safety of Hawaii’s keiki and teachers.

I have never worked harder as a teacher - and I consider myself pretty efficient in the technology aspect. Teachers who are less familiar with technology are near mental breakdown. Yet, they struggle willingly because they want to teach their students; and they want to do so safely. You are doing us no justice by allowing a wedge to grow between us and the community when all we seek is safety and a plan.

Yesterday, I watched as my colleague, her two educational assistants, and a skills trainer opened their door to 5 fully self-contained students with severe autism. It was clear to me then that you do not understand the magnitude to which you are endangering our lives and, through ripple effect, the lives of the entire community. My colleague easily spent nearly $800 if not more of her own money to set up sneeze guards at each desk, air purifiers (because we’re not allowed to open windows and doors due to worry of killing our AC system), face shields, hand sanitizer, etc. She spent all that money, only to have her precautions go down the drain. As she began to work with her brand new students, she quickly validated that students of this level of severity CANNOT adhere to social distancing rules and DO NOT keep masks on. They require hand-over-hand modeling and physical prompting. These students do not take themselves to the bathroom or feed themselves. You are knowingly putting all 8 of these people (plus their families) at risk of contracting COVID-19 by asking them to work face-to-face to meet their academic goals. You are de-prioritizing the health and safety of this group for the sake of what?

I am thankful that I currently only have 1 student whom we have deemed extremely vulnerable and welcome to campus. I gladly work to balance teaching him and my 9 other special education students who currently learn virtually. I gladly teach them and work to meet their special education minutes from their IEPs while they're at home because that is what is best for their safety, their families’ safety, and my safety.

Meanwhile, I continue to order as much PPE as I possibly can before the anticipated September date. My school provided me: 1 cloth mask, 50 gloves, 1 container of sanitizer, 1 face shield, a box of student masks, 1 grade level thermometer to share between 4 classrooms. I was provided by an outside DOE office: 20 N95 masks. My educational assistant received 10 - we work in the same conditions and in the same room, yet she received half.

You have sent us all to work in the face of danger without a plan and without providing what we need to stay safe. You continue to leave things up to individual schools without clear guidance and we continue to receive “I don’t know” as the answer when we ask about protocols. We are forced to buy our own protections because
you won’t at the very least make it clear as day what campuses should be providing. You could lessen the risk of outbreak by requiring teachers who do not need to be on campus to show up to work; but you haven't taken action to make sure it happens.

You saw last week what can happen when COVID-19 enters a confined space as we watched the OCCC numbers grow beyond 200. Hawaii DOE schools operate under very similar settings: 1 confined room with many bodies breathing the same air for hours; and sharing a meal in the same room. If you continue to operate schools in the same fashion that you have been for the last 2 weeks, when we have a shortage of contact tracers, and hospital beds, you will be personally responsible for the aftermath because those of us actually on the “frontlines” have tried to warn you again and again. If you find any of this hard to believe, please, I’d like to welcome you to our campus where you can witness these things yourself. Please, come and interview us and ask us what’s REALLY going on.

Short from begging on my knees and pleading:
1) Please consider remote learning for teachers who can
2) Please create metrics for safety
3) Consider 100% distance learning for all through the 1st quarter or until The State of Hawaii can gain a handle of our coronavirus outbreaks.

Best regards & Stay Healthy.

Amy Suzuki
Special Education Teacher at Aliamanu Elementary School
Parent to students at Kailua High School & Maunawili Elementary School
Aloha,
I am providing testimony for item V. A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.

I am a teacher at Aiea Intermediate School and have provided testimony on several prior occasions over the summer. Although my school has done a pretty good job of trying to keep us safe and provide PPE, the last couple of weeks have been full of anxiety. With the increasing case counts on Oahu it is absolutely ludicrous that schools are having students come in person to campus this week. That was my school’s plan until the Friday before students came. Thankfully we made the switch to packet pickup, but the constant back and forth and changing of plans is exhausting for school staff at all levels.

To make matters worse the total lack of competence by the DOH worries me that people at our school may not be notified in a timely manner if fellow employees and their contacts were exposed to someone with COVID-19. Even trying to socially distance it is impossible for teachers to remain completely apart from each other. Even if everyone is wearing masks, there can still be some danger. On top of everything else teachers are dealing with we should not have to worry about possible exposure.

I ask that you as the board ensure total distance learning for all students through at least October. Please give school staff the time to really get into the grove of distance learning, instead of stringing us on until the last moment like the current plan does.

Please require the DOH and DOE to provide clear metrics on when campuses are safe to return. If they can’t provide this information, then it is clear that they are not able to support in person learning.

And lastly, please allow teachers to work at home as long as distance learning is the norm. The governor and mayor just said today that business should allow workers to telework if they can. That should apply to teachers as well. Teachers should have to the choice of working at home or at school. In my personal case I live with my parents who are both over 65 and one who has several high-risk factors. I can teach just as well (perhaps better) from my home and it will be after from my family. I know I am not the only teacher in that situation. In order to ensure that we have licensed enough teachers for our keki, it is imperative that we care for the teachers we already have and allow them to continue working in a safe environment.

Although schools are an essential business, we must operate with methods that will help mitigate the spread of COVID-19 especially with rising case counts on Oahu. Academic losses can be made up in the future, we can "make up" the loss of life and health from COVID-19.

Thank you for your consideration.
Mary Shire
Testimony BOE

From: Amelia Keefe <ameliak@hawaii.edu> on behalf of Amelia Keefe
Sent: Tuesday, August 18, 2020 9:51 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

I am submitting testimony on item V.A: update on implementation of board resolution. We need to ensure that the following items are met.

- Ensure 100-percent distance learning for all students across the state, including those in special education, until at least the end of the first quarter.
- Require the DOH and HIDOE to provide clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students’ return. Many states and cities have specific triggers already in place for when schools should be open or closed based on COVID-10 cases, but Hawaii does not.
- Guarantee that the HIDOE honors HSTA’s contract by allowing teachers to work from home (telework) for as long as distance learning remains in effect.

These need to be met to ensure student and teacher safety during this time. I, personally, have chosen to distance myself from friends and loved ones to keep them safe. Other teachers may not have that as an option, therefore we must help teachers to be able to work in a way that is safe for them and their families.

Amelia Keefe
Hello Board of Education,

Thank you for reading my testimony. I am testifying on item V. **A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.**

I am asking that you ensure that our schools be 100% distance learning for all students in the state, including those that are in the special education program. I would like that distance learning be extended to at least the first quarter. As a special education teacher, I am scared to return to face to face with students who cannot wear a mask (my students are special needs 3 and 4 year olds.) Our school will open for students on Monday 8/24 for face to face instruction and yet I do NOT have any PPE in my classroom for myself or my EA. I keep hearing the DOE stating that we are ready to open! NO, we are NOT ready to open. Where are my supplies to keep myself, my coworkers, and students safe? I have to toilet train, change diapers and come in contact with body fluid. How will we be protected? Special needs students, their teachers, providers, and families are not immune to COVID!! I keep hearing how the "at risk" population needs to be in school to learn. As one of my student’s mother told me today that although she knows her child learns best in school and the benefits of a one to one support, she rather have her child be kept at home safe and with their health.

I am also asking that the DOH and HIDOE provide clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students’ return. The school I work at was closed last Wednesday due to an employee testing positive for COVID. Yes, someone contracted COVID and we didn't even have children present!!! DOH didn't contact the positive employee for over 4 days or do any contact tracing. Our students’ families and the community are kept in the dark of this. Where is the transparency? Why wasn't anyone informed of this case? Shame on DOE.

Please honor our contract and allow us to telework during the pandemic. I had to do this during the last school closure in March and most recently, yesterday and part of last week when our school was closed for our active COVID-case on campus. We are able to teach remotely. I have created folders for each of my students to use - this is aligned with their academics and IEP goals. I can work with them through one on one instruction via a virtual meet up and provide group meetings as well. It isn't "normal" but we aren't at normal times.
I hope that you see that the schools aren't ready. Our covid cases are going up, we are seeing Covid cases on the campuses (yet they're kept secret!). Why are we playing Russian Roulette on all of these lives? If we are forced to return to face to face I will have to take leave. I love my job, I love my students, I love what I do, but I will not sacrifice my life or my family's life by going to work.

Thank you,

Karine De Lima

Special Education Teacher
Testifying for item V.
- name greg saggers parent of 2 public school children and teacher
-Here’s reasons why we should error on the side of caution when opening schools up
- schools should be the same restrictions as the public
- as an elementary teacher I know that it is goin to be impossible to keep kids away from each other. I was a witness to this during a video session getting ready with 8 kids they couldn’t stay 6 ft away after me reminding them consistently.
- teachers should have the choice to teach from home or school. Personally witnessed that teachers have there own ideas like the public upon how serious the COVID situation is . I’ve witnessed teachers in a room having mtgs and lunch room with no masks sitting less than 6 feet taking to each other.
- the spread with all these schools in progress without protocols will result in rise and overwhelming the hospitals
- I’ve heard in Arizona before schools came in there was spread in teachers mtgs
- I have kids and we need the option to teach from home and school so we can get to supplies we need but flexibility to be there supervising our Own kids at home
- we need protocols and need to know where spread is happening in schools if we get back to teach in kids
- I want to be with kids but not in this situation it’s not safe for kids or staff
- much aloha for supporting all of us in your mtgs. I beleive we’re all in this together mahalo for all your hard work , greg

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Mahalos, Greg Saggers
Greetings,
My name is Michael Press and I am a 7/8 Social Studies teacher and Department Head at Ilima Intermediate School in Campbell/Kapolei complex on Oahu. I am testifying on item V.

A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.

I am voicing my support on 3 items in front of the Board of Ed:

- Ensure 100-percent distance learning for all students across the state, including those in special education, until at least the end of the first quarter.
- Require the DOH and HIDOE to provide clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students’ return. Many states and cities have specific triggers already in place for when schools should be open or closed based on COVID-19 cases, but Hawaii does not.
- Guarantee that the HIDOE honors HSTA’s contract by allowing teachers to work from home for as long as distance learning remains in effect.

History sighs, repeats itself.

We were here 6 weeks ago and cases went up. We were here a month ago and cases went up. We are here now and we lead the nation in infection rate. We need a plan that is not attached to a date but to targeted goals. Teaching is about goals not dates, Covid-19 is no different. This week I had friends dressed in homemade PPE in order to be with students in their classroom for 6 hours each day. I have had teachers come to me in the prime of their career and discuss resigning because they live in multi-generational households with at risk families. This is unacceptable. We are seeing the result of leadership that does not come from a classroom background. If I taught lessons as poorly planned as the D.O.E. reopening plan I would have never been hired. Teachers are surrogates for their student's guardians. It is a responsibility that all HSTA professionals take to heart, and that duty calls for safety first. We are better than this. I call on the B.O.E. to act because the D.O.E., Dr. Kishimoto and the Gov. Ige have been negligent in their duties at best.

I want to teach. My teacher friends want to teach but we want to be safe. We live on an amazing set of islands and that means we have no room for error. We cannot get this wrong because there is nowhere to go for help. I am asking for a phased reopening to the school year with clear metrics and clear communication. Pupukahi i holomua.

Thank you for your time,

Michael Press
August 18, 2020

RE: Testimony on Item V. A. Update on implementations of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health & safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.

Dear Board of Education Members,

I am writing today in support of 100% distance learning for all students for the 1st quarter of 2020.

I am also writing in support of requiring the DOH and HIDOE to provide clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students’ return.

Finally, I am writing in support of allowing teachers to telework from home for the entirety of the distance learning period remains in effect.

With over 179,000 students throughout the HIDOE system, at least 13,000 teachers and at least 12,000 school support personnel, this decision impacts over 200,000 individuals. Even with a conservative infection possibility rate of 1%, and with the current trajectory of cases of COVID-19 in Hawaii, that’s at least 2,000 individuals who could contract COVID-19. Imagine a single student, who has COVID-19, spreading it to the students in their class. Then these students, who may unknowingly host the COVID-19 virus, takes it home to their multi-generational family. The amount of individuals that can be infected increases exponentially above the 2,000 individuals mentioned above. Why are we willing to risk this many lives? Wouldn’t we rather say that we did too much to protect our keiki and our teachers, instead of wondering how many deaths we could have prevented?

Under the new rules of the Act Now Honolulu: No Social Gatherings order by Mayor Caldwell, groups (including those inside) should not have more than 5 people. If adults cannot abide by the rules set forth by the government for public health and safety, what makes us think that our children will be any better? Children learn behaviors from home, and it is unreliable to assume that their behavior will change in a school setting. Education and learning is a full-circle endeavor. Schooling doesn’t just turn off when a student steps off of their campus, it involves the whole circle. Parents also need to take responsibility to their child’s education. It has been far too long that I have seen that the mentality of many in this great state, view our education system as a babysitting service for their children. Teachers cannot do it alone.

In my view, our HIDOE has been behind in developing resources and tools for our schools, administrators and educators. For those who are saying that the teachers had all of this time to adapt to distance learning and improve it, we can say the exact same thing about HIDOE and the superintendent. They also had since March to develop strategies, and contingency plans to accommodate for distance learning. Hawaii’s numbers were good, no doubt throughout May and June, but as the strategic leader of HIDOE, shouldn’t some of these details have been anticipated, and preparations made for the Plan A, Plan B or Plan C options for the new school year? Why did they wait until late in the summer to determine what each school would do, instead of developing a comprehensive plan from the beginning? Instead of a cohesive, statewide plan of action, decisions and training were punted to the school level, creating confusion and chaos. For example, the Clark County School District in Las Vegas, NV provides a website to families to accommodate to distance learning, and offers resources for students, teachers and parents. They have made the decision to move to distance learning until further notice, creating continuity and stability for those planning for the full school year.
Instead, HIDOE waited until the last minute to push back the school reopening date, essentially punting the decision for a few weeks, until the point we are at today, in the week and week prior to students actually starting. How are educators, and parents supposed to plan for this?

We are all responsible for the health and safety of our islands. Let’s do our part to continue providing safe, educational opportunities for our keiki, without endangering the safety and welfare of our educators, staff support personnel and our community.

Thank you for your consideration and time.

Respectfully,
Scott Kaneshiro
To Chairperson Payne and Members of the BOE,

I would like to submit testimony on:

V. **A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.**

My name is Inga Park Okuna. I am an elementary school counselor and a parent and grandparent of public school students. I am also the HSTA Honolulu Chapter President. You have been hearing the concerns of teachers, as well as parents, who are very concerned about the lack of clear metrics on when school campuses are safe to have us all back. I hope you are also concerned that many schools are having students on campuses this week and in the coming weeks. As the number of positive COVID 19 cases have risen, so has the anxiety over schools reopening. Teachers have been contacting me, as well as our Honolulu Uniserv directors, to express their anxiety in having students back on campuses. We look to the Department of Health and the Department of Education for assurances of safety, but there isn’t any forthcoming. For whatever reason, the metrics we requested haven’t been provided. One can assume either they don’t have the metrics or that the metrics would show that it isn’t safe to have students on campus (and they don’t want that to be made public). Preschool classes are in full swing, children receiving special education services and other vulnerable learners are on many campuses and some of our campuses have their students showing up in large groups this week. Honolulu teachers have expressed concerns over having to be on campus -- especially in larger schools. Teachers have told me that there have been positive cases among the students and/or staff members and they don’t know if they were exposed to COVID. A teacher who has multiple health issues, in addition to being over 65, said that she actually interacted with some students who were diagnosed with COVID a couple of days later. She was wearing a mask and had gloves on, but the fear is real. Since she had to hand things over to them, they were only a couple of feet apart.

Teachers should be able to work from home if they want or need to. And if they are in their classroom, they should feel safe and protected. That can’t happen if they have their vulnerable students on campus. Preschool teachers are working with very young children who need frequent close contact. Recently we have been hearing how young children are carriers of COVID and when infected, have higher than the average amount of the virus in their nose and throats. Since so many people are asymptomatic, there is really no accurate way to screen our students or our staff members. So potentially, anyone can have the virus and now they are saying, 6 feet isn’t far enough apart.
Until we can prove it is safe to be together on campus, please initiate 100% distance learning for all students — at least through the first quarter. Please protect our most vulnerable students and our teachers -- and their families. Please allow teachers to work from home if they want to. Some teachers prefer to work at school, it’s been mentioned to me that there is better internet at school and all of the materials are there also. Teachers worked harder than ever during the 4th quarter last year, working during the day with students and peers and often in contact with parents in the evenings. I felt like I was living at my job, I worked on lessons and with students and teachers day and night. I made most of my videos in the evenings and late at night when it was quiet. I believe we earned your respect and trust that if home, we will do the work above and beyond our usual work day. Let teachers decide where we need to be to do our job and to feel safe.

Thank you for the work you do on this board. The decisions you make impact the lives of thousands. Please make the decision to protect our students and educators, a decision that you won’t regret. Look at other states like Florida, and learn from their mistakes without having to follow in their footsteps.

Thank you very much,

Inga Park Okuna
Hello,

I am writing to request that teachers have the option of working from home while all students are distant learners. I appreciate the board's recognition that bringing students on campus during a surge of new infections related to Covid-19 was not a wise decision, but I think greater thought should have been given in requiring employees to interface with each other throughout our schools when it serves no real purpose.

At my school there are close to 80 teachers and numerous support staff who cross paths with each other throughout the day. These encounters create a risk factor that could be avoided if teachers were allowed to work from home. One of the most riskiest situations for me is the simple use of a bathroom on campus. While I am in a bathroom stall, I am wondering who might also enter this small room which forces the two of us to share uncirculated air that becomes even more dangerous once the toilet is flushed. And then there are the numerous interactions between colleagues, administrative staff, and administrators that could be completely eliminated by using email or Google Meets.

We know this virus is highly contagious and numerous people are contracting the virus despite their best efforts to avoid it. There is no "reasonable" logic nor practical necessity for teachers to be present in a facility while the students are safe off campus. We should all be safe at home. We do not need a hall monitor making sure that we are conducting online classes, when in fact, administrators can join any of the online classes whenever they want. Moreover, all administrators have access to teachers' online courses as well as all of the assignments given to the students which are posted within Google Classroom.

Please reconsider placing undue risk on the teachers and support staff. Please allow the teachers to work from home while all of the students are also working from home.

Thank you for your time.

Mary Carlson

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“If you want to change the world, pick up your pen and write.”
-- Martin Luther
It seems strange that school would be shut down completely after spring break when the situation was less dire.

Now, with the current situation, we are online but also face to face. Doesn't seem safe for anyone.

I do feel however, that if teachers want to work from their classroom, while kids remained at home, this would be okay and a low health risk.

From a concerned teacher.
To the Members of the Hawaii State Board of Education,

I am testifying on Item V. A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements and communication.

I am a retired public school teacher, having taught for over 30 years in the Hawaii State system. I have been in contact with family and friends who are teaching, listening to their frustrations, anger and fears. One family member is especially concerned as she is a teacher of special needs pre-schoolers. It is a large class which will require 2 Educational Assistants and support staff, which consists of an Occupational Therapist (weekly) and a Speech Therapist (daily). Additionally, most of the students live in multi-generational homes. A lot of people coming into contact with each other. Exactly what we are being told to avoid. To add to this teacher's fears, no PPEs have been provided, yet. This teacher loves the students, but under the COVID circumstances, does not feel safe, returning to in-person teaching.

I ask that students across the state, including those in special education, receive 100-percent distance learning, until at least the end of the first semester.

Hawaii State DOE and DOH must be clear as to when opening school campuses are safe for students to return. Specific protocol must be provided in writing so that everyone is aware of what happens when COVID cases arise. What would trigger a closing, a reopening of a school?

Guarantee that HIDOE honors HSTA's contract by allowing teachers to work from home (telework) for as long as distance learning remains in effect.

Sincerely, Laurie Cruz
To Whom it May Concern,

This week from August 17 to August 20, I as well as my coworkers had to report to school and teach in person from 7:45-2:00. Even though the DOE and Kishimoto said students were to report to campus by appointment, this was false and not the case for many Kauai Schools. Being at school and teaching in person during these times has caused me anxiety and fear of the unknown. As a single mother I am by 7 month olds daughter primary and only caregiver. Who is going to take care of her if I get sick? Who is going to take care of me if I get sick? I do not believe that the DOE is taking any of this into consideration. As much as I love my job and seeing my students, I do not think it is worth my life, my baby's life, my family's lives, or the students and faculties' lives. I am also asking that we are able to telework. I have purchased a Macbook desktop computer for online and distance learning at home to make my life easier at the end of last school year. I have all of my curriculum online, easily accessible. I have provided my students with login information, my contact information, and the schools contact information. More importantly than that, I feel safe at home. I am not afraid and scared at home. I am responsible for myself at home.

Thank you for your time,
Kalei Kagawa

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 Randall Okimoto and have been working in the DOE as a teacher and coach for over 20 years. I kindly ask that the Board would consider to;

- Guarantee that the HIDOE honors HSTA’s contract by allowing teachers the choice to work from home (telework) for as long as distance learning remains in effect.
- Require the DOH and HIDOE to provide clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students’ return.

Thank you board members for your attention to these issues which really puts the health and safety of our families first.

Have a blessed Evening,

Randall Okimoto
General business Meeting
Comment on: Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication

As a member of the Hawaii educational community I have been very concerned that our schools are using the program Acellus Academy as the primary learning tool for our keiki. I want to make the school, district and community leaders aware of the harm that the creator of Acellus Academy, Roger Billings, has caused. There are several reasons why this program should not be used for students in Hawaii or anywhere. Roger Billings is the proclaimed prophet and leader of a cult in Missouri. This cult practices polygamy and forces its members to become polygamists. A member of the Sunset Beach community has family members that joined this cult. They took their family there and were told by Roger Billings, that the husband must take on another wife. They tried to push back stating he was already married and that this practice is not only unwanted but also illegal. Roger Billings forced it so much that they left the cult rather than commit this illegal act. As a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints we do not believe in this practice and are asked in our religious belief if we support or promote any teachings, practices, or doctrine contrary to those of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. These teachings and practices go against our religious beliefs and we can not support this person.

A close family friend who is a member of our community and has kids that attend Hawaii public schools shared with me an experience with Roger Billings. When was a child, joined the cult and took . While living within this group my friend was molested by Roger Billings himself. was able to get away later and has since contacted the police and there has been an investigation into . For me that is a hard line. I can not support anyone who sexually abuses children, period. While this program is not this man he is the owner and creator of this program and directly benefits from our tax dollars being spent on this program. Being a member of our Hawaii community has shared trauma with some school principals. While some principals believed and swiftly took actions to remove this program from their school other principals have chosen to separate the actions of the man for the potential benefits of the program in their schools. While we do advocate for the complete dismissal of this program from all Hawaii schools, we recognize that many may harbor the same zero tolerance stance on allowing accommodations. As a member of the Sunset Beach community with two children who attend school there we asked if the school would work with us and our children so we could use another program or do paper packets so we would not have to use the Acellus program. We are seeking reasonable accommodations and have offered to personally pay for another program approved by the state of Hawaii or have our children do paper assessments. We have offered to help align the curriculum to minimize additional workload for teachers, and personally take responsibility for teaching when home learning environments are being utilized. While our principal has been empathetic she feels that any of these accommodations would be too large a disruption to other students and her teachers and has zero tolerance for these accommodations. Our only options are use the program and violate our moral and religious objections, or homeschool our children and forgo the possibility of group learning among our children's peers.
We were told that when looking into these allegations that the people they went to for answers were the Acellus program. as inclosed in an email received from our principal.

Hi Karrie, Thank you again for reaching out with your concerns about Acellus. I understand what a stressful and difficult time this is for families! Guidelines and recommendations for reopening schools are changing so quickly, and we have all had to continually adapt to the changes. Be assured that when we make school level decisions, we will always put what is best for our students in the forefront of our minds.

Our school and complex area administration have been made aware of the allegations circulating online regarding Acellus. According to Acellus, the claims have been tied to a competitor and have not been substantiated, therefore we are unable to speculate. These people are not competitors, they are members of our community with nothing to gain.

I think it is important to stand with victims, especially children who are most often overlooked, and not allow pedophiles to profit off of our children. I further believe it is our right that in supporting these victims we should be allowed reasonable accommodations so that we do not have to use the Acellus program.

Thank you for your time.
From: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Sent: Tuesday, August 18, 2020 10:25 PM
To: testimony.V.A
Subject: Testimony V.A: Update on implementation of Board Resolution...

August 19, 2020

To: Board of Education
From: HSTA Member (anonymous teacher)
Subject: Public School Safety

To Whom It May Concern:

Please ensure the confidentiality of this testimony as I am writing in all honesty.

As many public schools have willingly, carefully, and wisely, closed their doors to face-to-face instruction for the general education students and the general education teachers, and for the best interests of their students and teachers in this particular group, there are many public schools who have willingly, carelessly, and dangerously, opened their doors for face-to-face, daily instruction, from 8:00 AM to 2:15 PM, Monday - Friday. I am a teacher who has been tasked to deliver instruction to students who are participating in “Distance Learning” and to students who are “Face-to-Face.”

Mask-Wearing: The wearing of a mask to verbally communicate with students in the classroom while trying to also communicate in Google Meetings with the other students who are distance learning and who have not yet reached competency in the use of technology, has been chaotic, ineffective, and physically sweaty. It has also been loud as the computers’ audio echoes in the classroom while in Google Meets, making the classroom a disruptive learning environment. It has been a major distraction for students as I talk on the phone with students’ parents/guardians while the EA is delivering one-to-one or small group instruction to the learners who are receiving face-to-face instruction in the classroom.

Lunch: There is a grab-and-go lunch service for students who are distance learning and for students who are receiving face-to-face instruction. Where do these students who are on-campus have their lunch? On the lawn? In the hallway? The cafeteria is closed. You cannot eat in the library. Teachers are then inclined to keep their doors open during their contracted (and much needed) lunch break so that their students can eat in a classroom, while hoping to not do contract the virus.

School’s Provision of Protective Gear: The school has informed their teachers that there would be ample sanitation wipes, and other cleaning amenities available, but how many times does a teacher need to request for a tube of Clorox wipes until the teacher starts to feel bad for asking, then has feel forced to add Clorox wipes on their personal shopping list: “That’s okay. I need wipes for my home, too. The school is just busy and taking care of other things. They’ll get to it when they have the time.” It has been 3 weeks, and no restocking of Clorox wipes. In addition, shouldn’t there be the provision of face shields and protective shields for each student and/or teachers’ desks? I was told that would be hopefully arriving in September.

This injustice within the public school system is clear as some teachers have their classroom to themselves, without any students—while the other teachers are sharing a classroom with educational assistants, co-teachers, and who have students coming to and from campus on various days and during various instructional hours—while parents/guardians get to choose for their child(ren) his/her own platform of instruction (distance learning, hybrid, and/or face-to-face) without any regard to the teacher whom is putting him/herself, unwillingly, in harm’s way, and whom, by the way, probably has a family of his/her own, and whom, by the way, probably loves his/her own family—except, the SpEd or ELL teacher has no choice as to his/her instructional delivery method. Furthermore, aren’t all teachers—general education, SpEd, ELL—considered State of Hawaii Bargain Unit 05 employees? How, then, are these teachers differentiated?

Students’ rights to a safe learning environment, students’ right to learn, and the teacher’s right to teach, are drastically compromised each day for these particular individuals who are receiving and delivering SpEd services, ELL services, and other federal/state-funded services.
It is evident, with the “Distance Learning for All, Except for SpEd, EL, and the Vulnerable” that the “all” does not cover SpEd students, ELL students, SpEd teachers, ELL teachers, and the vulnerable.

Public schools are not equipped for any face-to-face instruction. All instruction should be delivered online for the safety of all. Schools should focus on the provision of materials for students (equity) and we will be able to establish equality of quality learning and quality teaching.

Please consider this testimony as one teacher who may be the voice of many teachers.

Thank you for your commitment and dedication to public safety and health, to student and staff success, to your leadership and courage to make the changes necessary so we can teach and so that students can learn.

—Anonymous Teacher Who Cares For All, Not Some.
Aloha board members,

In regards to: *Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.*

- Schools on Oahu are not safe; the systems in place that would protect schools are not safe. Re-opening was based on the unsafe ideals of Dr. Park and Anderson. We continue to suffer from a lack of testing, lack of rapid results, lack of contact tracers, lack of public responsibility (wearing masks and distancing outside of school hours) high case numbers, the possibility of overburdening our hospitals, etc. Personally, my school's working population affiliated with a specific religion and these staff believe "it's in god's hands" so they are very lax in masks, distancing, time spent in closed environments, etc. I do not feel safe, I do not feel safe for our kids, I do not feel safe for our community.

- My special education kids are going to rock distance learning. They get to be appropriately challenged at their instructional level, don't have to focus on a 70 minute instructional period, won't be overwhelmed/over-stimulated by others, they will have a chance to gain confidence without feeling like they can't perform as good as their peers, and all kids are going to make invaluable gains in real world skills: self-reliance, time management, choice, ownership, variations in partnerships, self-reflection, relevance, etc. I've also worked with very high needs children and feel to best address their needs, perhaps we should consider their 1:1 staff going into their homes - it would be much safer to meet these students in their bubble, rather than removing them from it.

- Distance learning is a game changer: it will allow us to individualize learning for everyone. My hope is that we stick to it long enough to get really good at it (quarter by quarter, not month to month). I'd like it to be a viable option for all future learning. Please help us do what's right. We want to rise to the challenge of making something great out of this school year, not succumb to the challenge of constant stress, pressure, uncertainty, anxiety. These are not prerequisite skills to learning, these are detrimental elements to failure.

- Schools have a chance to contribute to the community in a new way: employment (pending COVID funds). We are facing dire economic straits, but schools could curb unemployment and other financial hardships by hiring one parent per household to be a "distance
learning support person." Based on need/sliding scale $5-10k per support person, every quarter the brick and mortar school setting is closed. (Single parents can use their funding to hire/acquire as they see fit.) A closed school could go through a remodel for safer spaces, better ventilation, and collect PPE and cleaning needs over time. COVID is not going away, instead it asks us to adapt our social environments in new and improved ways.

In conclusion:
- please keep us safe by keeping us closed
- telework must be an option
- consider 1:1 staff working with high needs kids in their homes
- let us get awesome at distance learning by giving us the commitment of quarter by quarter planning and execution
- let's contribute to our communities in a new partnership way: by hiring parents as distance learning support staff

Many thanks for all that you do,
Cara R
From: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov  
Subject: Testifying on Item V.A: "Update on Implementation of Board Resolution"

August 19, 2020

To: Board of Education  
From: HSTA Member (anonymous teacher)  
Subject: Public School Safety

To Whom It May Concern:

Please ensure the confidentiality of this testimony as I am writing in all honesty.

As many public schools have willingly, carefully, and wisely, closed their doors to face-to-face instruction for the general education students and the general education teachers, and for the best interests of their students and teachers in this particular group, there are many public schools who have willingly, carelessly, and dangerously, opened their doors for face-to-face, daily instruction, from 8:00 AM to 2:15 PM, Monday - Friday. I am a teacher who has been tasked to deliver instruction to students who are participating in “Distance Learning” and to students who are “Face-to-Face.”

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Classroom Social Distancing: It has been impossible to consistently practice social distancing measures when students are sitting only 6 ft. away for help on their chrome books and struggling on their chrome books because they do not know how to comment in Google Classroom, or answer a question on a Google Form. Am I supposed to say, while directly 6 ft. in front of students, “Sorry, I cannot help you because I need to lean-in to hear the person speaking, or lean-in to assist the student who is on a chrome book. It is a battle each day—a battle to either be helpful or be safe.

Lunch: There is a grab-and-go lunch service for students who are distance learning and for students who are receiving face-to-face instruction. Where do these students who are on-campus have their lunch? On the lawn? In the hallway? The cafeteria is closed. You cannot eat in the library. Teachers are then inclined to keep their doors open during their contracted (and much needed) lunch break so that their students can eat in a classroom, while hoping to not do not contract the virus.

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Disservice Rather Than Service: Having students in our classroom, physically present, with the restrictions of social distancing and the mandated wearing of face masks, has been the biggest disservice to our students that I have ever had to experience. As an EL teacher in prior years, I have seen the segregation of EL students in an inclusion setting, but did you ever see the segregation of general education students (possible discrimination) and students who are receiving SpEd or ELL services so vividly? A clear picture of the segregation between general education students and special education students/EL students is blatant in the way schools have opened up the 2020-2021 school year.

This injustice within the public school system is clear as some teachers have their classroom to themselves, without any students—while the other teachers are sharing a classroom with educational assistants, co-teachers, and who have students coming to and from campus on various days and during various instructional hours—while parents/guardians get to choose for their child(ren) his/her own platform of instruction (distance learning, hybrid, and/or face-to-face) without any regard to the teacher whom is putting him/herself, unwillingly, in harm’s way, and whom, by the way, probably has a family of his/her own, and whom, by the way, probably loves his/her own family—except, the SpEd or ELL teacher has no choice as to his/her instructional delivery method. Furthermore, aren’t all teachers—general education, SpEd, ELL—considered State of Hawaii Bargain Unit 05 employees? How, then, are these teachers differentiated?

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Please consider this testimony as one teacher who may be the voice of many teachers.

Thank you for your commitment and dedication to public safety and health, to student and staff success, to your leadership and courage to make the changes necessary so we can teach and so that students can learn.

—Anonymous Teacher Who Cares For All, Not Some.
I am testifying on item V. **A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.**

There are 3 essential concerns:

1. Ensure 100-percent distance learning for all students across the state, including those in special education, until at least the end of the first quarter.

***simply put, WE ARE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER is the slogan being used time and again during this pandemic. We do NOT have safe opening guidelines. What have we learned from the data? Putting our teachers and students in many danger zones puts everyone at risk. With all the so-called modules put forth by the DOE, I’ve watched pointless meetings about proper hand-washing over and over. No guidance or safety measures how we will protect ALL faculty and staff.

2. Require the DOH and HIDOE to provide clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students’ return. Many states and cities have specific triggers already in place for when schools should be open or closed based on COVID-19 cases, but Hawaii does not.

***our top chiefs DOE Kishimoto and DOH Anderson have failed. For people that have nice letters behind their name, they have done NOTHING to provide guidance. When we were off of school and the curve was essentially flattened, why didn’t they use that time to PLAN PLAN PLAN. Countless teachers worked for free during the summer; planning and preparing because there are a vast majority who felt like failures during Quarter 4 in the spring. We are doing our job, maybe they should do theirs?

3. Guarantee that the HIDOE honors HSTA’s contract by allowing teachers to work from home (telework) for as long as distance learning remains in effect.

***Teacher’s should be given the option to telework as long as they can fulfill their employment requirements. My brother is able to telework and he asked me to help him make sense for his 2 children’s schedule in elementary. Then he asked what is happening with our 4 children because we are at work (both my husband and I are teachers who travel 40 miles away from our home for work). Our 2 year old is going to daycare but all 3 of my children in (1 middle school, 2 elementary) are left home alone with a piece of paper for their schedule, I have to prepare lunches because I can’t
be home to pick up a grab and go for them, they are left home alone for 11 hours of the day. I am considering taking leave so that one of us can be home, but that would put us in a situation of poverty, also as a dual licensed special education teacher my students would be at the mercy of a substitute for their learning, thus the ripple effect.

Sharian Harada-Peck
Kealakehe High School
Hawai‘i Board of Education members:

I am a Special Education preschool teacher at Kilauea School on the island of Kaua‘i and am a National Board-Certified Teacher since 2003 as an Exceptional Needs Specialist. I am testifying on item V. A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.

I LOVE MY STUDENTS -- all ELEVEN of my three- and four-year-old students. I LOVE TEACHING!!!! I love teaching Special Education preschool and have been for 16 years now. I love their wide-open eyes that just soak up anything they are learning. I love their curiosity, their energy, their creativity and their raw emotions. I am so lucky to facilitate their learning as their first experience of school. It is an honor and a great responsibility.

After teaching two days now in person for full school days, my heart is torn; it is breaking. On the one hand, I want all of my students to be safe and healthy. I want them to stay 6 feet apart. I want them to wear their masks all of the time. I want them to wash their hands and keep germ free. On the other hand, I want them to be in school, in-person where they can discover the world --and embrace a love of learning, through play, through games TOGETHER, through exploration TOGETHER, through talking and listening TOGETHER, TOGETHER, TOGETHER. This is how three and four-year children learn.

Keeping students both safe and healthy and facilitating their learning the way they should learn is nearly IMPOSSIBLE. They want to play TOGETHER, but I have to constantly tell them to stay apart. They don't understand why and are "hurt" and cry when I ask them to stay apart. When I ask them to wear a mask, some do, at least for a short period of time, but most won't or can't wear them a lot of the time. I will always encourage them to wear their masks and make a game out of it, but it is so difficult for many of them. I would love to teach them 6 feet apart, but some of them need me to be right next to them or right across from them to learn. This is just a horrible way to introduce them to school and learning.

This summer I had the honor to teach 90 students statewide in a VIRTUAL summer hub integrating science with other subjects. Students ranged in age from preschool to first grade. Both students and parents loved the experience. The students really learned with hands-on projects, read aloud books, music and movement, and writing and drawing. Most learned with the great support of their parents who were there with them all of the time. Was it as good as if they were in person in school? No, but they learned and had fun learning.

During the fourth quarter of last school year, 6 of my 11 students participated in one group circle per day, a once a week lunch-bunch, and some of them had 1-2 one-on-one sessions per week. This was
as much as they could tolerate. This was as much as parents could do, balancing work, other children, and their many other responsibilities. Did they get the full extent of their IEP services? Did they learn as much as if they were in school. No, not even close. Virtually, both students and parents can't possibly be expected to do full day services that each of my eleven students have in their IEPs.

So, I am torn. My heart is breaking for students and parents. I want them to be in school. I want parents to be able to go back to work. I want my parents to have a break from being a parent and teacher. I want to help both my students and parents out.

But...I don't want to be responsible for one of my students getting sick. I don't want to be responsible for possibly one of them bringing home the virus to their parents, to younger brothers and sisters, to their aunties or uncles or grandparents. I don't want to become sick myself being almost 60 years old and having asthma. I don't want to infect my partner and another close friend I live with who are both over 70 years old and have chronic health conditions. I couldn't live with myself if something happened to one of my students, their loved ones or my loved ones.

So, it is with a very heavy heart that I would recommend 100% distance learning at this point. Why should students with disabilities be the only ones on campus receiving in-person schooling? Does this make sense? Why should we be taking a risk with this virus, when everyone else is at home? Why? I realize students with disabilities benefit from in-person learning and really struggle virtually. But...is this enough to risk their lives or other people's lives?

I also recommend that a very well-defined plan needs to be put in place before schools return to in-person learning. In the spring, it was said that we needed at least four weeks of declines in cases before we begin to SLOWLY open up again. I think this is very prudent.

We can get through this all TOGETHER!!! All of us need to sacrifice a lot in the meantime. It is such a difficult time and heart-breaking decisions need to be made.

Regretfully,

Michael Kline
Special Education Preschool Teacher
Kilauea School
Island of Kaua’i
I am testifying on the item of DISTANCE LEARNING.

100% Distance Learning needs to be implemented for ALL students across the state through the end of 1st Quarter -- at the earliest. Preferably the end of 2nd Quarter to create stability and routine - as well as allowing proper preparation for phase 2 of allowing students back on campus or continuing forward with virtual distance learning.

During this first semester ALL students need to be apart of their campus classroom by way of virtual meeting. That means REAL, CERTIFIED, EMPLOYED teachers in the state of Hawaii. Not pre recorded videos & robot teachers by way of programs with false credentials (see Acellus).

Keeping students separated in a time where they need to be interacting SAFELY ONLINE with their peers to keep distance is important for their educational and mental health. It also guarantees an EQUAL opportunity within the education they are receiving VS students being separated by way of blended/f2f & DL and continuing to keep them separate without the same educational opportunity of having their real teacher teaching them safely through technology when all students are off campus any way.

Most schools (mine included, Kapaa Elementary) are not combining their full classroom virtually for distance learning. They are keeping them separated and the original DL students are stuck using a terrible program called Acellus with NO help from the school or interaction by their real teacher.

WHY is this okay???
WHY are they not being treated EQUALLY and given the SAME education as their peers???
WHY are they stuck using Acellus when the program was created by a fake university & a self proclaimed doctorate founder that is the leader of a cult and includes false teachings in his program???
WHY are schools scrambling to start so quickly when there is NO proper communication, NO proper protocol, NO proper curriculum??
WHY are parents not able to get real answers and are constantly given FALSE answers and lies about what is going on???

Schools should not be in session in any physical face to face way. And most certainly should NOT be doing any in person training or picking up or dropping off of any kind. Any "training" or document signing can and should be easily done by way of technology.

The virus wasn't going any where. The pandemic wasn't going to end within a month or two. The fact that our districts are STILL struggling to find uniformity, organization and are incapable of communication almost six months later is an embarrassment to our state.

Each of our islands may be different and have different needs. But the truth and fact remain that each island is incapable of mass virus breakouts, which means every island needs to be following the same educational opportunity of virtual distance learning by way of their real campus teacher.
As parents, we stand with you and your decision to put a halt to slowing the start of the school year. We support your decision to CANCEL your contract with Acellus. To use your real, employed, certified Hawaii teachers to do what they do best and teach our children from the safety of their classroom or home.

Thank you for your time.
Sincerely,
Amy B.
Mother to young children attending Kapaa Elementary School on Kaua'i
Dear members of the Board of Education,

My name is Kate Kane, and I am writing to you today as a parent. My daughter is a fifth grader at Waikiki School. I feel it is a social duty and the best choice for our family’s health for her to be in a fully social distance learning program for this semester. I was unwilling to put her in her school’s 100% distance option, however, because I have grave concerns about the quality of the Acellus program. The program is overtly racist and sexist. It was created and is managed by a man whose education credentials are questionable. I do not believe that it was fully and appropriately vetted. Please reconsider the use of this program. Our children deserve better.

Thank you for your time.

Kate Kane
Katekane1@gmail.com
3029 Lowrey Ave, #1226
Honolulu, HI
To the Board of Education,

I am writing to you to testify on Action Item V. **A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication**

I believe that all schools should have 100% distance learning for all students until at least the end of the 1st quarter of school. The number of Covid-19 cases in the state is very alarming and schools are not a safe working/learning environment for teachers and students. Teachers should not be interacting with students face-to-face as the DOH has said that the Covid-19 is now community spread which puts everyone at risk for contracting Covid-19. There are studies that have determined that there are lasting long term effects from Covid-19 for both symptomatic and asymptomatic people. The BOE should take the health and safety considerations of students and teachers by having all students learn through distance learning.

The DOE and DOH still have not provided us with written guidelines on how the DOE and DOH will ensure a safe educational environment for both teachers and students. Many schools throughout the state have had Covid-19 cases of staff. If this is already happening without the students at school, how will the DOE and DOH ensure the safety for staff and students when schools open up? Will the DOE and DOH test all staff and students before the opening of schools? What will the DOE do in cases where there are communities where there is community spread of Covid-19? Will they still open the schools in those communities? What happens when there is a positive Covid-19 in the classroom? Will the students be notified and quarantined? How many days will they be quarantined? Will the DOE and DOH provide testing for everyone in the classroom? These are questions that I have been asked by my students’ parents when I have contacted them about this school year. I am unable to answer these questions as the DOE and DOH have not provided us with written guidelines on how these types of situations will be handled.

As a teacher, I feel that the DOE and DOH are still not prepared for the opening of schools and not provided teachers and staff with the proper PPE and safety measures to ensure a safe school year. I have spoken to many family and friends that work at different schools and have found there is inequity on the PPE and safety guidelines followed at each school. Some schools provide their staff with PPE and other safety items such as sneeze guards and their custodians are cleaning their classroom and high touch areas frequently everyday while other schools have minimal PPE provided and cleaning on campus. I feel that the DOE and DOH need to create a system where all schools provide the same PPE for teachers and that a specific cleaning schedule for all schools needs to be followed to ensure the safety of all teachers and staff at schools. My husband and I are both teachers and we have spent hundreds of dollars on PPE and other supplies that are needed in our classroom to keep our students, our family, and ourselves safe. This has greatly impacted our finances as we are both teachers and these are additional expenses that we were not expecting.
I feel that all teachers should be able to telework from their homes instead of reporting to their schools everyday. This will provide teachers with a safe working environment as it will limit the contact that teachers will have with other staff on the school campus. The mayor added new restrictions for Oahu and is limiting gatherings to no more than five people for both indoors and outdoors. He also asked employers to allow people to work at home if possible or limit the number of people at workplaces by staggering schedules. The BOE should be proactive in stopping the spread of Covid-19 on school campuses by allowing teachers to work from home.

Please put yourself in our situation. Would you feel safer working through teleworking or being face to face with others without being provided the proper PPE? Will the State and Board of Education be liable if we are to catch Covid from other staff on school campuses? Will the State and Board of Education also pay for our medical expenses if we are to contract Covid-19 at the workplace? I would appreciate it if the Board of Education would be proactive in keeping teachers safe by having all students learn through distance learning and allowing teachers to work from home.

Sincerely,
Katrina Kanemoto
Aloha Board members,

I am testifying on Item V. A. regarding the DOE’s implementation of the directives from the July 18 BOE meeting about reopening schools.

It is painfully clear that our islands are still not safe enough for us to reopen for in-person instruction, and schools should not reopen until they can do so safely...yet many schools are doing so anyway. Health and safety, we've been told, is the number one priority of the DOE and DOH. The superintendent and governor assure us that schools are currently doing "100% distance learning", and that it is very small numbers of students attending in-person for very limited amounts of time, on a case-by-case basis. And yet thousands of students are being brought onto school campuses this week, sometimes for hours at a time. The people have spoken again and again, and they continue to speak, and they agree: we must preserve the health and safety of our children and our educators. Please, Board members, make sure the DOE holds firm to the agreements they've made, make sure they actually follow through on that number one priority: health and safety.

You need to mandate true 100% distance learning for ALL students statewide, until the end of first quarter, or later if it is still not safe by then. True 100% distance learning means ZERO students being required to risk their lives to attend in-person and ZERO teachers being required to risk their lives to teach in-person. Students with special needs, students from poor families, and students who are otherwise "at-risk" can get the virus too...and so can their teachers, and so can their families. Why should they be forced to interact in-person when others are not? If the governor can require limiting gatherings to no more than 5 people, there is no way schools can safely have in-person instruction. Why should schools be exempt from his order? Is there a magical barrier around our campuses that prevents viruses from getting in? (Obviously not...ask any teacher about their annual "back to school" illnesses.)

You need to mandate that the DOH and DOE comply with the MOU negotiated and signed by the superintendent. All of it. Every word. It is a legally binding agreement. I can't sign a lease for a new car and then just decide to not make my September payment. Why should the DOE and DOH just get to decide not to fulfill the various lines of the MOU they have so far neglected to comply with? The MOU clearly states that school campuses will reopen only when there is clear written guidance from the DOH providing metrics for what would deem a campus safe vs unsafe, what the trigger points would be for needing to close school campuses, and more. Bruce Anderson admitted today in a press conference that the DOH has not done this yet. Therefore, the MOU has not been fulfilled. End of story. Teachers and principals are not experts in controlling for a pandemic. Leaving these decisions up to each school to figure out is just plan reckless. Who will take responsibility when students, educators, and family members fall ill and even die? Whose desk does the buck stop at?

You also need to mandate that the DOE abide by it's contract agreement with HSTA. The contract states that teachers must not be required to report to campuses when students are kept home from campus. Statements that campuses are not closed to students are completely disingenuous when they are said by the same people trying desperately to convince the public that we have 100% distance learning. Which is it? Are we doing distance learning, or are students on campus? It can't be both. And the idea that students are being kept home for anything other than a health and safety concern would be laughable, if it wasn't such a dangerous and outright
lie. If students are not on campus because campuses are not safe, teachers should not have to be on campus either. Yet, we have principals who are refusing to allow for any type of telework for any of their employees, even those who truly are doing 100% distance teaching. The governor said in his press conference today that all employers should consider letting their employees telework...but schools are exempt from this? Why is that? Seems a little fishy to me.... In any case, the contract states teachers must not be required to be on campus if students are kept off-campus. Therefore, teachers must be allowed to telework as long as they are doing distance teaching.

As I said in previous testimony, if you were serious when you said that health and safety was the number one priority, then you must act like it. Talk is cheap. People are fed up. The time for action was long ago, and I cannot begin to imagine why these plans were not developed back in March. But they weren't, and so the new time for action is now. Do the right thing and take charge of the superintendent and the DOE. Mandate that they do what is right. Anything else would be putting our children's, our educators', and our community members' lives at risk. We are counting on you. Don't let us down!

- Mike Landes
Kihei, Maui
To Whom This May Concern:

I have been in contact with my son's school regarding my concerns about the Acellus Academy program for those parent's that chose 100% distance learning for their child.

Currently, there is a two-tiered system among students at Hawaii public schools. We have those who have opted for in-person classes who will still be taught online for the next four weeks. These students have been notified to pick up class materials from qualified educators, and develop relationships with their teachers and peers (albeit online). Alternatively, we have those students whose parents opted for 100% distance learning and will now be taught by Acellus developer, Roger Billings and his employees, and who will not be allowed to build a connection to their teachers or peers. This is 100% unacceptable, and accreditation is simply not enough in the case of Acellus Academy. Why can't my son be instructed online by his teachers and be able to interact with his classmates? They're doing it for 4 weeks for ALL students, why can't they do it for 100% distance learning students?

Furthermore, if you take the time to research Roger Billings and the content of his curriculum, you would be horrified. It is obvious that Acellus was a rushed choice and was not property vetted by HIDOE and the Board of Education.

Our children deserve better. Our children deserve a real public school education. Our children need to be able to interact with their teachers and classmates/peers. Furthermore, teachers and staff deserve to be safe. Instead of being forced to choose between risking their lives or financial ruin, teachers should be supported in directing their energies toward developing a comprehensive online curriculum that includes ALL students, while providing the social contact and legitimate learning our children so desperately need right now.

Please get rid of the Acellus Academy program immediately.

Sincerely,

Melissa N. Kalauli, Principal Broker
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To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Justin R Bergonio. I am a sixth year math and science teacher at Waipahu High School, and I am testifying on action item A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication. I am submitting testimony advocating for the following:

1. Continued distance learning for at least the first quarter of the school year.

The last two months have been a "hurricane of fecal matter". It is understandable that changes had to be made as the situation on Oahu had progressed. The way that it happened, however, seems to not come from reason, but rather a false sense of confidence and hope that "things will magically get better". We started off in July imagining welcoming back students for a new school year with in-person instruction. At that time, cases were on a slow rise, but seemed manageable.

Fast-forward to July 24, a week before teacher's were about to go back to school, and we hit our first "new high" of 60 new cases. Teacher's across the state sounded the alarm, but the DOE leadership kept trudging forward to the beat of the economy. We educators knew in our hearts that the opening of school's was deeply tied to the reopening of the economy, and a good number of us, despite our fears, marched on in hopes that we could do our part...safely. However, that safety wasn't guaranteed. Despite the positives of opening the school year to a blended schedule at Waipahu--which I applaud my school's ledaership as we were in the top 4 public school's with the largest student population--the safety measures we were ensured had not come to fruition. Teacher's were still scrounging on their own terms for gloves, surgical masks for students, hand sanitizer, and the like. We brought our concerns to the DOE, only to be me by Superintendent Kishimoto's wonderful words that school's would have "adequate" amounts of PPE and other resources. The word "adequate" does not really give confidence in the current climate, which is why we pushed further for the delay of in-person instruction.

Despite our worries, that week of July 24th, we continued to push forward, trying our best to keep our minds in preparation for the school year, while the coronavirus crept behind us in the dark recesses of our minds. At Waipahu High School, our leadership gave many of us the opportunity to take a workshop to prepare for the blended learning that was to come. I am so proud of my school because they had given us almost three different opportunities that summer to prepare. The workshop was evenly paced and I felt some degree of hope that this year may not be so bad. But then cases continued to rise and by July 26th we saw another new peak of 64 new cases. Maps were updated and places like Waipahu began showing high case counts in the last month. I tried to remind myself that the numbers were large, but our community was larger. If many of us continued to stay safe, maybe we can continue to keep it manageable.

Seeing the case numbers rise, and hearing from the testimony, school's were luckily delayed once more on July 27th, and not a moment to spare as the following day Hawaii saw it's largest spike of 109 cases. The delay pushed the reopening date from August 4 to August 17. The delay gave us teachers a sense of hope once more, but also the rising number of cases struck fear like when a child sees a pretty flame and puts their hand closer
and closer to touch it knowing that it will eventually burn. The school year looked magical from afar, but in reality a safe school year seemed more like a mirage.

In the week's that followed we continued to prepare for a new school year like no other: finding many apps and resources and tinkering and playing. Some of my more "mature" colleagues were finding it overwhelming, but their long tenure gave them the resilience to keep moving forward. Everyone--the teacher that was recently hired out of college to the teacher two years from retirement--was "the new teacher". It was exhausting and exciting at the same time.

Then the first week of August came and we were charged to do "Mandatory Training" which felt slapped together in the last minute (what most would call "busy work"). To imagine these videos were going to be used WHILE we were welcoming students for half days was ridiculous! It's like teaching a surgeon how to do open heart surgery with the body cut wide open between their lunch breaks. How were we going to learn to do distance learning AND be safe at school AND provide a quality education all at once? The superintendent spoke confidently that many of Hawaii's educators were ready, but many of us were just coming back from break, trying to ready our minds for what was to come.

Despite this so-called "training", teachers continued to push forward. Some of my colleagues who had participated in an online summer hub teaching students virtually came away with many great things. However, their plans were moot when they found out the program they were requesting to use was still stuck through bureaucratic bull excrement. Again, our administrators worked tirelessly to help us get these resources, but unfortunately approval goes at a snails pace with the DOE.

THEN on August 13, a few days before schools were set to open, we had reached our largest rise since the pandemic began of 355 cases. Although 70 were from a cluster in OCCC, about 255 were still out in public. Despite this, OUR SUPERINTENDENT continued forward saying that school's would go distance learning for the first four weeks--with a caveat that no one else heard: that the first week would be in-person "training" for students. She and the governor stood in front of the state saying that it would be safe and that a minimal number of students would be only seen "by appointment" for a short period of time. A handful of school's must not have got the reminder because ONLY AFTER the HSTA threatened to sue the school, many at the eleventh hour on a Thursday night suddenly pivoted from their original plans of seeing a quarter or maybe a half of their students for a whole school day to doing everything online. This was not something discussed BEFORE the superintendent and the governor made their comments, this was only AFTER the HSTA threatened to sue.

What I'm tryin to get at in this lengthy testimony is that we teachers have been experiencing whiplash in pedagogy and preparation doing everything within our powers to prepare for synchronous and asynchronous instruction WHILE engineering our own safety measures using PVC pipes and shower curtains to create safe spaces for our students AND battlin the never-ending anxiety of this virus.

Please, just be consistent: let us do distance learning for the first quarter. It may not be the same, but at least we can focus our energies to deliver high-quality instruction during this time of "new normals". We can find ways to support our students once we know the direction we're going in, instead of anticipating and having anxiety attacks over our own safety. We can focus on giving the best of ourselves to our students during these trying times.

2. Development of proper metrics by the DOH backed by sound science that can guide us towards the safe reopening of in-person instruction.

Metrics: a fun buzz word the Superintendent will proudly use when talking about students test scores, but not in addressing this pandemic. The DOE has promised that they would develop "metrics" for when schools would be safe to reopen for months now, however, we have not seen those metrics nor have they been made public. In the beginning of this pandemic, the superintendent started with a seemingly crazy statement: we will reopen
classrooms when we have 4 weeks of zero cases. That has not come to fruition, and the science has slowly evolved. However, now it seems we are haphazardly trying to open school's now WITHOUT any sort of guidance and assurances that it would be safe to do so. Can we find an in-between of the "crazy zero cases for 4 weeks" and the "absolutely no guidance/metrics"? Just like you, Superintendent, use test scores to measure student progress, give us something to measure when it would be safe to reopen. AND IF there are no numbers for that at the moment, then choose to err on the side of caution. We were very fortunate not to be the first to screw this up completely, but there is still time--let's not screw this up. Let's make sound decisions based off scientific evidence and reasonable case studies (also, please don't use Florida as a "model" for opening schools, that state is an unfortunate and tragic mess...).

3. The HIDOE should honor the HSTA's contract by allowing teachers to work remotely for as long as distance learning is in effect.

I am going to keep this short: it's hard for me to work when in the back of my mind I'm just trying to survive. Seemingly innocent interactions with a colleague have my heart racing as I'm counting how long we've been in contact, whether that cough is consistent or just them clearing their throat, or whether that itch in my throat is the beginning of the end. Trips to the bathroom have me thinking "Is this how I go: touching the door knob to the faculty bathroom and then just scratching an itch on my nose?" It's easy to imagine teacher's lounging around and not teaching their students, but I've seen the exact opposite. My wife has been working tirelessly and my friends spent their summers comfortably on their couches talking about the names of their plants and building a community with up and coming freshmen. I can see they want to do great things despite the blows and punches and the exhaustion because we want to give the education these students deserve, especially during these times.

An educated community is one that will progress on reason and understanding. We need that now more than ever, but we can't do that if we're constantly living in fear.

Thank you for your time, and stay safe.

Sincerely,
Justin R. Bergonio

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! While we stand with teachers on Oahu who happen to be in “hot spots” of the coronavirus (wanting to wait for face to face instruction until numbers are decreasing), the outer islands whose numbers are very low should receive students now. We shouldn’t close down Face to face learning at 100% of schools but should modify it accordingly in districts, Complex areas, and schools whose communities have been able to follow health and safety rules and keep numbers low.

Safety and health protocols are already in place following CDC guidelines at our school and many other schools as well. Many of our population have no internet coverage in their areas to benefit from 100% distance learning. Many do not even have reliable or consistent phone service. Admin and staff have had to go into communities to locate students, deliver learning packets, and inquire about missing student phone numbers. Not being in school is proving very detrimental to our keiki and rural Ohana.

Parents and teachers who truly do not feel safe can opt for distance learning, matching those teachers with distance students. Please don’t keep 100% of students physically out of school. Trust our island mayors, principals, complex area leaders, and teachers to make their own decisions about face to face instruction. Thank you.

D. Pelletier Island of Hawaii
Sent from my iPhone
Aloha Chairwoman Payne and Board Members,

I am writing with some concerns I have had about the reopening of Hawaii public schools for the 2020-2021 school year. These are concerns I have had for some time and I have yet to have them answered sufficiently to ease my concerns.

1) We know that faculty and staff on school campuses, both here in Hawaii and on the mainland, have exposed their coworkers and transmitted COVID-19 to others on campus even in the absence of students. There have even been cases of teachers dying after campus-based exposure over the Summer months. So, is it reasonable to bring children onto campus and place them at similar risk?

2) If adults cannot keep each other safe and unexposed, can we expect that children, especially lower elementary students, will do any better keeping each other safe and well?

3) Are the Department of Education and Board of Education prepared to handle law suits from the family members of students and teachers that contract COVID-19 on campus and later end up with life-long disabilities or dying as a result?

4) Has the Department of Education or the Board of Education obtained Life Insurance policies or AD&D policies for every full or part time faculty member, staff member, student, and all casual employees of the Department of Education?

5) Will substitute teachers be offered quality, AFFORDABLE (less than 10% of their monthly expected wages) health insurance coverage, employer sponsored optional life insurance that is fully effective the day they opt for it, and full paid time off in the event they get ill?

6) If a member of faculty, staff, or any other employee of the Department of Education gets ill with COVID-19 due to exposure on campus, is the Department of Education going to cover 100% of the copays, deductibles and out-of-pocket costs for that employee's medical treatment?

7) If a member of faculty, staff, or any other employee of the Department of Education gets ill with COVID-19 due to exposure on campus, is the Department of Education going to continue to pay them their FULL salary or pre-COVID average weekly earnings until they are fully recovered and released to return to work by their doctor?

Unless you can honestly answer "yes" to all of the above questions, then the question of whether or not it is reasonable to reopen Hawaii public schools for face-to-face, in-person learning, before there is an effective vaccine or treatment for COVID-19 readily available, should also be answered "no".

Thank you in advance for your consideration of my testimony,

Mara Hanson
"We are ready. Our students are ready.” Super Intendent Christina Kishimimoto.

NO, we are not.

It seems that our DOE, the department that represents us is not listening to us. Over 7,000 pages of written testimony advocating for the safe return to public schools have been submitted and here we are. AFTER we’ve had 4 days of face to face instruction for many schools. How many children, parents, kupuna, teachers, and staff will have contracted COVID from this reckless reopening? How can we live with ourselves, knowing that we can have prevented this, but chose the more dangerous option-the option where the ones we are trying to protect and support are the ones that we end up hurting?

We’re most likely going to see a spike in cases because of this in the upcoming weeks, and yet the DOE still thinks it’s a good idea to reopen to hybrid learning after September 11th. When will you see how the decisions that you are making are impacting the LIVES of our community and our ohana of Hawaii?

Why did Governor Ige and Kishimoto choose September 11th as the date that we may return to face to face instruction. Again, what is the data for that resume date? What are the metrics that schools would be safe to reopen them or did they just pick a random date? Is this going to be a month by month basis? Are parents, students, teachers, and staff going to need to plan from a month-by-month basis because our leadership is not strong enough to make definitive decisions.

How will the Board and DOE respond to this rise in cases? What will they say to parents to a child that gets sick? Or to a family who loses their grandma because they contracted Covid at school? I want to hear it from you, what you will say to them.

What about the SPED teacher who is immunocompromised that was asked to “show up” for her 13 FSC kids (who could also be high risk). Why? Do you think these decisions are protecting our vulnerable population? SPED teachers and SPED students are NOT immune to this virus. You are under this pretense that you’re helping, but in reality, you’re putting them in harm’s way. EVERYONE deserves the right to be able to learn in a safe environment, not most, but ALL.

Also, the new distance learning mandate until September 11th violates HSTA’s contract in Section X stating that, “Teachers shall not be required to work under unsafe or hazardous conditions or to perform tasks which imminently endanger their health or safety,” and “When students are sent home from school or are not required to attend due to emergencies which endanger health or safety, teachers will not be required to remain at, nor report to, said schools.” So the DOE and State violated our contract when they asked teachers to return to school for face to face instruction. And by asking teachers to work at school without the option to telework also violates our contract since students are not reporting on campus. I have had to use my sick days because I got tested and the DOH mandate is that those who are tested need to self-isolate until they receive a note. But because I did not receive one (and other teachers I have talked to) did not receive one, they had to use their sick leave.
Why is it that schools are always the exception? Is it because we always do more than what is asked for? Schools are to remain open even though there are way more than 5 people gathering in many classrooms. Why can’t schools telework, like other agencies?

Let’s break down our Superintendent’s email on August 13th in response to Corey Rosenlee threatening to sue the DOE after months of the DOE failing to listen to us:

At the last BOE meeting, it was stricken from the agenda to even discuss the possibility of distance learning, even though the community is demanding it! Only when our union demands it through a press conference did Kishimoto and Ige abruptly about face to distance learning for 3 weeks (not 4!). And even still, our community is begging and pleading that we to have face to face instruction. Our union president even demanded it; and what did our Superintendent do? She sent a passive-aggressive blast out email to the entire DOE, calling out our president who defended us.

She said Rosenlee misleading claim was that “tens of thousands” of students will be receiving face to face instruction—that is true. ONE school only was going to have 2800 students come onto campus for 4 days. So, add that to the entire state of Hawaii and one of the largest schools districts in that nation and what do you get? Tens of thousands of students.

She mentions that this is a “scare tactic” to create “further anxiety” “at a time when we need sound leadership.” Let’s break that down shall we. As many of us said, we would rather err on the side of caution, than to not have been careful enough-and having been thinking and considerate about other people and their livelihoods, then to have gone about this RECKLESSLY. Kishimoto hasn’t aided all of our anxiety. As someone who already has anxiety, she has added to my 100 fold by 1) giving us 15+ hours of “training videos” about distance learning and safety training 2) pushing forward with face to face instruction 3) fighting against our union president and not listening to the needs of our community 4) giving false information to the public that teachers are prepared when we’re not 5) and informing them that there are controlled protocols for safety in place when there lacks many such as what are the DOH’s metrics to reopen and close schools, why are we reopening schools when we have 10 times as many cases as we had in March when we closed the entire state. We had 355 cases LAST WEEK! And sound leadership? What kind of sound leader doesn’t listen to the people they are leading, runs our departments by “my way or the highway” rules, and when the people they lead bring up our legitimate concerns passes the buck to another department saying they didn’t do their part or lying under the pretense that things are going well when they’re not. Mr. Rosenlee has listened to our concerns, communicated to us opening with what is happening, and fought in place of us when our own Superintendent wouldn’t listen. That is a true leader to me.

She also said, “Mr. Rosenlee encouraged teachers to show up for paid training days over the past two weeks, and now he is telling teachers not to show up for students.” What is this training you speak of? You mean the 15 hours of training you slapped together and expected us to be able comprehends amongst the many other duties we’re required to do as a teacher? I still haven’t completed all of the training! Why? Because I’ve been showing up for my students and parents: virtually! Don’t you dare insinuate that we “don’t show up” for our students; when sometimes we are the ONLY ones that show up for them at them. Sometimes their own parents don’t show up for them. But “showing up” doesn’t mean we have to physically show up, but we need to be there for them, but in a safe manner. We can’t “show up” for our kids if we’re sick or dead.

There have been cases of COVID WITHOUT students on campus! Imagine what it will be like once students are back on campus?

Kishimoto also claims that summer school was a success with over 8,000 students. Try over 100,000 students. She also claims that parents want face to face instruction based on a parent and teacher survey—this survey was taken in MAY/JUNE. How many people want that now? Did you even ask? You need to make decisions based on current data!
What our keiki truly deserve is to have a strong leader that will listen to and consider the health and needs of the community. What our keiki deserve are people that will “show up” for them even if it is virtual and provide them with what they need in a safe manner. That’s how we show up for our kids.

Thank you,

Karly Kanehiro
World History and MHH/PID Teacher
Anime Club co-advisor, World History lead, FOL lead

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James Campbell High School
91-980 North Road
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Aloha,

I am testifying on item V. A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2022 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic.

Please ensure that 100% distance learning will apply to all students. Schools are beginning "full distance learning" in an effort to keep students and staff safe. However, the students in my fully self-contained special education classroom are expected to be on campus all day, every day. My students have high needs and often require close physical support to meet those needs. We simply cannot maintain a distance of 6 feet between people in the classroom. There is no way that we can meet the numerous needs of my students in a safe manner with the lack of supplies and safety equipment that we have at this time. In addition, recent restrictions put a limit on the number of people that are to be gathering indoors. There will be between 9-11 people in my classroom at all times which exceeds the most recent mandated limit of 5 people.

Why should my students be on campus when literally every other student is expected to stay home to be safe? I feel that if schools are truly implementing “full distance learning,” then ALL students should be participating in distance learning. I agree that my students see a greater benefit from in person instruction, however, we are in the middle of a global pandemic and positive cases are on the rise on Oahu. I am tremendously concerned for the health and safety of my students, my staff, myself, my own children, and the high-risk family members in my household. Safety of ALL should be the top priority.

We need to have clear, specific guidance on if/when COVID-19 cases on campus will determine school closures and when school campuses will be safe for students to return. We need to be proactive rather than reactive. We need to have a clear plan set up ahead of time so people know what to expect.

Decisions need to be made that will support the safety of all students and all staff members on school campuses. These decisions need to be made now at not at the last minute. In this time of great uncertainty, having plans in place to support the health and safety of everyone will bring peace of mind to students, families, and school staff.

Respectfully,
Tina Marie Myers
Parent of 3 public school students
Special Education Teacher, Manana Elementary
Dear Members of the Board of Education,

My name is Jessica Lee Loy and I am a teacher at Holualoa Elementary School on the island of Hawaii. I am writing to implore you to consider extending distance learning to include the entire first quarter of school. Data shows that children are NOT immune to this disease and, in fact, cases in children in our country have risen 90% in the past month. The largest change that has impacted this age group in the past month has been school reopening. Many of our SpEd populations are students who are medically fragile. Requiring them to report to campus endangers them, their families, and their teachers. ALL of our Keiki deserve to be safe! Families in our communities deserve to be safe. The Governor and Mayor Caldwell have recently imposed a no gathering mandate….why is it that schools are exempt? Having distance learning through AT LEAST the 1st quarter would allow students, families, teachers, and staff to prepare to the best of our ability instead of this constant change in course which just creates chaos.

With our numbers on the rise in Hawaii we can’t afford to take the risk that “it will be ok.” Those of us on the outer islands know our health care system cannot afford a rise in cases like Oahu is experiencing right now. I have sisters who work at our local hospital. We have 9 ICU beds. 9 beds equipped to handle what could be hundreds of persons needed acute care for this disease. 9 ICU beds to support a population of 11,000+ people. Keeping our schools in distance learning mode will allow our health care workers breathing room. We spent all of April and May with our health care workers in mind, why has that suddenly flown out the window?

I am also writing to ask that you allow teachers to telework. I am the distance learning coordinator for our Kindergarten and 1st grade students. I have no face-to-face meetings with anyone; students, parents, or other staff. My request to telework has been denied by Dr. Kishimoto with no explanation as to why. Common sense says if I can complete all tasks assigned to me virtually I can do that from home just as well as I can do that at school.

In our contract it states that if students are kept home due to health or safety hazards teachers will not be required to report. Why are we still being required to report to campus if all of our meetings with students, parents, and staff can be done remotely? The governor keeps asking members of our business community to allow workers to telework to keep our exposure rates down. Why are teachers not allowed this? Especially if we are not meeting with students face-to-face? Teleworking as an option for ALL teachers would lessen the amount of people gathering and would lower the exposure rate of our communities.

On a last note, I am asking the Board members to look into the Breakfast/Lunch system that the DOE has in place for families. The newest guidance from the DOE requires students to: A) Be in the car to receive their lunch. B) Only receive their meal from their home school. C) Only pick up one meal at a time. For families on the outer island this is an immense hardship. A family could have students at 3 different schools. It could take over an hour to drive to each of those schools to pick up their breakfast (if they can reach the school in time) only to turn around and have to do it all over again for lunch. This puts undue stress/strain on our families that are already struggling. It also makes it almost impossible for students (since they are in the car during these trips) to make it to their virtual class meetings. This is not fair for their learning! Please allow families to pick up more than one meal at a time, at the school that is closest to their homes. Our schools, especially those in the outer islands, are spread much too far apart for what is currently planned.

Thank you for your consideration
Jessica Lee Loy
Dear Hawaii BOE,
I am submitting this testimony to express my deep concern over the use of Acellus as the distance learning platform for our schools. I had considered enrolling my child in distance learning until I browsed the Acellus website and watched a few “sample” lessons. I found the video lectures to be patronizing and shallow. I then tried to find out more about what the program involves, but there is very little real information on the Acellus website about the program. I did some web searches and found that the program is under the umbrella of the “International Academy of Sciences” which appears in every way to be a scam. It offers graduate degrees including a “Doctor of Science”, but has zero admission policies, procedures, course listings, curricula, or faculty. It is utterly creepy and an insult to the field of education. Please take a look if you haven’t already. There is no way I would trust these people or their products or associates to interact with my child in ANY way, much less have a hand in shaping her mind.

These are incredibly challenging times for educators, and I, like so many parents, am profoundly grateful for the work that you do and aware of the monumental tasks in front of you. This is new territory for everyone, and no one can be faulted for honest mistakes, but we are responsible to try our best to make things right. Our keiki deserve so much better than Acellus.

Mahalo,
Andrea Jani
Aloha, Members of the Board of Education:

Re: testifying on item V. A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.

I'm writing my testimony today because I am deeply troubled by the HIDOE's reopening plan which lacks empirical data on thresholds for closures, clear procedures for reporting and testing, as well as a staggering disregard for the safety of students and teachers, and in particular, Special education teachers and their students.

The DOH still hasn't set clear threshold numbers for how many positive cases in schools will trigger a shutdown. Back on April 7th, it released long-term school closure guidelines which stated schools will NOT reopen until 4 weeks with no positive cases were reported. What happened to these guidelines? They were published at a time when the average number of positive cases on Oahu was FAR fewer than at this time.

To add to the ambiguity around opening and closing thresholds, the DOE/DOH STILL have not established reporting guidelines at the school and district level. Individual principals are making decisions that aren't standardized and based on any clear procedures. This leaves open the possibility that principals might wait 48 hours to notify students and families of a positive COVID test on campus, leaving students and other school staff open to possible exposure.

Furthermore, Special ed teachers and their students are put in harms' way when vulnerable students have the opportunity to learn on campus. Do they have some special immune systems that prevent them from catching COVID-19? Special Ed teachers like myself feel a heavy burden when we think about students being out of school for a long time. I believe the DOE is cynically exploiting the relationship between teachers and our students and weaponizing it against us! Yes, I agree that students should be back in school and they will return, when it's *safe*. Requiring SPed teachers to report to work in-person violates the principles of equity.

In sum, I encourage the Board to continue distance learning until DOH has clear guidelines for opening/shutting down, and NOT allow Sped students and other students in the vulnerable. Also, please consider teachers with young children and pre-existing health conditions who now face the prospect of either quitting or taking an extended leave of absence. They need telework options.

Thank you very much,
Elizabeth Laliberte
Hilo, HI
Testimony BOE

From: S. Nonaka <missnonaka@msn.com> on behalf of S. Nonaka
Sent: Wednesday, August 19, 2020 5:36 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: S. Nonaka
Subject: 100 % Distance Learning

Dear BOE Members,

I am a Kindergarten teacher. The first day of school was Terrible. The “kids will be kids”, and they were great because, I love my job as a teacher, but to go to school, in fear because I may bring the virus home a get my family sick or is absolutely terrifying.

Please support 100% distance learning, telework, and health and guidance. Teachers are people too. We are teachers because we want to help children, and give them the right tools to be successful in every aspect in life, but going to school is not safe.

In my classroom, I tirelessly worked every day since before our official work day and spent over $1000 in materials to build a sneeze guard, ipad stand to teach in my own safe area, plastic containers to store the kids individual things, not to mention gloves, wipes and other PPE, the school can only afford so much. Even though I prepared day and night and my family helped everyday I was still not prepared this is what I saw....

-Teachers, no gloves opening car doors, and unbuckling car seats, no gloves, no handsanitizer in between cars. I believe I am the only teacher that wears gloves to open doors.
-Teachers and students (3 grade levels)
huddled in the shade of the cafeteria standing inches apart.
-Students walking to class (they cannot walk 6 feet apart).
-Students drinking each others waterbottles, they have the same color waterbottle.
-Students with adult masks. Unable to cover their mouths and noses. The mask is now a tissue, they are hot and their noses are runny and now its used as a wipe.
- I have to teach with a face shield and mask, is it not scary for them?
-Students coming to school, Dad cannot pick them up because he flew in the night before and is quarantine and he lives in the same house as the students.
-Students coming to school sick. I sent one to the healthroom and she said he had allergies. The parent said afterschool yeah, he wasn’t feeling well from his party this weekend.
- Students running in circles. They cant play with each other and its not our turn on the playground structure until the end of the week, and it wont be group B’s day.
- Students sharing and touching playground toys, not 6 feet apart.
-5 year olds sitting or standing behind their chairs. Only allowed to go to the bathroom. We do exercise dances and take as many mask breaks outside under the tree. I put P.E. dot markers outside (+10 feet apart) to let them drink water and feel the air in their face.

This is not school.

We are scared.

Teachers are exhausted.
Before school started, we are crying at school overworked, overwhelmed, we only see our kids before bedtime, we have to take a bath or change clothes before entering the house and those are my kids. I am not there for them, I am trying to protect and love them, but I have to go to school and protect my new students. If they get a sub, if there is even subs will they get the same level of care and that I can provide. I am completely torn.

My older parents are watching my two children. My son is 8 years old. We bought him a new laptop ($1000) it was our family choice, he needs to be an independent learner on-line. My parents, feed, bathe, take my kids on walks, makes sure they balance playing and learning. Without them, I don’t know what I would do. My husband tirelessly and unconditionally supports me, he sits up with me late and night making on-line password cards and cut out name tags because I have to teach on-line soon and face to face.

School is supposed to be a safe place. If we teach students in our class and Kindergarten is vulnerable, ELL, disadvantaged, SPED, no matter if it is one child or the whole class. All these concerns do not go away.

Please help us and our students. We only want to teach and students only want to make friends and learn.

God be with you,
S

Please advocate for 100% distance learning, telework, and health guidance
I am testifying on Item V. **A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.**

This testimony is in opposition of having vulnerable students return to campus for face to face instruction. I am a special education preschool teacher and have had my students back in school for face to face instruction for the past 2 days. Some of them do not wear masks and we are definitely not able to provide effective instruction and assistance to them while keeping 6ft apart, making social distancing virtually impossible.

While I understand that children with special needs have different learning needs, I do not feel it is fair to put all of the teachers, staff and other students on campus at risk during a PANDEMIC just to make sure these students receive their minutes and services on their IEPs. Since when are minutes on an IEP more important than the health and safety of everyone (teachers, staff and students)? I have never felt more disappointed and undervalued during my 18 years as a teacher. I am in that high risk category and I am scared every single day that I go to work, not only for me but for my students as well.

There are a lot of ways virtual instruction can be provided effectively during this time and I ask that you consider making the health and safety of everyone a PRIORITY! When conditions improve and are safe for everyone to be in school, we will gladly go above and beyond to help our students to succeed.

Thank you for your time and consideration.
Jacie Kanetani
Special Education Teacher
August 19, 2020
RE: TESTIMONY on Item V. (total 2 pages)

Thank you Gov Ige, Mayor Caldwell, BOE, and other distinguished residents for reading this testimony,

This is a plea to keep the schools, students and residents of Hawaii safe by returning to an online/ distance learning program. Opening schools to face-to-face is a premature move with the ongoing infection rates and the infrastructure of Hawaii is incapable of handling the worst case scenario.

SARS-CoV-2 (severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus, the causative agent for the COVID-19, as indicated by the name is a novel coronavirus identified in 2019. It has impacted the world through its ability to be highly contagious and increased IFR (Infection Fatality Rate) than that of other known coronaviruses. As it currently stands, the estimated mortality rate is 1%, as we are still awaiting delayed body counts from those infected early in the year 2020.

Our understanding of the virus is based on a minimum of months of research. However, we have been able to understand that SARS-CoV-2 lives in the upper respiratory system, i.e. mouth and sinuses, unlike SARS-CoV-1 which resided in the lungs. The virus itself is capable of attacking mucosal membranes and blood vessels and has been identified to shed in feces and urine. Research has shown the virus (0.06-0.12 micron) can survive for up to 16 hours in a microdroplet (mean 70 microns); with larger droplets capable of sustaining survival much longer.

Of those that have recovered we have data on recrudescence and in some cases new infection. Studies have not been conclusive on the longevity of immunogenicity; some recent studies have shown a short lived antibody response. However, there are numerous recovery cases are now suffering from long term affects which can include cardiomyopathy, Kawasaki syndrome-like inflammatory, lung damage and other respiratory issues.

The major concern is that there are no prophylaxis or therapeutics available. Without our common safety nets we should not leave infection rates up to chance. We are aware asymptomatic infections (accounting for 40-45% of infections) is our largest concern and that the younger population tends to be asymptomatic or capable of recovery; one can still be infectious post 14-day quarantine. It should also be noted, a vast amount of families in Hawaii live in multi-generational homes, a child would easily be able to contract COVID-19 and bring it home with them.

I worry for all ages of the medically fragile, as those will be the most hurt by any decision. I ask that a discussion with a local infectious disease (ID) experts and/or ID physicians if there are no other easily identifiable options for students who require in-person education.

It is frustrating on no matter which side of the argument you are on. But, all you need is one infected to cause an outbreak; and as of yesterday 2020AUG19 there are 134 confirmed new infections and countless more unknown.

Thank you for your time,

Janelle MY Kuroiwa
I encourage you to read the following referenced articles to get a glimpse of the impact and severity of SARS-CoV-2:


I am an at risk teacher and yet I have the most at risk students in my room for up to 4 hours a day. Risky behavior. Then I have to distance teach the others. Two jobs in one. And they want to furlough? Say no. I am HSTA.
My parents are in their 80s with health issues. They rely on me to do many tasks for them requiring us to be in contact every day.

My sister is a cancer survivor and physically not well.

I cannot get this virus. I risk losing my family

Distance learning is what is keeping me on the job in my 30th year in the DOE. I'm near retirement and don't want to end my career dead.
Today was the first day online learning for our school. The first thing I noticed was our network was jam. It could be prevented if all teachers work from home.

My husband diagnosed stage IV in 2018. I’m concerned about my health and more about his. I was so released when our principal told us 100 virtual for our school. I had the best sleep that night!

I called my daughter in Silicon Valley. Google told her and all other employees work from home until September, 2021. I wish our super intendant has the same awareness.

Lillian Shaw
Special Ed Teacher
Kawanakoa Middle School

Sent from my iPhone
I am writing regarding item V on the agenda.

I ask that the BOE uphold the HSTA contract that allows telework for teachers during the period in which students are not allowed on campus and in distance learning mode. My two young children and I live with my high risk father. Requiring me to go to campus every day increases my exposure, which increases my chances of exposing my family to COVID-19 unnecessarily. I'm still required to go to the front office to sign in for the day. I don't have control of who drops by my classroom. Even though social distancing is required, it's anxiety invoking whenever my door opens. It's stressful to have to tell people to stay away. I'm torn between preserving my health or preserving my relationships.

Giving teachers the option to work remotely allows us to be strategic in our campus visits and will minimize our incidents of exposure to COVID-19. Also, we would be using less school resources like electricity (no lights on, no air conditioners) and less strain on custodial staff to sanitize a barely used room.

With telework in place, I would feel less mentally drained, allowing me to put my energy toward asynchronous and synchronous lessons. Keeping with Campbell High's schedule of a minimum of 30 mins of synchronous class per period with the remaining time for independent work, will keep teachers accountable for teaching and continue to allow for relationship building with students.

Again, I ask that the BOE uphold the HSTA contract and allow for telework for teachers, for our mental and physical well being.

Thank you for your time,
Katrina Pasion
Teacher, James Campbell High School
"NO GATHERING OF MORE THAN 5 PEOPLE" announced and in big letters on today's morning news. Gov and Mayor both agree that measures need to be taken.

Yet we still have schools open, I am beginning to question the common sense of our leaders as students and teachers continue to risk their lives to educate our students in classrooms with MORE THAN 5 PEOPLE.

I am a former Special Education teacher, and now technology coordinator at a public school and I am writing to discourage continued negligence from the BOE and Government to insist that students with special needs come to school. I understand the importance of fulfilling the legal part of IDEA however, I feel that this decision should be a no brainer. My experience, in both positions (Special education and technology) has shown that my job can be done from our home and it can be done effectively.

My wife and I both DOE employees, debate constantly whether or not we need to isolate from each other as we do not want to possibly pass on COVID to each other. Families are being affected by the negligence of the decision makers.

Please consider the health and safety of your government employees.

Thank you for all you guys do,
Aloha,

Thank you for reading my testimony. I am writing in regards to agenda item V.A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication. There are several factors that I would like the BOE and DOE to consider as we continue to move forward with the 2020-2021 school year.

First, I think it is imperative that HIDOE honors HSTA's contract by allowing teachers to work from home (telework) for as long as distance learning remains in effect to protect the health and safety of all persons. Teachers and students deserve the right to learn and teach in a safe environment until schools are ready and safe to accept students back. Taking attendance could be quite easy and effective and accurate. Teachers can invite an administrator to their daily Web Ex meetings and attendance can be taken. Or support staff can be assigned a grade level to take attendance in the same manner on a daily basis. It could be seemless and accurate. There are so many effective ways to show attendance, it is just a matter of DOE’s willingness to come up with a plan, something that they have been reluctant to do in many occasions. That reluctance to act should not be at the cost of a teacher’s or student’s life. Please guarantee that the HIDOE honors HSTA’s contract by allowing teachers to work from home (telework) for as long as distance learning remains in effect. We are professionals working numerous hours beyond our contracted time, please just demand that DOE puts a system of accountability into place so that we can prove our attendance.

Secondly, we are asking that you please ensure 100-percent distance learning for all students across the state, including those in special education, until at least the end of the first quarter. Schools are not yet ready for students, protocols have not been secured, yes they are doing their best, but as of yet, have not secured safe environments for the learners and staff on campus. Schools have tried their best, but with the ever changing plans, we have prepared for three different versions of reopening since we returned, been trained in ASU and all of this actually wasted our time rather than focusing on the one goal of reopening and welcoming students to campus. We are not ready. Areas are not all being disinfected before another individual is in the same place. Bathrooms are still an area that does not have a safe protocol in place. Students, families, teachers all deserve to know how and when they are being disinfected so that would be deemed safe. Groups of children are being mixed in the morning and then dispersed into three different classes because of lack of personnel and available rooms. Please help us by ensuring 100% distance so that our schools can be fully ready to receive students in a safe environment. Reopening schools for face-to-face instruction without clear guidance is reckless and dangerous. It needs to be stopped now before our schools become a petri dish of experimentation.

Next, please require the DOH and HIDOE to provide clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students’ return. Many states and cities have specific triggers already in place for when schools should be open or closed based on COVID-19 cases, but Hawaii does not. Right now our school would not know if a child had Covid and was not yet showing symptoms and was spreading it around. We are not taking temperatures, and
there is no concrete plan in place, no teacher training, as to what should be done to get the child to the help he/she needs and to keep others safe in the transfer to care. Who would then go home if the child was positive and for how long has not been shared at a teacher training at my school.

We all deserve to be safe and have concrete protocols securely in place to help us know and carry out the safest actions to help our community in this pandemic. Our principals and VPs are working overtime to prepare, but there just has not been enough information to plan. Plans keep changing causing them to have to change what was just completed. They are not ready because of the chaos of information and ever-changing plans. They need more time. They deserve more time to do it well. Everything is rushed and being done on weekends and after hours without time to ask the teachers, the ones carrying out the plans asking for the discrepancies and omissions. Our principals deserve better. They need our teacher input, but there is no time for that. They are taking the brunt of all of this change and their success has been a direct reflection of the lack of time to fully implement our safe plan of return. Administrators are not ready with complete plans for a safe return.

Please give us this time to restart and make things the best we can for our community. Let us work from home this quarter, safely do the jobs we love in a safe environment, and allow administrators the time to roll out safe plans for our schools. We all deserve better.

*We don’t have to lose one life!*

Thank you,
Liz DeLyon
Aloha Chair Payne and Members of the Board,

I would like to request that you direct that Department of Education to stop using the Acellus Academy program for online learning until further research can be done into its appropriateness. Here are a few concerns:

Roger Billings' education credentials: Billings goes by the title of 'Dr.' but this is a title he has awarded himself based on a degree that he created (a 'doctor of research' degree) at an institution that he founded called the International Academy of Science, which is not accredited. It also seems that Billings has awarded a number of these 'doctorates' to others designing the Acellus curriculum. While Acellus is accredited, the International Academy of Science is not. This raises serious questions about whether or not there are any primaries involved in the designing of the Acellus curriculum who have an actual background in education.

Billings was also involved in the founding a polygamous cult. Allie Johnson, the reporter for the Pitch article, discusses documents from a lawsuit involving Billings and the Novell Inc. software company, where Billings is said to be the founder of a cult called the Church of Jesus Christ of Zion. Their now defunct website purportedly listed Billings as the church’s “Patriarch and Prophet,” and the Novell Inc. court documents mention Billings taking other people’s spouses as “celestial wives.” On the LDS Freedom Forum, people who report living on Billings' compound say they helped to design/ worked on Acellus.

Lastly, there are serious concerns about the content being taught to students: So far, I have seen screenshots of the curriculum or heard of parents complaining that the curriculum contains the following:

- Political views on a president that allow for only one "correct" answer, not allowing for multiple perspectives
- Use of the word "Towelban" as an option for Taliban, a combination of the words Taliban and Towelhead, a racist insult
- A slide that explained that slaves were only beaten if they were "bad" or "late to work", or "taking too many breaks"

Please do not allow this curriculum to be used in the name of online learning. We can and we must do better for our haʻumana.

Aloha,
Chris Santomauro
Educator, Oʻahu
Good morning,

I am a fifth grade teacher here on Oahu. A fifth grade teacher that seems stuck in an impossible situation of whether I can work this school year or need to quit my job. In March when schools shut down, we transitioned to distance learning and while managing my own three young children I worked tirelessly to ensure I was still communicating and teaching my students. Over the fourth quarter and the summer I did professional development to help me prepare for this upcoming school year. I knew it would be a different year no matter what was decided. I spent my own personal money on programs and writing curriculum that would make myself a better teacher and set my students up for success as well. I spent countless hours creating digital resources for the first quarter. I have my first quarter completely planned out. My Google Classroom is done. I set up my classroom to be completely digital so that we could be prepared in case of a shut down of schools or a quick switch to virtual.

Here is what I didn’t anticipate. I didn’t anticipate the lack of child care or caring that we teachers have children too. I have a daughter starting Kindergarten and one that is entering the Second grade. Prior to this school year I depended on school and A+ after school programs to ensure my kids were in a safe place. My youngest daughter is preschool age so she thankfully is enrolled in preschool and they have not cancelled their program, yet. In May when I realized the school year would probably
be different, I requested care through the School Age Care for base. They put my kids on the waitlist but also informed me they have no intention of taking anyone off the waitlist. In fact, they have released some kids from their rosters-- those belonging to parents that aren’t dual working or aren’t considered essential. See in their eyes, teachers aren’t essential personnel because we have the ability to work from home. This put me in a predicament at the start of the school year. My children do not attend the school that I teach at but even if they did I would be unable to bring them to work with me. After having my second grader with me for 3 workdays last week, I was given less than 24 hours notice to find care for my child. I was luckily able to find someone to watch her so that I could return to work. Let me speak about that quickly. Before the school year began on July 29th, I sought out and interviewed someone to assist with my childcare problems. She was more than willing to watch them on my workdays, pick them up from the bus stop once their school started, and help on days that my second grader was distance learning. I obviously while interviewing questioned her about how serious she has taken the pandemic. She responded that they hardly leave the house (using grocery delivery when possible), they don’t have parties or see friends, and watching my kids would be the ‘most risk’ she would have taken the whole pandemic. That woman is currently in the ICU with the coronavirus. I do not know if she lied to me or if by some stroke of bad luck she caught the
virus. However, this goes to show the risk I would be taking by having some person come into my home and watch my children. I don’t know what the harm was by having my own child in my room where no one else was but I followed the rules and found someone else to watch her--taking another risk and hoping we don’t end up sick from it.

I have no problems switching to virtual/distance learning and am completely prepared for it. I have set up a space in my home where I can hold my online classes with my students and even created resources for those that may miss a live session with me. I have made sure there is a separate space where my own children can do their learning with their teachers. All I need is the ability to telework while we are distance learning. If the schools move forward with making it mandatory for teachers to report to their worksite and students distance learn, I will most likely be unable to continue working or have to take some leave of absence. This quite honestly isn’t fair. It isn’t fair to my co-workers who will get the burden of covering my 19 students while they find someone else willing to teach. It isn’t fair to my student who I am already familiar with having seen them roaming the halls last year. It isn’t fair to my own children who would have to deal with a stressed out mother, a new type of learning environment, and have already lost so much to this pandemic. Lastly it isn’t fair to me who has spent my own personal money on my classroom, my students, and thrown my heart into all that I do for my students (kids).
shouldn’t be asked to give up my passion, my income, and the thing that truly keeps me happy and sane throughout all of this because the Department of Education is unwilling to allow teachers to telework. After all that we have been through as teachers in this pandemic, we do not deserve to be treated this way. I hope that by reading this you have seen someone else’s side of this battle and I hope that it opens your eyes to the struggles that I am sure many teachers are going through right now.

Thank you for your time,

- S. C.
Aloha,

I am writing to submit testimony on item V. **A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.**

I am an elementary school teacher in the Central District of Oahu. Our schools are in need of clear metrics provided by the DOE and DOH that schools can rely on to implement safety procedures and protocols, and to help make decisions on re-opening. Also, when schools do re-open, clear metrics will help schools determine the instructional model. Right now, each school is making their own decisions, and we are making these decisions based on varying and often conflicting information. Educators are not medical and health professionals, we need the DOH to provide clear guidance to make the best decisions. As an example, at our school, we have had an employee who was identified as a close contact to someone who tested positive for Covid-19. Upon testing negative for Covid-19, the employee was instructed by our administrator to return to work before the 14 quarantine ended. However, in our training videos provided by HIDOE, it clearly states that "a negative Covid test does not shorten the quarantine period." I am asking to require the DOH and HIDOE to provide clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students’ return and for safety procedures and protocols.

Teachers should be given the option and allowed to telework. The decision was made for students to engage in 100% distance learning for 4 weeks as it is not safe for them to be physically on campus, yet HIDOE is requiring teachers to be on campus. During the 4 week period that students will be doing 100% distance learning, it is completely possible for teachers to telework, yet we are being told that we need to report to campus. Governor Ige and Mayor Caldwell held a news conference yesterday stating that employers should allow teleworking if at all possible, and gatherings are limited to groups of 5. We have grade level meetings that are larger than 5 people and many people/staff on campus at the same time, which is going against their orders. Teleworking is possible for teachers and should be allowed by principals.

Mahalo for your time,
Good Morning Chair Payne & Board of Education Members,

I write to you, once again, to submit testimony on the reopening of schools. I write to you from DOE issued gmail account because I believe that my testimony is absolutely work related. I will be referring to the following items from Chair Payne's Exhibit B: Professional Development & Training, A.1 & A.1b and Professional Development for Distance Learning, B.1.

- The DOE will state that training was given as Supt. Kishimoto emailed us a list of required training modules on Friday, July 31st at 8pm. However, these training modules, for classroom teachers, totaled about 14 1/2 hours (more for counselors & registrars) consisting mostly of watching videos & reading ppts and training information sent at this time was after most schools had already planned training as 8/4th was the following Monday. Therefore, many schools had to shift and replan and figure out how to fit these hours of trainings in. Also, the Distance Learning 7-module training has so much information, some very valuable, that there's no way a teacher can effectively complete 1 module in 1 hour, which is how long the DOE stated on their website page that these trainings would take. Did Supt Kishimoto believe that we would just sit, watch videos and barely discuss or plan anything with the information we were gleaning? Not best practice at all.

- The DOE will most likely provide you with "proof" that the training was completed by showing you the feedback data. This is inaccurate. The link to the feedback form was never emailed to teachers. Rather, teachers found out about it haphazardly from one another and some from their administrators. The link for the feedback form didn't even appear on the training list on the DOE website until the middle of last week. It wasn't and still isn't clear to all teachers that the feedback is REQUIRED to receive "completion credit" for the "mandatory" trainings. Why wasn't this VERY important information sent to us in an email? Our work email is being used for many things communicated to us by DOE and Supt., however, this information wasn't sent to us. I question why. Also, the feedback form did not fully provide teachers the opportunity to give their true thoughts on the training unless you clicked "other" for each area. So, if a teacher was pressed for time, they most likely will just click on the rating they feel is closest to how they felt about that training piece.

This is just one of my concerns regarding how Supt. Kishimoto continues to ineffectively communicate with us therefore creating much angst and concern from our teachers.

Thank you,

Caroline Freudig
Kaua'i, Kalâheo Elementary School, 1st Grade
Aloha,

I have 2 children in the full distance learning program. Luckily my child's elementary school opted to have my child involved in google classroom, so she is not on Acellus.

My intermediate school daughter though started Acellus on Monday. After seeing screenshots of certain concerning questions from the Acellus Academy, I did my own research on the program. I was very concerned to hear about the program's founder, Roger Billings, his honorary doctorate of research that he gave to himself and some teachers in the program. I'm also concerned about his polygamist background and his tweets about COVID. Further the screenshots that I did see are downright racist and further support the white nationalist movement that is crippling our country. I do not want my child being taught by a program that supports this way of thinking.

I am working full time from home. I am stressed out enough as it is trying to manage this workload and like many other parents, teach their children from home. I shouldn't have to worry about the content of what my child is learning from a program DOE chose. I should be able to, as I always have had in the last, trust that the education my child is receiving from the DOE is appropriate.

Please full distance learning families with another option.

Thank you
A concerned parent

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android
Good afternoon, Chairperson Payne and Members of the Board of Education.

**Agenda:** General

**Position:** Comment

I appreciate this opportunity to share my perspective as a former Personnel Regional Officer, former principal, current Complex Area Superintendent, community member, and parent of a public school student.

I am Robert Davis, Complex Area Superintendent for the Central District Area (North). I am confident in the safety of our schools and classrooms. My testimony today asks for the Board’s support for employees to report to work rather than telework.

The impetus for all decisions is doing what is best for students. These are reasons for reporting to work:

- Reporting to work ensures students and teachers have access to devices, build relationships, and are trained on the instructional process going forward.
- Given the variation in the home environment and teacher capacity to handle virtual training, the school is the hub for centralized support for technical issues and coaching support. Reporting to work ensures immediate support to the greatest extent possible, particularly for teachers who may not be confident managing the platform.
- Reporting to work allows teachers the ability to collaborate with colleagues. Specifically, student teachers can be in close contact with veteran teachers who provide support to them.
- Staff who report to work have access to teaching materials and reliable network access in safe conditions at school.
- When teachers report to work, students see their teachers within the classroom, which emphasizes that school is in session and increases school connectedness.

The view I shared today reflects each and every school’s relentless and tireless efforts to move in the direction of supporting all students. We need the Board’s support to continue to let our school teams address the needs of the vulnerable student population, implement creative solutions, and most importantly, have vulnerable students attend schools albeit general pandemic shutdowns.

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Board today. We in the Central District continue to believe that our schools provide the educational environment where students’ dreams are built …and learning continues to be by design and not by chance.

--

Bob Davis
Complex Area Superintendent, Leilehua, Mililani and Waialua
I am a parent of three children who attend Daniel K. Inouye Elementary.

I am testifying today because I would like more transparency and consistency with regards to which children are identified as a part of our vulnerable population district wide rather than on a school by school basis.

Daniel K. Inouye Elementary, while on a military installation, is not a DoD school. However, the administration at Daniel K. has placed children on full face to face educational tracks based on their parents' employment in the military (after asking if parents were dual military on a survey sent out to determine placement in mid July). While many parents at Daniel K. requested the full face to face schedule, including those with children in grades K-2, many were told the school couldn't support those requests with the staffing they currently had, however other children without IEPs, 504s, ESL or those with extreme economic hardship were also given the choice of face to face learning. When clarification of the criteria needed to qualify for face to face instruction was sought out, parents were told it was a need to know scenario and too complex to discuss. Currently, while the DOE has mandated that learning for the first four weeks must be done virtually with extreme exceptions being those who needed services that could not be provided at home, Daniel K. has continued to plan to allow all children who were previously receiving all week face to face instruction to continue to come in five full days a week, even if the only reason they were on this schedule was because both parents were employed by the army. If our district had decided that all children of working parents should have a safe place in which to do their schoolwork on their virtual days and the school provided an area and Wifi to those affected students, I would welcome that, but to only offer the option to people of certain occupations and to allow those children to have full face to face time while their peers are doing distance learning is both an economic advantage to the parents and an educational advantage to those children.

Why are principals allowed to ignore DOE directives to placement such as the importance of giving K-2 students priority for face to face learning in favor of placing children whose parents are employed by the military on a full face to face schedule? Why, in a public school setting, are we considering the needs of parents above the needs of children? Why is asking who employs a child's parents not considered incredibly discriminatory but instead hailed as being a "personal approach"? Why is it that when parents ask for objective and transparent criteria with regards to placement of children they are told this is not their business and we need to think of the needs of our community. Public education is about the needs of our children and educational equality and equity is what our principals should strive to achieve. I believe there must be more oversight and enforcement of guidelines in order to ensure our children are all getting an equal opportunity at education.

Sent from my iPhone
Subject: Testimony

Name, Position, and Organization: Robert Davis, Complex Area Superintendent, Central District (North), Hawaii Department of Education

Meeting: General Business Meeting (Full Board)

Agenda Item: Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2021 school year amid the COVID 19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communications.

Position: Comment

_____________________________________________________________

Good Afternoon, Chairperson Payne and Members of the Board of Education.

I appreciate this opportunity to share professional insights regarding challenges we are facing during this pandemic and specifically ask for your support. I am Robert Davis, Complex Area Superintendent for the Central District Area (North). My testimony today asks for the Board’s support to allow vulnerable students in schools...as determined by IEP and 504 teams...to continue to have them attend schools albeit anticipated broad pandemic announcements to lockdown communities and provide for only 100% distance learning. Specifically, unless there is an incident of a Covid 19 case whereby the Department of Health orders closure of a specific school, the Department should continue to allow the vulnerable student population to attend their school and provide support needed to continue their education. On August 7, 2020, the Department announced that all Oahu public schools would implement full distance learning models starting August 17, 2020 and that there would be three phases to this implementation.

The first phase (August 17-20) is to provide in-person training opportunities for students where students would physically return to campus to connect with their teachers and receive training on distance learning platforms. Many vulnerable students have been on our school campuses since Monday and are on our campuses today.

The second phase (August 24-September 11) requires staff to work from their designated work sites and provide students distance learning, with limited exceptions.

The third phase is to transition to a blended learning paradigm, which could start as early as September 14, 2020, but an announcement would be made on September 8, 2020 as to the actual start date for the third phase.

This week our schools began addressing several challenges related to providing services and support to vulnerable students. For a moment, let me highlight some of the activities that are ongoing at schools in an effort to help these students. A complete shutdown of access to schools would severely impact the work that has already begun:
a. We are continuing the Grab N Go meal services for students in our communities... especially for our economically disadvantaged and vulnerable students. Initial feedback from our communities is one of gratitude, appreciation and understanding that the BOE/DOE continues to care for all students and their families. I ask that we continue this practice, allowing families to enter school grounds to pick up meals.

b. There are numerous IEP and 504 team (school-parent) meetings that are on-going right now to develop or revise the individualized education programs for individuals with disabilities as mandated by both Federal and State statutes. Gentle reminder that we have not received any reprieve from these mandates by the federal education department. IEP and 504 teams, as we speak, are working diligently to make individualized education decisions that comply with the laws regarding continued learning regardless of the difficult challenges of this pandemic. The comments from the field continue to elaborate words of understanding, collaboration, and creativity in developing “what works” for these students with disabilities...other than a single choice of virtual-distance learning with technology. These students must come to school to benefit from their Individualized Education Programs (IEP). Many of these students are unable to learn through a distance-learning model and need to be on campus receiving services from an array of people.

c. English Learners (EL), and there are many, must continue their learning journey also. While some computer-based programs may offer legitimate learning opportunities for some of our EL students there are many who require more intensive assistance from specially trained teachers. Our non-English and Limited English speaking parents in our school community are not equipped with the necessary skills to help students meet the Federal mandates of proficiency within five years or provide their much needed assistance. The Department has recently developed guidelines that help schools develop Personalized Learning Plans that provide an array of direct instruction, supports, accommodations, and strategies used for developing proficiency in English and acculturation within our communities. Schools are currently involved in authentic parent engagement in the determination of the educational programs for their child. Our most needy English Learners need time with that skilled EL teacher to properly implement these Personalized Learning Plans. Many are in the vulnerable population attending school this week.

d. Schools are working diligently to identify and support students who lack computers or access to the Internet at home which are the basic requirements for the implementation of distance learning. The deployment of technology to these vulnerable students is on-going in schools as we speak. Many of our schools have had to purchase additional technology to support the distance learners amidst this pandemic. Some schools have purchased hot spots to enable families with multiple children at several schools to allow them to participate in distance learning. Schools have set up locations on campus for students to utilize computers and access the Internet, allowing students to come to campus daily to participate virtually in their distance learning classrooms. Schools will continue to identify these students and feverishly work to rectify the situation until every student has access. Unless universal deployment of technology and Internet access can be completed, these vulnerable students must come to school to use
technology to continue their learning.

The view I shared today reflects each and every school’s relentless and tireless efforts to move in the direction of supporting all students. We need the Board’s support to continue to let our school teams address the needs of the vulnerable student population, implement creative solutions, and most importantly, have vulnerable students attend schools albeit general pandemic shutdowns.

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Board today. We in the Central District continue to believe that our schools provide the educational environment where students’ dreams are built …and learning continues to be by design and not by chance.
To Whom it May Concern,

My name is Kylee N. Sullivan and I am a 7th and 8th grade English Language Arts (ELA) teacher at Pahoa High and Intermediate School (PHIS) in Pahoa, Hawai'i. I am emailing you to give my testimony on the fact that schools should absolutely be fully virtual for the remainder of the first quarter at the very least.

As mentioned, I am a teacher at Pahoa High and Intermediate School which is one of the few schools on the Big Island of Hawai'i that voluntarily (against the consent or input of all faculty on campus minus the administration) chose to allow face to face this week with students in order to "transition" them to virtual learning. Did you know that students who supposedly pass the temperature and symptom screening may still throw up in class later? I did not either, yet that happened yesterday (Tuesday, 8/18/20) during one of our class periods. The student was removed from campus but the fact still remains they got sick during the day after passing screening. Were you also aware we have several teachers on campus who are immunocompromised due to being recovering cancer survivors, are pregnant, or have severe respiratory problems? Yet, these people are being asked to take in up to 15 students within their classroom (a feat that cannot be safely social distanced as all classroom are only available to have about 9 students safely inside of it) or are being asked to personally temperature check all students coming into school (which, as I mentioned, does not seem to be effective if we have students throwing up at school).

Were you also aware that my school decided to be cautious in order to prevent the spread and broke the week down into alpha groups by last name in order to limit how many students on campus? Well, that safety measure has since been thrown out the window as we have now been told to accept any and all students who come to school regardless of if they're supposed to be there or not which has resulted in the 15 students in one class I have mentioned above possibly growing. Did I mention we have also had a teacher fail screening two days in a row and get sent home? The likelihood of us being "protected" from the virus spread is diminishing each day we are face to face.

It has become increasingly apparent to the faculty at PHIS that our administration (one of whom has expressed how they do not feel comfortable sending their own children to school face to face because it is not safe yet are allowing our students and faculty to be here face to face and risk transmission) do not care enough to keep us safe. Therefore, we rely on you, Board of Education, to extend virtual learning until the end of the first quarter at the very least (thought I would prefer the entire first semester as flu and cold season is coming up and will raise transmission rates further). I have said this in past testimonies: I am only 26 and am afraid. I am afraid I may not live long past 26 or 27 if I catch COVID-19. I am afraid that I will pass it unknowingly to my 65 year old father and cause his death. I am afraid that several of my students will catch COVID-19 and die before they were meant to. By allowing schools to continue to be face to face as the transmission rates for all of Hawai'i continue to rise at an alarmingly rapid rate, you are aiding and abetting several potential deaths. Kindly take that into consideration as you meet tomorrow.

Sincerely yours,
Miss Kylee Nicole Sullivan

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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.
Eleanor Gonsalves, Principal, Royal School

General Business (full board)

I am testifying on agenda item V, Personnel, I am in support of DOE continuing to use the current Telework Policy. I believe telework is a management right, and administrators may deny requests if they determine it is not in the best interest of students or the Department. Teachers should continue to provide distance learning from their classrooms for the following reasons:

- Our teachers have commented about the benefits of working in an environment built for education.
- Our teachers have set up their classrooms workstations following distancing and health guidelines, and as a school we are using technology to maintain social distancing while still embracing the culture and friendships that define our school.
- Our teachers have access to smart boards, wifi, textbooks, and communication services that enhance their student's education as well as opportunities to work together with their colleagues.
- Our teachers feel safe in their classrooms, they are asking that they be allowed to work on campus.

Thank you for your consideration.
Aloha Board Members,

I am writing this testimony in regards to require that the DOH and HIDOE provide clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students’ return. Many states and cities have specific triggers already in place for when schools should be open or closed based on COVID-10 cases, but Hawaii does not. My school has decided to do face-to-face instruction for the first week, to meet teachers and gather their resources. After the first day of school, I had a student email me that afternoon that he will not be coming to school tomorrow because he was not feeling well and he felt dizzy. None of the symptoms were shown during class, and the student was fairly quiet and did not inform me at all about his health. When receiving this email, as you can imagine, I started to feel scared and panicked. I had just spent a FULL 6 HOURS in a classroom with this students and a few others and had not known anything! State safety social distance guidelines were followed, but I was more concerned about going home to my family and/or if I should go to work the next day. I contacted my administration team and they were able to follow-up with the student and give me some guidance on next steps.

Nothing in the MOU nor the handbook does it state CLEAR instructions for protocols regarding what to do if a student does not mention nor show any symptoms and came to school. I was terrified to go home and put my family at risk. Nor did it have any instructions on coming in to work and putting staff members at risk or other students at risk.

I understand the best education comes from face to face learning, and I will come to work practicing the safety guidelines. However, I believe EVERY TEACHER SHOULD KNOW WHAT TO DO AT ANY MOMENT IN ANY SCENARIO THAT COULD HAPPEN! I will be happy to teach my students face to face when I feel it is safe and there is a full, clear, and concise guideline to ensure safety for everyone that is involved.
My name is Linell Dilwith and I am the Complex Area Superintendent for 29 schools in the Kaimuki, McKinley, Roosevelt complex areas. My testimony is in reference to discussion item V, Personnel, in the general meeting.

I’m writing to express my support for the current Telework policy. I strongly believe that Telework is a management right that provides supervisors the flexibility to allow for telework when appropriate. A blanket approval of telework for all teachers, in all situations, and at all schools is not an appropriate policy. It would eliminate the ability for principals to design learning opportunities that best suit the needs of their students.

The current plan provides a safe environment for teachers. This includes a large workspace in their classrooms, access to reliable technology and connectivity, and on-site support from administration. The school is the hub for centralized support and while on campus teachers have access to materials, resources and equipment needed to provide quality distance learning for their students.

Please do not change the current Telework policy.

Thank you.

Linell Dilwith  
Complex Area Superintendent  
Kaimuki-McKinley-Roosevelt Complexes

"Don't fear failure.  
Fear being in the exact same place next year as you are today."
-unknown-

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,
I am writing to ask for 100% distance learning for educators and students. I'm a 20 year veteran of teaching in Hawaii. I think it's unconscionable that teachers are being asked to be at schools and exposed to unsafe conditions. At the school I teach, one of the staff tested positive. A memo was sent to campus staff and parents. Understandably, questions were asked of sanitation, exposure to a person with a positive result, etc., yet, never about the identity. Though these questions were responded to.....they were not answered. Another teacher, knowing of their potential exposure, was given minimal directive, other than "get tested, and stay quarantined." They remained sequestered in their class until the end of the school day. They are understandably anxious of whom to confide in, or what to share.
Administrators are placed in an untenable situation to act in the capacity of the DOH. I am still now learning of spaces on campus that had to be sanitized (a question asked of admin but not answered). This positive case at this campus was not publicized. Teachers were briefed back in May that if there was a positive case, it was likely the campus would close. Even in the HSTA's COVID FAQ section, there is reference to a positive case being a component that could necessitate a school closure. Now, staff are unilaterally advised "if there is a positive case, it is at discretion of the administration how it is handled.
I have little confidence in administration to make informed decisions about this rapidly evolving health crisis. Repeatedly, teachers have asked of the protocol for a positive case and have not been answered. There should be explicit DOH/DOE clear metrics, to keep school staff and students safe. HIDOE should honor HSTA's contract and guarantee teleworking for teachers (from home).
I implore the BOE to enact it's responsibility. If additional faculty, staff or children are infected, the BOE is culpable, as are the DOH, DOE and our state leadership.

Respectfully,
Robin McDonald
I am testifying on item A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication. Also, this testimony has been sent to all news media outlets to do deeper research into Acellus Academy.

As a parent of an 8th grader, I have serious concerns about the use of Acellus Academy, its founder and owner Roger Billings, and the content of its curriculum. We were told that Acellus Academy is the only distance learning option approved by the Hawaii Department of Education for public schools, and that public school parents/students have three options:

1. Agree to attend in-person hybrid classes during a record-breaking surge of COVID cases on Oahu.
2. Go through the Acellus program with no contact from teachers or their peers by quarters to a full year.
3. Home school.

The use of this platform should be of concern not only to Hawaii public school parents, but to any parent with children in public school as Acellus is being adopted across the US because of its low cost. Who did the actual FULL vetting of this program?

The first issue is Roger Billings' questionable education credentials. Billings goes by the title of 'Dr.' but this is a title he has awarded himself based on a degree that he CREATED (a 'doctor of research' degree) at an institution that he founded called the International Academy of Science, which is NOT accredited. It also seems that Billings has awarded a number of these 'doctorates' to others designing the Acellus curriculum. While Acellus is accredited, the International Academy of Science is not. This raises serious questions about whether or not there are any primaries involved in the designing of the Acellus curriculum who have an actual background in education. We would never hire a public school teacher who had invented their credentials, so it is unclear how Billings' credentials as well as his associates' were vetted and approved by the DOE. Someone didn't do their job here!

Second, while there is actually very little to be found online about Roger Billings and Acellus Academy beyond his own promotional materials, one exception is an article published in The Pitch, a Kansas City weekly, which highlights Billings' involvement in founding a polygamous cult. Allie Johnson, the reporter for the Pitch article, discusses documents from a lawsuit involving Billings and the Novell Inc. software company, where Billings is said to be the founder of a cult called the Church of Jesus Christ of Zion. Their now defunct website purportedly listed Billings as the church’s “Patriarch and Prophet,” and the Novell Inc. court documents mention Billings taking other people’s spouses as “celestial wives.” On the LDS Freedom Forum, people who report living on Billings' compound say they helped to design/worked on Acellus. Without needing to know anything further about these bizarre claims, I cannot imagine allowing Acellus Academy and Roger Billings to educate my daughter online and collect data on their school progress. See: https://www.thepitchkc.com/dr-hydrogen/
Third, I’ve attached several images with this post - one shared with me by a Hawaii public school teacher and the other by a Hawaii public school parent - that are deeply concerning. The first is a screenshot of a text expressing concerns over part of the Acellus curriculum that states people who were enslaved in America were only 'beaten' if they were "bad, taking too many breaks, or were late to work," and attempts to re-historicize native genocide. The other is a Tweet from Billings himself that has since been deleted, which advocates for allowing COVID to run through the population with the hashtag #MAGA. I've included another image sent from a Hawaii parent whose child just took an Acellus assessment test, where one of the multiple choice options was 'Towelban.' This is a combination of the word Taliban and the racist word 'towelhead.' So not appropriate!

Here is a Dropbox link to the Acellus Academy's Physical Fitness intro. Very inappropriate with the sexual undertone.

Acellus Academy PE Intro

Who was responsible for the FULL and COMPLETE vetting of the Acellus curriculum by the HIDOE? It is obvious that such a vetting did not take place. These screenshots and complaints from teachers about racist, unscientific and historically inaccurate content suggests that if a vetting did take place, it was not thorough enough.

What we have now is a two-tiered system among students at Hawaii public schools. We have those who have opted for in-person classes who will still be taught online for the foreseeable future. These students will shortly be able to pick up class materials from qualified educators, and develop relationships with their teachers and peers (albeit online). Alternatively, we have those students whose parents opted for distance learning and will now be taught by Roger Billings and his employees, and who will not be allowed to build a connection to their teachers or peers. This is UNACCEPTABLE, and accreditation is simply not enough in the case of Acellus Academy.

In addition, I am very concerned for the safety of my children at school. I do not feel the plan that the DOE has put out is sufficient to provide a safe atmosphere for the students and the staff.

1. Schools can't 100% successfully control the common cold, flu and ukus. How do you expect to control the coronavirus? Several schools have already reported COVID-19 infected staff and students.
2. There should be 6 feet distance in ALL DIRECTIONS for the students and the teachers.
3. Temperatures of the staff and students should be taken each morning. Anyone with a fever should be isolated and sent home immediately. Testing should be done on that individual.
4. Mask should be ABSOLUTELY REQUIRED for EVERYONE at ALL TIMES FOR ALL PUBLIC SCHOOLS.
5. 100% distance learning should have access to a teacher for questions and help. It is unfair to them to not provide any support.
6. There is no plan for the event of coronavirus infections in the schools. What are the measures/actions that will be taken when a student, teacher or faculty member test positive for the coronavirus. No plan has been shared with the school or parents.
7. The DOE, BOE and the schools should be prepared for possible lawsuits if a student gets sick/dies from catching the coronavirus in school if the school DID NOT follow the CDC guidelines.
8. Teachers deserve the option to work from home while teaching distance learning. It will also ensure their safety from working around others at the school.

Our children deserve a real public school education, and teachers and staff deserve to be safe. Instead of being forced to choose between risking their lives or financial ruin, teachers should be supported in directing their
energies toward developing a comprehensive online curriculum that includes all students, while providing the social contact and legitimate learning our children so desperately need right now.

Concerned Parent,
Zan Timtim

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**THE FANATIC FRINGE**

Many small polygamous groups are offshoots of splinter groups of one of the major factions. So far removed from original Mormonism, their theology ranges from radical to bizarre. The Tolman group in Cane Beds, Ariz., bask nude in “the Angel of the Sun,” while another group in the same area extends plural marriage to include sexual relations with all its members—of either sex. Joseph Smith declared Missouri the Mormons’ promised land, so several groups have beaten the millennial rush there. One such group is headed by former BYU energy whiz kid, Roger Billings, who perceives himself as the reincarnated Jesus Christ. This group has fashioned an underground survival city in an abandoned limestone mine.

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**THE INDEPENDENTS**

Families that espouse Fundamentalist doctrines, but don’t feel that any other man has a right to direct them, maintain a loose-knit circle of acquaintances among other independent polygamists. They often function in traditional society while hiding their polygamous identities.
Here are some screen shots and short clips from grade 8 American History. This is from step 57.

There was more issues with step 69. That the teacher stated that slaves were only beaten if they were bad, taking to many breaks, and were late to work.

My daughter just came to me know and said that step 73 British and French Clash. Stated that the French Indian war was because the Native Americans were terrorizing the British. Do not let your school use them for history.

AUG 03, 2:32 PM

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Osama Bin Laden was the leader of what terrorist group?

A. Islamic Jihad Union  B. Al Qaeda (in Afghanistan)
C. Muslim Brotherhood  D. Towelban

Haven't learned this yet.
Aloha... Please scroll down to read my story. 🌮

I am writing you today on the subject of the “Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication”.

I humbly ask you take a moment of your time to listen to an experienced educator with over 25 years experience, twenty one of which have been serving the Honolulu District in the Ahupua’a of Kalihi.

I ask that you consider my safety & the safety of others who haven’t a clear understanding about the risks involved when requiring teachers to return to campuses to conduct distance learning. Many people have an affinity towards gathering simply because they care about one another. Last week I was on campus working alongside colleagues to paint 6’ foot “distance dots” around our school. I observed our community while conducting this labor of love. I couldn’t help to look away when I saw many of them unconsciously breaking the safe distance protocols, passing items they share to one another while touching their noses & faces. I even had to remind a very senior teacher who just loves the little ones to keep her distance & to stop entering my classroom and touching everything! She meant no harm. But, she just wasn’t cognizant & continues to act unsafe despite many reminders. It’s just NOT in her nature to stay away. This is happening all over! And I for one implore you to PLEASE ensure the safety of myself, my family, my colleagues & our communities by mandating teachers who are able to telework! Teaching from home (telework) means less people on the roads, less people physically interacting at the worksite, and less chance to spread this very dangerous virus!

Our administration has already placed many of our teachers at risk by scheduling face to face orientations for families at our school! Keeping a safe distance while trying to serve these highly impoverished families without spreading germs & following safety guidelines is impossible without awkwardness. It looks bad & isn’t safe! Because of language & educational gaps, most of our Micronesian families cannot understand the directions we offer. They need staff to physically break the safe distance protocols and touch shared keyboards, pens, paperwork etc., hovering around them for 2 hours in an enclosed space at a time!

This was too MUCH! By allowing administrators to bring back everyone to campus, YOU allowed the VIRUS the opportunity to infect! Haven’t you learned from the political climate that has engulfed the country already?!? Almost half our population thinks masks are “nonsensical, a hoax, a deep state plot to undermine our rights”... Come On! BE PRUDENT with our keiki & schools. Ensure we are all safe by keeping EVERYONE at 100% distance learning through the spikes of Corona. That means ensuring teachers who can teach from home using the excellent technological tools at their fingertips stay at home safe. Do not leave this up to the administrators, nor the DOE. We must protect our schools. If you place us in danger, we will break. People will die. Infections will increase.
Finally, I ask that you mandate the DOH & HIDOE provide the metrics of when school campus are safe for students’ return. Many states already have these in place with SPECIFIC TRIGGERS that tell administrators to open or close their schools.

Please honor our HSTA contract and allow us to work from home. It’s the safest route & the surest way to mitigate the spread of Covid-19, so we can all get back to normal & beat this crisis.

Mahalo for your Kokua.

Mr. Paul Bauer
Kalihi, Hawaii USA

Paul E. Bauer III
Honolulu, Hawaii USA
Dear BOE,

I am a long-term substitute teacher for the Hawaii State Department of Education in the elementary field. I have been substituting for 3 years now and currently working on receiving my masters degree in education. However, I am constantly worried for the health and safety of my wife, son and family. I believe that the only way to ensure safety is to start 100 percent distance learning. I have an anxiety coming to work everyday, hoping that I will not become a victim of COVID-19. Education may be important, but the health and safety of the children and Ohana's are much more important. If they are to ever get sick due to the way things are operating now, ask yourself “was it really worth it”, I mean think to yourself what would you do if it was your family and children being put at risk? I humbly ask to make the decision of doing 100-percent distance learning for all students in Hawaii as soon as possible.

- Ensure 100-percent distance learning for all students across the state, including those in special education, until at least the end of the first quarter.
- Require the DOH and HIDOE to provide clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students’ return. Many states and cities have specific triggers already in place for when schools should be open or closed based on COVID-10 cases, but Hawaii does not.
- Guarantee that the HIDOE honors HSTA’s contract by allowing teachers to work from home (telework) for as long as distance learning remains in effect.

Sincerely,

Corey Gushikuma
Substitute Teacher for Hawaii DOE
To the Hawai‘i Board of Education:

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

I am writing this testimony with regard to a few things I would like you folks to take action on. The first is 100% distance learning. Given the influx and increase of positive COVID-19 cases, I am asking for the Board to ensure that ALL students across the state, including those in special education, are able to utilize 100% distance learning through at least the end of the first quarter. The bottom line is that we need to proactively consider and be cognizant of the safety, health, and well-being of all school staff, faculty, students, all of our families, and community members. If it is decided that we go back with blended models (which includes face-to-face instruction), we are putting us all at risk for contracting and spreading the virus. We should go 100% distance for at least the first quarter so that we can also get all of our health and safety protocols and procedures done as well as ensure a safe and healthy learning environment for our students. Going 100% distance learning would also help with establishing consistency for families to plan, teachers to teach, and students to learn; if we change, yet again, mid-quarter, instructional and family protocols, routines, and procedures will be disrupted again.

Additionally, I am asking that we continue to put pressure on the DOH and HIDOE to provide clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students’ return. With cases on the rise, we still lack clear guidance from the DOH and HIDOE. Let’s be proactive rather than reactive when considering the fact that it is not a matter of if, but when with regard to contracting COVID-19 and possible passing from the virus. Please, give us hope, act with kindness, and work towards togetherness by ensuring that we have THOROUGH plans in place and specific guidance moving forward. We currently do not have specific triggers for when schools should be open or closed based on COVID-19 cases.

One more thing that I would like the Board to guarantee is that the HIDOE honors HSTA’s contract by allowing teachers to work from home (telework) for as long as distance learning remains in effect and as needed. Many teachers are either high- to medium-risk, health-wise or also parents of DOE students. For some of us it would be best if we could telework given those conditions. On the other hand, it may be best for other teachers to be able to teach and work on campus. Teachers should be able to choose what option works best for them and their families.
Please err on the side of caution when considering your actions with regard to the aforementioned topics with regard to our schools for the 2020-2021 school year; we need to ensure that we have clear guidance, an option to telework, and to prolong 100% distance learning through quarter 1. Help us thrive, survive, and live!

Me ka haʻahaʻa,

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

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

- 3rd Grade, P-18, Pāhoa Elementary School, Pāhoa, Hawaiʻi
- SLL HSTA Grievance Representative, Pāhoa Elementary School, 2019-2021
Aloha,
I work in the special education department at Waialua Elementary. I strongly encourage you to allow our students to come to school for in person learning. Your reasoning behind not allowing our children to come to school is flawed. We do have guidelines that have been provided to us and that have already been implemented. We do have PPE and all the safety measures are in place and ready. We have teachers, parents and administration that are ready and willing to participate with in person learning. We are ready! The kids are ready! The parents are ready! Let us teach! On-line learning is a difficult thing for a general education student to participate in, for a student with special needs it is almost impossible. All that will be accomplished by not allowing these students back to school is a greater divide in their learning-- We can allow them to school safely and we should.
Lori Hodosh

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I am testifying on item V.

A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.

I am an Oahu high school teacher. I am requesting the DOH and HIDOE provide clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students’ return. Along with that, I am requesting we extend distance learning until at least the end of the first quarter. Parents, students, and teachers are confused with all the changes. We need some consistency and teachers need to be able to focus on making their distance instruction the best it can be.

I am also requesting that teachers be allowed to work from home (telework) for as long as distance learning remains in effect. I do not have children of my own, but I fear that those who do will choose to take leave and be replaced with, who? I also know that the work I am doing can be done just as easily at home. There is no reason for me to drive to campus daily and sit in my classroom. This is not the case for everyone; therefore, choice is important.

Finally, I ask that 100% distance learning include special education. Yesterday, as I sat under a tree for our drive-by materials pickup, I watched three staff with a special education student. To keep this student from going where the student should not go, the special education staff had to be at least within a foot of this student at all times, usually with a hand on one or both of the student’s arms. These staff are not equipped properly to do this kind of work and protect their own health.

Sincerely,

Cindy Reves
Twenty-four. This number has loomed over my head like a dark cloud for months. It has interrupted my excitement to return to the classroom. No, not because it's the number of hours in a day, but because it's the number of ICU beds on the Big Island, which hosts over one-hundred and eighty-five thousand residents. As of this writing, one-hundred and thirty-one people have tested positive for Covid-19 on this island. That shrivels in comparison to Oahu, where over three-thousand people have tested positive. Okay, so that means that the Big Island is in the clear, right? Time to reopen physical schools and businesses. Not so fast.

Oahu’s surging cases have coincided with the reopening of gathering places while the virus remained endemic and before an effective vaccine had been created. In addition to its rural nature and relatively spread out population, another essential factor in the Big Island’s success has been closing businesses and institutions like schools that lead to large gatherings of people. Throughout the time period that saw the average cases per day on Oahu go from the twenties to over one-hundred cases, inter-island travel was allowed throughout the state. Combine this with the fact that there have been recent positive tests for Covid-19 on the Big Island, and it is proven that the virus still exists on this island, and likely at a higher rate than our current data suggests.

Although children are unlikely to suffer the most severe consequences of the virus, they are still capable of becoming infected and spreading it to their parents, grandparents, aunties, and uncles. At schools, students will undoubtedly act like children, bending and breaking the rules to prevent the spread of Covid-19. This will lead to an increase in the number of cases of Covid-19 on the Big Island, mirroring the surge seen on Oahu in July.

As I mentioned before, while the mortality rate for children is relatively low, a surge in cases of Covid-19 could still result in a public health crisis on this island. Specifically, this public health crisis would occur for two reasons. First, Hawai‘i has the highest proportion of intergenerational households of any state in the country. While mortality rates for children are low, they are extremely high for the elderly. By reopening physical schools, we are exposing the kupuna to a mortal risk.

Secondly, the Big Island of Hawai‘i has only twenty-four ICU beds. Overwhelming the medical infrastructure on this island could lead to a number of preventable deaths. Imagine, you’re in a car accident, and you’re rushed to the hospital, but there aren’t enough nurses or doctors to respond to you in time. You die from what would have been a routine emergency procedure, if the hospital had had the capacity to meet your needs. This unfortunate scenario can be avoided by continuing with measures to prevent the spread of Covid-19, such as distance learning.

The Big Island is a magical place, and I consider myself lucky to have the opportunity to live here. It is out of my sense of gratitude for this place and the community here that I insist that we recognize that the Big Island is not immune to effects of this contagious virus for which there is currently no vaccine nor reliable, standardized treatment response. We must start the school year virtually and commit to this mode of education until it is safe to return to physical schools.
Item testifying on: A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020 directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic.

Dear Hawai‘i Board of Education Members,

My name is Alexandra Obra, Principal of Waiāhole Elementary School, a small school rich in history and culture. Currently, we have an enrollment of 90 students, 12 teachers (including a Counselor/SSC and Academic Coach), and 18 staff members. Today, I am advocating for the health and safety of my students, teachers, staff, families and the Waiāhole-Waikâne community.

During the first two weeks, I prepared my staff for the inevitable by letting them know that we need to be ready not if COVID-19 happens on our school campus but when it happens. Recently, an employee tested positive for COVID-19 at Waiāhole Elementary School. This is not the first nor the last time an employee will test positive for COVID-19. I am writing to you today to share that I was recently tested for COVID-19 as I came into close contact with the employee who tested positive at my school.

I have over twenty years of service with the Hawai‘i Department of Education, and without a doubt, this has been the most stressful experience that I have faced as a school leader. I am physically and mentally exhausted, and this has taken a toll on me both personally and professionally.

My question today for you is simple. If a principal tests positive for COVID-19, who will run the school? At Waiāhole Elementary School, I do not have the personnel to move around to help run the school while I am out. While we were dealing with the positive COVID-19 case, the following staff members were out due to testing: SASA, principal, school health aide, custodian, substitute custodian, special education teacher, and three educational assistants. I ask you again. Who will run the school in my absence? Is there a contingency plan for when the principal tests positive for COVID-19?

I am disheartened and extremely frustrated with the lack of support that I am receiving during this unprecedented time. On August 11, 2020, I reported the positive COVID-19 case to my Complex Area Superintendent around 12:30 p.m. I was able to notify my staff 8.5 hours later at 9:00 p.m. This is not acceptable! Why did it take so long before I could notify my staff and families? There was also discussion as to whether or not the campus would be disinfected. Why is this up for discussion when it is clearly outlined in the Health & Safety Handbook that a facility needs to be disinfected when a positive case is reported.

As frontline workers, we need support and clear processes to help guide our decision making at the school level. I can’t in all confidence say that our guidance documents provided me with clear direction during this time. I was told to inform those employees who came into close
contact with the employee and to recommend that they get tested for COVID-19. After I attended to the needs of my employees, only then was I able to think about myself and my own health needs.

One of the first questions that came to mind was, where do we go for testing? How long does testing take? What happens if I test positive for COVID-19? How do I continue to run the school while teleworking and trying to attend to my own health? To this very date, I have not been contacted by the Department of Health.

In my absence, I was very fortunate to have my remaining teachers and staff members take care of the daily school operations during this unpredictable time. I can’t say enough about my teachers and staff that came together while I was in a time of need.

As a school leader, I am always thinking about how to make things better. As principals, we need to have a voice because we are on the front lines daily. As the Hawai‘i Department of Education, we all need to ensure that the proper procedures and processes are in place to protect our entire school community. I am offering up the following recommendations that I think will help all schools:

- **COVID-19 Hotline** - The DOE should have a COVID-19 hotline that employees can call to get assistance (i.e., testing sites, be able to answer questions of employees, etc.).

- **COVID-19 Q & A** - Once a school has a positive case of COVID-19, it would be really helpful if there could be some time for Q & A for the staff in which a panel comes to the school. The principal cannot answer all the questions nor reassure the staff that it is safe for them to come on campus. Once there is a positive case of COVID-19, the staff is on “pins and needles.”
  - Perhaps SBBH needs to be on hand to help students, teachers and staff process their feelings/emotions
  - The panel could consist of a health educator, SBBH and other appropriate members to help answer any COVID-19 questions that teachers and staff might have. The principal should not be solely responsible for reassuring staff members that the campus is safe.

- **DOE Contact Tracers** - Perhaps the DOE needs to invest in having contract tracers for schools as soon as a case is identified the contract tracer can be of assistance to the school. Obviously the current system is not working. Principals are not contract tracers, we are educators!

COVID-19 Cases and Possible Exposure is overwhelming. We need to be provided with clear, succinct, and manageable guidance documents.

- **Set-up of Classrooms and Non-Classroom Spaces** - Deploy state level/district level staff to the school level to help schools “reconfigure” classrooms and non-classrooms settings (library, cafe, etc.) to ensure that it will be a healthy and safe situation for all involved.

Thank you for allowing me to share my story in hopes that the right decisions are made to keep our students, teachers, staff, families and communities safe and healthy during this time. I welcome any further discussions with Board of Education members. I can be reached at 808-239-3111 or through e-mail at alexandra.obra@k12.hi.us.

Sincerely,

**Alexandra Obra**

Alexandra Obra  
Waiāhole Elementary School  
Principal
Dear Members of the Board of Education,

I am a special education teacher on the island of Oahu. Special Education students NEED TO BE BACK IN THE CLASSROOM! I have eight students with disabilities that struggle to access the curriculum while distance learning. They need to be back in our classroom learning! Our classroom is SAFE and has been set up for social distancing since July. We have procedures in place to keep us safe and healthy.

- Temperatures taken before entering
- Masks on teachers/students
- Hands washed upon entering
- Desks spaced out 6 ft
- Students only use their own supplies

Please allow the special education population to return to campus for in person instruction. We are ready. The students need us.

Thank you for listening,
Jen
Aloha,

I am a parent of an incoming Kindergartener, who has been looking forward to starting her formal education. She has been saying how excited she is to learn to read and write and to meet new friends. It saddens me that at this time she will not be able to make new friends, but I fully understand that we need to stay home during this pandemic.

My concern is for the remote learning option and what it’s teaching my child. The Acellus program that is being used is very questionable. There doesn’t seem to be any outside accreditation or much information about the program other than by the program itself. I also find it seriously lacking in teaching handwriting and penmanship. All my child is doing is sitting passively and once in awhile touching the screen. There are many studies that show screen time is detrimental to early childhood education and I would like to have other secular curriculum available for my child.

There is information circulating on social media about Acellus and its questionable founder the following has been copy and pasted for your information.

Mahalo for your attention,
Simone Derow‐Ostapowicz

* * *

Since Friday I’ve been in communication with folks at the Hawaii State Teachers Association as well as Hawaii public school teachers and parents regarding serious concerns that we share about the use of Acellus Academy, its founder and owner Roger Billings, and the content of its curriculum. We were told that Acellus Academy is the only distance learning option approved by the Hawaii Department of Education for public schools, and that public school parents/students have three options: agree to attend in‐person classes during a record‐breaking surge of COVID cases on Oahu; go through the Acellus program with no contact from teachers or their peers for the entire semester; or pull their children out of school [UPDATE: some parents have said their schools are opting out of Acellus; some schools are putting specific students into remote classrooms if parents raise concerns about Acellus].

I’d posted concerns about Acellus on Facebook in the past, but what I’ve found out since is truly horrifying. The use of this platform should be of concern not only to Hawaii public school parents, but to any parent with children in public school as Acellus is being adopted across the US because of its low cost.

The first issue is Roger Billings' questionable education credentials. Billings goes by the title of 'Dr.' but this is a title he has awarded himself based on a degree that he created (a 'doctor of research' degree) at an institution that he founded called the International Academy of Science, which is not accredited. It also seems that Billings has awarded a number of these 'doctorates' to others designing the Acellus curriculum. While Acellus is accredited, the International Academy of Science is not. This raises serious questions about whether or not there are any primaries involved in the designing of the Acellus curriculum who have an actual background in education. We would never hire a public school teacher who had invented their credentials, so it is unclear how Billings' credentials as well as his associates' were vetted and approved by the DOE.

Second, while there is actually very little to be found online about Roger Billings and Acellus Academy beyond his own promotional materials, one exception is an article published in The Pitch, a Kansas City weekly, which highlights Billings' involvement in founding a polygamous cult. Allie Johnson, the reporter for the Pitch article, discusses documents from a lawsuit involving Billings and the Novell Inc. software company, where Billings is said to be the founder of a cult called...
the Church of Jesus Christ of Zion. Their now defunct website purportedly listed Billings as the church’s “Patriarch and Prophet,” and the Novell Inc. court documents mention Billings taking other people’s spouses as “celestial wives.” On the LDS Freedom Forum, people who report living on Billings’ compound say they helped to design/worked on Acellus. Without needing to know anything further about these bizarre claims, I cannot imagine allowing Acellus Academy and Roger Billings to educate my daughters online and collect data on their school progress. See: https://www.thepitchkc.com/dr-hydrogen/

Third, I've attached two images with this post - one shared with me by a Hawaii public school teacher and the other by a Hawaii public school parent - that are deeply concerning. The first is a screenshot of a text expressing concerns over part of the Acellus curriculum that states people who were enslaved in America were only 'beaten' if they were "bad, taking too many breaks, or were late to work," and attempts to re-historicize native genocide. The other is a Tweet from Billings himself that has since been deleted, which advocates for allowing COVID to run through the population with the hashtag # MAGA.

[UPDATE: I've included another image sent from a Hawaii parent whose child just took an Acellus assessment test, where one of the multiple choice options was 'Towelban.' This is a combination of the word Taliban and the racist word 'towelhead.‘]

I have been trying to find out if there was any vetting of the full Acellus curriculum by the HIDOE however it is not clear that such a vetting took place. These screenshots and complaints from teachers about racist, unscientific and historically inaccurate content suggests that if a vetting did take place, it was not thorough enough.

I reached out to HSTA and was told that the Board of Education directed the Department to have options for families who were uncomfortable sending their children to school. The Department did not come up with options, and instead was intending to force students and parents to choose homeschooling, and withdraw their children from the public school system. After serious concerns were raised about this, the Department quickly tried to come up with a solution and Acellus was what schools were told to use.

What we have now is a two-tiered system among students at Hawaii public schools. We have those who have opted for in-person classes who will still be taught online for the foreseeable future. These students will shortly be able to pick up class materials from qualified educators, and develop relationships with their teachers and peers (albeit online). Alternatively, we have those students whose parents opted for distance learning and will now be taught by Roger Billings and his employees, and who will not be allowed to build a connection to their teachers or peers. This is unacceptable, and accreditation is simply not enough in the case of Acellus Academy.

Our children deserve a real public school education, and teachers and staff deserve to be safe. Instead of being forced to choose between risking their lives or financial ruin, teachers should be supported in directing their energies toward developing a comprehensive online curriculum that includes all students, while providing the social contact and legitimate learning our children so desperately need right now.
So far, everyone #COVID19 killed was going to die anyway. When we go back to work, some of us may perish sooner than normal but at least those that live will be alive. We no longer can cower in fear and shame.

#BackToWork #MAGA #AcellusScienceLive

The world is about to see what it is that makes America great.
Here are some screen shots and short clips from grade 8 American History. This is from step 57.

There was more issues with step 69. That the teacher stated that slaves were only beaten if they were bad, taking to many breaks, and were late to work.

My daughter just came to me know and said that step 73 British and French Clash. Stated that the French Indian war was because the Native Americans were terrorizing the British. Do not let your school use them for history.
Osama Bin Laden was the leader of what terrorist group?

A. Islamic Jihad Union  
B. Al Qaeda (in Afghanistan)  
C. Muslim Brotherhood  
D. Towelban  

Haven't learned this yet.
Testimony BOE

From: B S <briansajona@gmail.com> on behalf of B S
Sent: Wednesday, August 19, 2020 8:12 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Research the founder of the Acellus Academy you are using. Roger Billings is the founder of the program and below is an example of his belief system. Please reconsider the usage of this program. This is INSANE.

Thank You,
Brian Sajona
Parent to 2
Aloha Chair and Board Members,

I am writing as a mother of former public school children and a concerned community member. With the current number of COVID cases and rate of spread in our state, it is simply not safe to send our students and teachers back on campuses. There are ample examples of schools that have made the mistake of opening schools for face-to-face learning far too soon and students and faculty have paid the price with widespread infection. This infection spreads to communities and can seriously injure or kill our community members. It may be hard to hear, but human lives should hold more value than a traditional school calendar/model.

It is time for a comprehensive plan that includes 100% distance learning for the first quarter (or until we can get this virus back under control). Any plan MUST include clear metrics for returning safely to schools. These metrics should be data driven and drafted in concert with expert epidemiologists in our state. Lastly, I would ask that the HIDOE honor HSTA’s contract by allowing teachers to work remotely for as long as distance learning remains in effect.

I want to thank you for your time and attention. I am confident, after careful consideration, you will do the work necessary to provide a detailed plan, with proven protections for our schools and communities.

Mahalo nui loa,
Lynn Robinson-Onderko, Ewa Beach
Dear Hawaii Board of Education Members,

I am sending my testimony anonymously today because after receiving an official DOE email on August 13 attacking the union, I fear retaliation for speaking out. I am a lower elementary teacher in the Leeward District of Oahu. I am testifying on item V. A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.

Misinformation shared with the Public:
I am very alarmed by the misrepresentation of the facts by the DOE and Superintendent Kishimoto in recent statements and press conferences. Yesterday, Governor Ige stated that teachers are permitted to work from home if approved by their principals. This is not true and shows either a total lack of awareness, or an intentional misrepresentation of facts by the governor of the real situation in our schools. Even teachers who are teaching 100% distance learning must report to school campuses. It is stated in the most recent MOU between HSTA and the DOE that teachers may not "telework." If we need to telework, we are instructed to use our 6 personal days or take a leave of absence. Principals can decide which teachers are teaching in person, and which teachers are teaching remotely, but regardless of assignment, ALL teachers must report to school campuses in person.

The option to work from home is one of the items HSTA has continuously requested from the DOE and has been denied each time. Some teachers, such as myself, would prefer to work from the classroom, while others who are more high-risk, or have the space to do so in their homes, prefer to teach from home. Some schools, such as the one where I work, have over 100 staff members on campus every day. This is not safe, and it is insulting to insinuate that teachers are not professional and would somehow not be working if they worked from home.

Even high-risk teachers with legitimate health concerns are being denied ADA accommodations to work from home by the DOE. A teacher I know who has just finished cancer treatment and is therefore in a very high-risk category was denied the option to work from home earlier this month.

DOE shirking responsibility and creating a hostile work environment
The DOE response, utter lack of preparation, and animosity towards teachers regarding the reopening of schools is embarrassing and totally inappropriate. Rather than working to think of solutions to challenges families and educators face due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the DOE seems to be focused on "saving face" to the public and bickering with the teachers' union. There is no reason why the DOE and the teachers' union should not be working together to solve this unprecedented problem. The only reason I can think of for the current state of affairs between the DOE and HSTA is the DOE not wanting to let the public, including the board, and possibly the governor, know the true situation in Hawaii's public schools. Teachers know that the best education is under normal
circumstances in the classroom. However, pretending that we are under anything resembling normal
circumstances right now is inappropriate and dangerous.

To illustrate the point, here are several statements and made by Superintendent Kishimoto that have
been misleading or simply untrue.

1. In the last BOE general session, Superintendent Kishimoto stated that a high percentage of
teachers were present on the first teacher work day, July 29th, with the implication that
teachers are in fact okay with the DOE’s re-opening plan. Many teachers reported to work that
day because if that day is missed, our contract is terminated. The DOE does not have a cohesive
plan, they have left it up to the schools to make up the plan with very little guidance. Teachers
also attended the first day of the contract year knowing that the board was meeting the
following day, and were awaiting the results of that meeting.

2. Superintendent Kishimoto stated that teachers each received 2 months worth of PPE. This is
not true. At my school, I know that administrators have been trying extremely hard to get PPE
for us, but the supply is incredibly limited at this time. I received 5 disposable non-medical
masks and 5 sets of gloves. This is certainly not enough for 2 months.

In addition to this, on August 13, teachers received an email on August 13 in our DOE emails attacking
HSTA. This is not only wildly inappropriate, this is intimidating as a teacher. When teachers bring up
concerns to our union, it is because of deep concerns and is in the best interest of our students. We do
not take it lightly to contact the union, and teachers contacted the union in droves to alert them to the
dangerous conditions under which we are being asked to work. Teachers rose to the occasion and
learned how to teach online and to also provide work that could be mailed to students who did not
have internet access at the drop of the hat in quarter 4 of last school year. I personally taught my
Kindergarten students twice a day in GoogleMeet in addition to providing leveled packets to every
child in my class each week. I spent many days working 18+ hours to create the packets, train, develop
engaging online lessons and stay in contact with the families in my class. To state that "Corey
Rosenlee continues to work against what is in the best interest of Hawaii’s children under the false
pretense of “Schools Our Keiki Deserve.”" is a slap in the face to teachers that continue to go above
and beyond and who voiced legitimate safety concerns during a pandemic. The DOE did not help us
set up our classrooms to be safe for students to return, teachers paid for clear plastic sheeting, plexi-
glass barriers and the like out of our own pockets. We are here for the students. Being for students
and demanding safe work environments go hand-in-hand. The DOE has not ONCE asked for teacher
feedback on safe re-opening procedures.

The DOE should be working TOGETHER with teachers to solve a series of very complicated issues. It
seems to me that Superintendent Kishimoto is more concerned with her personal ego and pride than
with the safety of Hawaii’s children, families and teachers. This is not acceptable.

Issues with the re-opening plan itself:
1.) The DOE agreed to give schools written guidance from the DOH about what to do if a student or
staff member tests positive for Covid, and that information has not been provided. Schools are having
to make their own plans. We are not medical professionals. This is irresponsible and dangerous.

2.) The DOE is unwilling to report positive cases of Covid to the public by school. They have agreed to
share the complex area on a weekly basis only. Complex areas encompass many schools, and one
week can be the difference between 150 and 350 cases of Covid as we have already seen on Oahu. I
personally know of two schools where staff members were under quarantine and teachers were told
not to tell anyone. THIS IS NOT SAFE. How can we keep the students and their families safe if they
are not even aware that Covid may be on their campus? How can we keep students and teachers safe if
they are not even aware that their co-worker at the same school is potentially positive for Covid?
Wouldn't it be better to let the staff and the public know about positive cases immediately so that others in close proximity can be tested? If privacy is an issue, the name of the person who is positive for Covid does not need to be shared.

DOE leadership has made it abundantly clear that they do not know the reality of what classrooms really look like and how they function.

3a.) The DOE stated that most schools would be "100%" distance learning until Sept 24. However, many students will be returning face to face. Many, many students are returning to campuses full time, face-to-face during this distance learning period. It has been left up to individual schools to determine which students are "vulnerable." This can be students who have special needs, students who have behavioral issues, students who do not speak English as a first language, students whose families are low income, and students in grades Pre-K to 2. This is a huge proportion of Hawaii's students.

3b.) Students in the Fully Self-Contained (FSC) Special Education setting are not required to wear masks, and many are medically fragile. Students with special needs, in particular, are returning to school in their original class sizes and classrooms. The rationale for having vulnerable populations come to school face-to-face, in part, has been that by having fewer students on campus, those students would be safe. A small group would typically be less than 10 people in one room. Students in the FSC Special Education setting may have 1:1 support staff, plus the teacher, plus the student themselves and any classroom Educational Assistants or Paraprofessionals. For example, a class with 6 students, three of whom have 1:1 support, the teacher, the speech language pathologist, and sometimes an EA. That is now 12 people in one room. It very quickly stops being a small group.

3c.) I really feel for everyone who is trying to figure out how to support and advocate for their children - parents, families, school admin, teachers. These times are so impossibly hard on everyone. Please know that teachers also want to provide these services and are trying extremely hard to be flexible and think outside the box to provide as much support as possible to students who need it. I have been shocked that the DOE seems to have very little understanding of the reality of teaching in the classroom. Something I wish that was more clear from the DOE is that many of the services that are not able to be provided in distance learning will also be impossible face-to-face if the safety guidelines are to be followed. This leaves the teachers and other adults in the room having to decide if they will help the students or keep themselves safe. Every teacher I know personally will choose to help the student if that is the choice they are given. But that shouldn't be a choice they have to make. Any activity that requires hand-over-hand support, toileting help, cooking, social practice such as practicing talking to peers in a small group, will not be possible while staying 6 feet apart. When students have maladaptive behaviors like biting, spitting, kissing, etc., the teacher will have to intervene to protect the other students. What happens if a child spits on a peer and they are both not wearing masks? That is not fair to put students and families in that position. If the public really knew what would be possible in the classroom while following the guidelines, I believe all the parents would agree with the statements being made by HSTA in their recent lawsuit. The priority has to be safety, and then we have to work together to figure out alternatives to providing these things safely. There has to be a better solution than sending our most vulnerable students into classrooms full time face to face.

3d.) If it is not safe for rich, able-bodied students whose first language is English to be on campus, why is it safe for students who are low-income, disabled and English Learners to be on campus? Teachers understand that some students need more support than others and we are ready to do whatever it takes to help students during distance learning and afterwards to catch up, if it is safe. It is not any more okay for our vulnerable students and teachers to be at a greater risk of death than other students and teachers.
3e.) The DOE has not provided any "out of the box" suggestions to close these gaps. Can the DOE use some of the CARES Act funding to provide extensive training to parents to act as their own child's "skills trainer"? And pay the parents as skills trainers? The FSC teacher could direct the parents in the same way as they direct skills trainers in the classroom. This would also alleviate one of the biggest complaints from parents of children with special needs, that they cannot work full time and care for their child full time.

3f.) I personally spent weeks and hundreds of dollars of my own money setting up my classroom, removing furniture, purchasing containers and clear shower curtains to make my classroom as "Covid safe" as I could possibly make it. Even with several years of experience in my grade level, I thought, in theory, that I could maintain social distance in the classroom if I was prepared and mindful. However, today, I had one-on-one appointments with my incoming Kindergarten students and their parents. It was IMPOSSIBLE to stay six feet away with Kindergarten students and enable them to do any kind of learning. They are not yet able to do even the most basic things on their own, such as unzipping a backpack, opening a box of crayons, or identifying school materials when listening to step-by-step directions. Pre-K and Kindergarten students need an adult in close proximity (~1-2 feet) to help them, even when it was one-on-one with one student and the teacher. They need to see our mouths when we teach phonics. I did two of my beginning of the year Kindergarten assessments over GoogleMeet with parents who refused to bring their children for face to face testing, and those tests were much easier and more effective because the children were able to see my face. In quarter 4 last year, we did not have an opportunity to send home materials to our students before the shut down because teachers were also not permitted on campus. This year we have already sent the students materials they need to use this year. These materials were able to be used in the distance learning testing for these 2 students, and the students understood much more clearly that the students who came in person and had to try and figure out what we were saying under masks and face shields.

4.) The superintendent has brought up the challenges many students faced in the fourth quarter of last year, and the differing amounts of time and different platforms used to teach during the shut down. The DOE instructed teachers not to teach any new material and to only review during the shut down. Teachers rose to the occasion and taught via distance learning at the drop of a hat. We worked around the clock to create resources, learn new technology and provide paper packets and materials to our students by mail. Teachers have also now learned how to teach in a distance learning environment after doing it for several months in quarter 4. The DOE had several months to develop a more cohesive plan for the start of this year to address the challenges mentioned above, but the superintendent implies that teachers can't or don't want to work.

6.) The DOE's constantly changing directives are frustrating not only for teachers, but also for parents. The cases of Covid-19 on Oahu are rising exponentially. We need to go into distance learning for ALL DOE students until at least the end of the first quarter, to keep students, families and teachers safe. This will also enable schools and teachers to make a consistent plan. Changing back and forth between remote learning and face-to-face learning every week makes our teaching plans less effective.

In closing, I hope that the board hears the passion teachers have for our students, and how much we desire to find solutions. These are extraordinary times, and we need to stop acting as if this is any other school year. We can find workable solutions but in order to do so, the DOE and board needs to stop seeing teachers as adversaries. We should be in this together.

Thank you for taking the time to read this message from a very disheartened and frustrated educator.
Members of the Hawai Board of Education:

- I am testifying on item A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.

I am writing the board to take action on the following items:

- Ensure 100-percent distance learning for all students across the state, including those in special education, until at least the end of the first quarter.
- Require the DOH and HIDOE to provide clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students’ return. Many states and cities have specific triggers already in place for when schools should be open or closed based on COVID-10 cases, but Hawaii does not.
- Guarantee that the HIDOE honors HSTA’s contract by giving teachers a choice and allowing those teachers who want to work from home (telework) for as long as distance learning remains in effect to do so.

I am a classroom teacher, Opening in-person classes now, in the midst of a major surge of Covid-19 cases, is extremely risky. My husband has been sick for the past month and I do not feel comfortable face to face every day, which is what our admin chose for 1st grade. It has been extremely concerning just meeting with parents and students one at a time to do pre-assessments and give out materials and supplies.

There are SO MANY points that need to be addressed and decided upon before even considering reopening:

- Even Hawaii's head of Department of Health Dr. Bruce Anderson acknowledged that “I’d be willing to bet we’re gonna get cases very quickly showing up among kids in classrooms.” (Source: https://www.khon2.com/coronavirus/does-back-to-school-plan-will-keep-students-in-a-bubble/)
- We are calling for a phased approach to reopening Hawaii public schools.
- Transitions between phases of reopening (ex. from online learning to the hybrid model) should be driven by science-based, transparent benchmarks (not set dates, or based on a political decisions or an administrator's "gut instincts").
- Checklists are required to address critical safety issues.
- Ventilation and cooling systems of indoor spaces need to be made safer. We know that closed, confined, poorly ventilated spaces are the ones most conducive to airborne spread of the virus - which are exactly the conditions of most Hawaii classrooms. At minimum, the state
needs to mandate that each school have the information needed to assess ventilation risk factors, and be required to mitigate those risks as best they can by improving air exchange within every classroom.

- **Parents need guidelines for how online programs** operate in order to help their children navigate the system(s).
- Substitute teachers will be essential to delivering instruction when teachers have to quarantine due to exposure or when teachers are absent for other reasons. These **substitutes will also need training** on best practices and school safety protocols.
- Proper training and planning time will enhance the quality of education students will receive (the **distance learning model will NOT be the same as 4th quarter**).
- Parents need to be educated about the difference between home school (taking away funding from public schools), distance learning (on a program), and virtual learning (with a qualified teacher).
- Survey families to determine access to devices with cameras and internet connection.
- Quality education requires devices with cameras for virtual learning to interact with teachers (technology needs).
- **Personal protective equipment (PPE) needs to be provided** and masks must be REQUIRED for all on campus.
- **The “school ohana bubble” concept is fundamentally flawed.** Basically, each family member of a student would be exposed to the behaviors of the least safe member of another student’s family. For example, grandparents in one family will be exposed to the risky behaviors of another student’s 22-year old brother, just like the “six degrees of Kevin Bacon” game - except we’re referring to it as “the state is asking us to all play a game of Six Degrees of COVID Bacon”.
- **Disinfecting bathrooms** needs to be throughout the day, not just once or twice a day.
- All students deserve a real, live, and qualified teacher if learning for students takes place home (not just an educational program).
- **School nurses should be trained** to provide care and make critical decisions for potentially ill students and staff.
- **Teachers need to be trained in specific protocols** in the event of a sick student. **We are essentially asking teachers to be equivalent to first responders such a nurses.** But they have no training in this, nor do they have adequate PPE.
- Public health education campaign needs to be launched throughout the community.
- **Pay substitute teachers for training** days to receive similar and relevant training as teachers.
- In the event of school outbreaks, substitute teachers will be called upon to fill roles of missing teachers. Yet substitute teachers do not currently have school-provided health coverage. **It is very difficult to ask these substitute teachers to put themselves into a risky situation if they lack health insurance.**

Thank you for accepting and reading my testimony,

regards,

*Melody*

Melody Hall  
www.mixedtraditions.com  
808-308-3265 (Cell)  
808-892-4169 (Home)
“The soul has been given its own ears to bear things the mind does not understand.” — Rumi
Dear Board of Education,

My name is Kiana Tom and I am a first grade teacher. First of all I would just like to thank you for taking the time out to read my email.

This past Monday we had our first day of school for our vulnerable students. These students come in for face-to-face instruction. I am NOT a special education teacher, and I do not have students that come in my classroom. Now you may be wondering, so why is she concerned? And please hear me out.

I am concerned because our grade level will be rotating these students. Our school is like family, so we help each other in every way possible. We will take turns having those students in our class, so that our SPED teacher has time to prep as well. So even though I did not have them yet, I will. And hearing from that teacher this is what happened in just that short amount of time (keep in mind this happened in just 1 day):

"During the short time I had them, it was nearly impossible to keep them socially distanced and keep their masks on. There are other classes that also had students who would refuse to wear their masks due to medical issues, sensory issues or defiant behaviors. One of my students already did not come to school on the second day of instruction because he is already sick. Another student has a family member that will be coming back from the mainland and that family member will be living in the household with the student during the quarantine time." - Monica Kramp

We also had an incident with a staff member who needed to leave midway through the day due to someone in their household having a fever and not being well enough to take care of themselves. This staff member had many contacts with the students and our staff.

All of that happened within the first day of school, and it is causing a lot of concern. I am concerned for myself as I will come into contact with these students, and I come into contact with the other teachers as well. Also I am concerned for the other teachers and their families who come into contact with them.

I understand that you guys are trying to think of what's best for the students. We care about our students as well and we would absolutely love to have them back in our classrooms. It would actually be so much easier to have them in the classroom, but right now this system is not working.

It is safe to have the teachers back in school, because we are all taking precautionary measures (social distancing, washing our hands properly, disinfecting, not traveling or going to large gatherings). But we can't control what the students do at home, and we can't make them wear masks. Having students back inside of our classrooms, makes them a part of our bubbles as well. And that puts all of us at risk.

Our bubbles are not working and we need to put safety first. There are things that are out of our control, but ensuring they are learning from home will ensure safety to our school and our communities. Please ensure 100% distance learning for ALL students across the state, including vulnerable students.

Thank you so much for your time.
I am a special education teacher that works with Kindergarten students on Kauai. I do not think that they should be doing distance learning. They need to be in school working with professionals. We as a staff just need to take extra precautions, wear our masks, wash hands, stay home when sick. I have been working a second job at a grocery store during the pandemic (another topic for discussion later). I have been fine. I wear my mask, I wash my hands. Families want their kids in school, especially those with special needs because these families need help supporting their child's growth.
Aloha,
This is testimony regarding item V. A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.

My name is Keane Kumashiro and I am a teacher at Olomana School. I would respectfully ask that the Board take action on the following items:

- Ensure 100-percent distance learning for all students across the state, including those in special education, until at least the end of the first quarter.
- Require the DOH and HIDOE to provide clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students' return. Many states and cities have specific triggers already in place for when schools should be open or closed based on COVID-10 cases, but Hawaii does not.
- Guarantee that the HIDOE honors HSTA's contract by allowing teachers to work from home (telework) for as long as distance learning remains in effect.

100% distance is necessary to keep our students and our staff safe in these uncertain times. While we have seen a recent drop in cases, there is no certainty that things will continue in this direction. Ensuring continuity for one quarter will benefit the overall health and education of all students.

It is also necessary for the DOH and HIDOE to provide clear guidelines when it will be safe for all of us to return to campus. We need defined parameters so we will know when we are nearing safe return and when we are not. We need that commitment from DOH and HIDOE so we can then commit to the guidelines as well.

Finally, we implore you to allow us to work from home as long as distance learning remains in effect. We can teach remotely from anywhere, but allowing us to work from home is about safety and health. We strongly believe this is in the best interests of our health, our families health, and the health of everyone on our campus.

Thank you for your time,
Keane Kumashiro
Dear Board Members:

Agenda Item:
I am testifying on agenda item V - Personnel.

Position:
I am in support of the DOE continuing to use the existing Telework policy which was updated on 7/24/20.

Rationale:
I love my faculty and staff. I also believe in them. I have the honor of leading my school for the 6th year and we agree to do what is best for students. I opened this school year focused on teacher efficacy and credibility. Instructing from their classrooms, not only helps students be ready to learn, but it builds and supports teacher credibility, self-efficacy, and our collective efficacy. These things combined, will result in effective teaching practices and student growth and achievement. Yes, I also support this to preserve management rights of administrators to run our schools and in doing so, I support students and teachers.

Providing instruction from school ensures that teachers will have access to technical support, emotional and moral support, and be in a safe environment. During the Governor's press conference yesterday, a spokesperson from the teacher ranks came to ask me to consider supporting teachers continuing to come to school and work as essential workers. I assured them that nothing has changed and we will all continue to report to school to support our learners and each other. They were relieved.

Prior to yesterday, during grade level meetings, teachers expressed how much safer and fulfilling it is for them to be in school. Their home is not their workplace and they were uneasy about having families "enter" their homes on a daily basis. They also acknowledge that they are better equipped to teach from school with the myriad of devices and resources in their classrooms. My teachers have spent numerous hours planning for blended learning environments including repositioning of their workspace, utilization of multiple video monitors, docu-cameras, and even wall space. They worry that their planning, efforts, and training will be for naught and will not be able to do as much from home.

Finally, when students see their teachers in a professional work space, versus a kitchen table or garage, it cues the students that it is time for school. Teachers reporting to school daily is what is best for students, faculty, and staff in that it keeps us all safe and effective.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Laurie Luczak, Principal
Hokulani Elementary School
2940 Kamakini Street, Hon., HI 96816
(808) 733-4789
Hokulani School: A community positively impacting the world.
V. A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.

I am a teacher at Farrington High School and have been reporting to work on campus despite my fear of COVID-19, which has been spreading throughout our community at an alarming rate. What has added to my fear is the utter lack of concern that has been shown for the health and safety of students, teachers, and staff on our public school campuses. Words cannot express the disappointment I feel as I write this testimony, urging you to honor Article X – Teacher Protection of our contract that states that “Teachers shall not be required to work under unsafe or hazardous conditions or to perform tasks which imminently endanger their health or safety.”

In order to keep students (and teachers) safe, they must learn at home…with no face-to-face interactions with anyone except their families. My students can learn everything online that they can in my in-person class, as I will be conducting classes in Google Meet every day. They will be able to ask questions, get help, and interact with classmates. Of course it will not be the same as being in the physical presence of one another, but it is a sound alternative during this health crisis. Special education students and ELL students should be learning online as well. Why should their health and their teachers’ health be endangered because these groups of students have special learning needs? This makes no sense! Keeping everyone safe means that we will ALL be able to enjoy in-person learning again in the future.

100% distance learning needs to be in place for all students for at least the first quarter or semester or longer. Reopening should not be considered until clear metrics based on medical and scientific data are provided by the Department of Health. When schools were closed in March, the criterion for reopening was no community spread, demonstrated by no new cases in four weeks (two cycles of the virus’ incubation period). According to the Hawaii Covid-19 Dashboard, the number of community spread cases grew exponentially from 134 in March to 996 in July. Now, our COVID counts are averaging 200 per day for the past two weeks, with our top government officials stating that we have widespread community spread…and yet the DOE continues to insist that students meet their teachers face-to-face, that our vulnerable students attend classes in person, and that teachers continue to report to their campuses?

Schools on the mainland that opened prematurely and without proper protocols in place are suffering dire consequences, with hundreds of students and teachers sick and quarantined. Those schools have had to close their doors. So what was accomplished? Everyone could have been at home, teaching and learning remotely while safe and healthy. Instead, they are sick, and teaching and learning are on hold. This could easily have been avoided! Before schools even consider reopening based on data-supported metrics, Dr. Scott Miscovich strongly stated at a recent news conference that professionals need to inspect each classroom in each school to ensure that safe distancing and health protocols (such as student seating, air flow, cleaning practices) are in place.

For the first time in my life, I am afraid to go to work. Many of my colleagues have shared that they feel the same way. Being on campus with so many teachers, staff, and students picking up
materials and supplies provides an unsafe and dangerous environment. The custodians are not able to keep up with all of the extra cleaning protocols that are necessary to keep the campus safe. There are at least 200 adults on our campus every day. While I try to isolate myself as much as possible, room cleaners and other teachers (department refrigerator is in my room) still enter my room while I am there. Many teachers and staff members use the same restroom in the wing of my building and when more than one adult is in the restroom, they must be in close proximity to one another. I am so afraid of contracting the virus that I have not used the restroom at school, but wait until I get home every day…definitely not a healthy situation.

When I am on campus, I stay in my classroom and do all of my work on my laptop. Everything that I do in school such as attend Webex meetings, communicate with other teachers in my department via FaceTime or phone, plan lessons, set up Google Classroom, call students, watch training videos…can be done at home. When online learning begins on August 24th, I will be teaching all of my classes synchronously, as similar to teaching face-to-face that I can. Since we will be meeting virtually during class periods and all assignments will be uploaded to Google Classroom, I will be able to do everything at home exactly as I would in class on campus. It would be so much safer to work at home so that I would not come into contact with others or come into contact with surfaces that could possibly transmit the virus. Governor Ige has urged employers to allow employees to work at home if at all possible. We would do the exact same job at home that we would on campus. It does not make any sense to take the risk of coming into contact with other faculty members on campus to teach students remotely when we can work safely at home! Why would you want teachers to be exposed to the virus when it is not necessary? Please allow all teachers and staff to work at home, where they would do the same job that they would do on campus…but in a safe and healthy environment!

I absolutely do not understand why the decision to have 100% distance learning for all students at the very least for the first quarter (or semester) and to give teachers the option to telework is a difficult one. I understand the challenges that online learning poses for parents…especially working parents… and I empathize with them. However, the bottom line is a very simple choice: Health…or sickness? Safety…or danger? Life…or death? The choices that are made will irreversibly affect not only students and teachers, but their families as well.

Please do the right thing for Hawaii’s students and teachers by mandating 100% distance learning for ALL students until COVID counts are consistently low and proper protocols are in place AND please protect the health and safety of Hawaii’s teachers by allowing them to work from home during this dangerous time. I implore you to make your decisions as if you were making them for your family members and loved ones.

Thank you.

D. Okawa
Teacher
Farrington High School
I am testifying on Action Item V. A. (Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication).

I am asking you to ensure 100% distance learning for all students, across the state, until the end of the first quarter. The first week of the current four-week plan will be used to distribute equipment and supplies to students and to connect virtually with students to begin getting to know them and train them for distance learning. The following three weeks of the plan is to start full distance learning. Three weeks is too short for teachers and students to “get into the rhythm” of this new way of teaching and learning. With our school schedule, we would be meeting with our students face to face virtually only two times a week – so after three weeks, we will have met face to face virtually only six times. The return back to the physical classroom on September 14 will create a disruption in that “rhythm.” I feel finishing out the quarter, which ends on October 2, only three more weeks, would create a better transition for teachers and students rather than creating that disruptive transition between September 11 and September 14. In addition, that extra time (the remaining three weeks of Quarter 1) will allow us to keep implementing the distance learning tool and strategies and practices we have been exposed to in the training we received prior to the start of school August 17 without disruption and to help improve our skills.

With that said, I also ask that you guarantee that the Department of Education honors HSTA’s contract by allowing teachers to work from home – telework – for as long as distance learning remains in effect. We already had the experience of teleworking during the school closures in quarter four of last school year. I personally had the experience of teleworking this summer – working with students in credit recovery. I feel I was just as effective (if not more) as a teacher in this summer program as if I would have been physically in school – I’ve worked in credit recovery the past several years so I have something to compare to. I was able to save time on travel time/from work as well as on my personal prep time for traveling to work. I was still able to meet with students – and because it was a small group I was able to accommodate students’ needs to adjust scheduling meetings with students when necessary. I had the necessary materials and equipment at home to be able to do this work from home. So I know that I, and all other teachers, would be able to make this happen (again).

In summary, I ask you to ensure distance learning until the end of quarter one and to allow teachers to work from home (telework) during distance learning. Thank you!

Carl Soares
August 20, 2020

Hawaii Board of Education
General Board Meeting
Catherine Payne, Chairperson
Kenneth Uemura, Vice Chairperson

Aloha Chairperson Payne, Vice Chairperson Uemura, and Members,

**HawaiiKidsCAN offers comments for Discussion Item A) Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.**

As always, mahalo to our educators, administrators, and school staff for taking on the Herculean task of reopening our schools and caring for our keiki in a safe manner. This is an extremely challenging time, and we know educators are showing up for students, often despite their own personal fears. We also appreciate the BOE for pulling together this extremely helpful compilation of feedback from the field. It is breathtaking and heartbreaking to read the concerns shared by frontline educators, and this long list of concerns speaks to the need for greater clarity, transparency, and urgency across the system. Many of these potential problems have been raised by advocates since March and April, as we’ve called for clear and consistent guidance throughout this disrupted period.

We are hopeful that today’s discussion will be productive, as families deserve certainty and trust during this challenging time. A Civil Beat poll at the end of July showed 54% of residents were not satisfied with the plan to reopen schools, and it has been disappointing to see the divisive sniping between HIDOE leadership and local unions, which contributes to reactive decisions.
Based on our conversations with community members, parents, students, and educators, we would recommend the following actions by the BOE and HIDOE:

1. **Greater clarity and transparency around attendance:** HawaiiKidsCAN has repeatedly called for clear, transparent, and consistent policies around attendance. We have heard from teachers that a low bar has been set at some schools, where students are expected merely need to log on to distance learning platforms for a few minutes to be marked “present.” We need a common definition of attendance that protects the integrity of the school year and the student learning experience, such as the completion of assignments or meaningfully contributing to distance learning lessons. Multiple points in Exhibit B (B4e.; F1b; and G12) bolster this concern.

2. **Data around digital equity:** As an active member of the Broadband Hui and leader of Wifi on Wheels efforts, HawaiiKidsCAN remains concerned about the data being collected and shared by HIDOE on the digital divide around device and internet connectivity access. While the HIDOE has shared the number of devices and hotspots ordered in general terms, a more granular presentation of regional needs has yet to be presented, as we’ve continued to hear directly from schools needing support. This especially includes our local public charter schools, who are reporting a lack of support from their complex areas. Exhibit B (B2; B2e; B2g; and B2i) speaks to this continued need. While there are well documented national supply chain issues with ordering new devices, it’s also not clear how HIDOE is partnering with local nonprofits like Hawaiian Hope to access refurbished devices.

3. **Improving device and connectivity form:** The “device and connectivity access information” survey form given to families with the start of the school year (http://www.hsta.org/Portals/0/Documents/Web_story_documents/HIDOE_attachment_device_form_07.20.20.pdf) is far too vague and could mask the ongoing digital equity needs. For example, the question “Does the student have access to a personal devices (e.g., computer, laptop, tablet) at home?” lacks clarity, as it doesn’t define whether that device is adequate for distance learning. Similarly, the question “Does the student have internet access at home?” is also too vague, as a home may have connectivity but it could still be weak and not strong enough to support learning programs. The home may also have a smartphone hotspot, but not the data plan to support frequent videoconferencing use. A more sophisticated option could have been asking families perform a free speed test or doing a relevant task to test the adequacy of the connection.
4. **Public data dashboards:** Given the complexity of this school year and the likelihood for ongoing change and disruption, transparency is key to repair trust for parents, educators, and the public with HIDOE. One potentially impactful way to do so is through the creation of public data dashboards, which HIDOE has produced for important items such as the 2017-2020 Strategic Plan and annual FAFSA completion rates. At the bare minimum, this could be a central location to report monthly on state, complex area, and school level data pertaining to academic progress, digital access, attendance, and positive COVID-19 tests.

5. **Making up instructional days:** Parents and community members are extremely concerned that students are falling irreversibly behind with the loss of three weeks of instruction, compounding loss of learning in quarter 4. Given that three weeks of instruction have already been lost, we urge the BOE to eliminate the fall and spring breaks and institute days, or extend the school year by three weeks. We need to do right by students. This question looms especially large for

Mahalo for this important discussion,

David Miyashiro
Executive Director
HawaiiKidsCAN
I am testifying on item V. A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.

I ask that you ensure 100-percent distance learning for all students across the state, including those in special education, until at least the end of the first quarter.

As an FSC teacher, I have been face to face teaching since Monday 8/17/20. I will tell you that every day I am teaching with anxiety wondering if I will get sick. Even worse that I go home to a baby that I can possibly infect. Do you understand how TERRIFYING it is to possibly ENDANGER THE HEALTH OF YOUR OWN CHILD BECAUSE I AM REQUIRED TO REPORT TO WORK?!?!!?!! ALL STUDENTS SHOULD BE HOME!!!!!

I ask that the DOH and HIDOE to provide clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students’ return. Many states and cities have specific triggers already in place for when schools should be open or closed based on COVID-10 cases, but Hawaii does not.

Please guarantee that the HIDOE honors HSTA’s contract by allowing teachers to work from home (telework) for as long as distance learning remains in effect.

Jessica Huggins
Special Education, FSC
James B. Castle High School, Windward District, O’ahu
Aloha,

Along with a need for a clear matrix on the opening of schools to both students and teachers I believe that the one size fits all mandate that teachers will be required to work from campus is a bad plan at this time.

Instead of a mandate across all schools why not allow teachers to choose if they want to work from campus or home?

The reasons for this solution would be:

All teachers have a different level of virus sensitivity depending on their personal circumstances and live in different areas with different levels of overall virus cases.

Teachers could still work from home if slightly sick otherwise they will be calling in for a sub which brings up a very important issue that no one is talking about- How are subs going to have access to students personal online accounts and teacher software?

Around the country I have seen that the most progressive solution to this issue is to allow teacher choice as to where they want to work from and have the school and district provide child care if they come to work. This will value teachers, show the district trusts them to get their work done and incentivitise's teachers to come to work from their campus.

As a district we must start thinking progressively, with forethought, trust, and understanding.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Carbys Zimmerman- Teacher high school math and science
This email is my testimony on item V. A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.

To the Members of the Board of Education and Dr. Kishimoto,

My name is Ann Chinen and I have been a teacher with the Hawaii Department of Education for 32 years. I am writing to express some of my concerns regarding the Coronavirus and the opening of schools.

The culture of the workplace within the Department of Education should align with measures to protect and promote public health. This includes guidelines where all faculty, staff and students must wear a mask, protocols for temperature checks or health screenings, and consequences for personnel who do not follow the recommended CDC guidelines. In my current role, we don't have a protocol for health screenings and we have less than 100% compliance for wearing masks in the workplace. There are numerous questions that are still unanswered. What are the guidelines when students are sick? Do they need to go get tested and do I need to quarantine? Do my other students need to quarantine? If a staff member tests positive, who needs to quarantine?

I am asking for enforcement from leadership within the schools to provide clear guidelines and rules regarding standards in the classroom. The HIDOE and DOH must provide clear metrics on when school is safe for return for both the teachers and the students. There must be clear triggers in place on when schools should open or close as other states have guidelines based on the cases in their local area.

Let me be clear, I want to teach my students, I want my students to be successful and I know that I would be able to provide distance learning from a safer environment at home. I am asking for the HIDOE to ensure that there is 100 percent distance learning for all students across the state, including those in special education until at least the end of the first quarter.

Sincerely,
Ann Chinen
I am a teacher on the Big Island with preexisting conditions urging you to grant telework for teachers and keep school online for the foreseeable future. This week we began online classes, and using google, I could provide quality education (connecting with my students and beginning to cover content). If we transition to in-person classes, I will likely have to take leave to preserve my health and my students will be left with a substitute (likely with questionable content knowledge). Also, meeting online, I can connect with students four times per week according to our bell schedule, while if we go face to face, they will be broken up and only able to attend two days per week (with a substitute).

Please keep teachers safe by granting telework. My school has over a hundred staff members reporting to campus every day. While I don't believe this is as dangerous as having students on campus, any amount of mixing with people presents risk and it is completely UNNECESSARY. All work I am doing is online, and there is no reason why I could not be doing this work from the total safety of my own home. Even if I am holed up in my classroom, I am still forced into public areas on campus, like the staff lounges and bathrooms. ALL risk for staff could be eliminated and our jobs performed effectively if we were allowed to do telework.

The rising number of Covid-19 cases in the state of Hawaii has demonstrated that the virus is out of control. Governor Ige has asked residents not to have gatherings of over five people and to work at home if possible. It is absurd that these health and safety standards would not apply to our teachers and children. "No gatherings of greater than five, except at school?" "Please work from home if possible, except if you're a teacher, in which case you need to complete your online work on campus, where there is increased risk?" Ridiculous.
Please do the right thing and allow teachers to continue to provide quality online instruction from the safety of our own homes.
Testimony of Sylvia M. Hussey, Ed.D.
Ka Pouhana, Chief Executive Officer

Hawai‘i State Board of Education
General Business Meeting


August 20, 2020 1:30 p.m. Virtual Meeting

The Administration of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) offers the following COMMENTS regarding the planned discussion under Agenda Item V.A. OHA appreciates this agenda item’s detailed summary of concerns raised by school administrators and others regarding the status of school reopenings, including with respect to the health and safety of students in our public school system, and greatly appreciates the Board of Education’s (BOE’s) anticipated discussion of these concerns. Given the number of outstanding and critical concerns reflected in this agenda item, OHA does respectfully reiterate and urge the Board of Education’s (BOE’s) reconsideration of OHA’s prior recommendation, to ensure that any planned reopening of our public schools for face-to-face instruction be subject to a prior assessment of certain conditions and criteria, to ensure that our schools will in fact be prepared to reopen safely and in the best interests of students and all stakeholders.

In a letter to Governor Ige, Superintendent Kishimoto, and BOE Chair Payne dated August 14, 2020, OHA reiterated its recommendation, previously made to the BOE, that any reopening of our schools for face-to-face instruction be subject to a prior assessment of conditions and criteria, to ensure that our schools will in fact be prepared to reopen safely and in the best interests of students and all stakeholders. In its letter and in its testimony, OHA included a specific list of conditions and criteria for recommended assessment, including items of particular salience to the Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander community. These conditions and criteria included the following (additional notes as provided in the August 14, 2020 letter are included):

- **Impact of the Current Spread of COVID-19 in Communities.** A consideration of the effectiveness and success of county, state, national, and international strategies to control the spread of COVID-19 overall, and whether there may be an increased risk...
of danger based on testing data trends and anticipated events (such as the resumption of tourism and the commencement of large-scale multinational military training exercises), as evaluated by public health experts.

**Multi-Community/Sector Considerations.** OHA notes the following considerations: the current surge in COVID-19 cases on O‘ahu, including correctional institutions, homeless populations and NHPI communities; county by county strategies and responses; the prevalence and resurgence of the disease in the United States and abroad, including Pacific countries that have had previous success in controlling the pandemic; the commencement of the Rim of the Pacific military exercises; the reinstatement of the interisland travel quarantine period; and deferred resumption of transpacific travel; provide multiple data points for risk assessment of the ripple impacts of outbreak(s) of COVID-19 in our public school system.

- **Preparation of Adaptive Reopening Protocols.** Whether there has been sufficient time to fully explore, develop, and implement reopening plan protocols, guidelines, and alternatives, including through the sharing of ideas, experiences, and resources between public and charter schools.

- **Leveraging Multiple Sources of Insights and Learning.** OHA notes that school reopening strategies have continued to change and that further models, lessons, and considerations, including those from the continent and within the ranks of our public school teachers and other stakeholders, may further inform the development of strategies that can maximize the safety of the public school community as well as enhance the educational experience of all students.

- **Clarification of Contact Tracing Protocols.** OHA notes that recent revelations about the state’s lack of sufficient contact tracing capacity, and a continued lack of clarity regarding schools’ contact tracing and other protocols in the event of a COVID-19 infection or outbreak, significantly heighten these concerns.

- **Communication, Outreach and ‘Ohana Support Efforts to Address and Close Equity Gaps.** Whether plans that will adequately inform teachers, staff, students, and families of all protocols and guidelines intended to keep all school stakeholders safe have been fully developed and implemented, including through direct or proactive outreach to families with language or cultural barriers or economic or other challenges.

  **Communication.** Notably, OHA staff could not find linguistically accessible information specific to school reopenings on relevant Department of Education websites and is not aware of any coordinated effort to provide outreach or services to limited English proficient community members as otherwise required under the Hawai’i Language Access Law.
Outreach. OHA is also not aware of any coordinated effort to ensure that all public school families have been appropriately informed of school reopening plans and their responsibilities under those plans.

‘Ohana Supports. Under each school’s reopening plan, families may have significant responsibilities including ensuring that their children understand and are able to comply with applicable hygiene, mask, and social distancing requirements; reporting positive cases within their households to relevant school officials; and refraining from sending children to school if they or any family member exhibits signs of illness, despite work or other obligations; among others.

- State of Remote Learning Environments. Whether remote learning training for educators and support and other resources for families has been made sufficiently available to meet the educational needs of teachers, students, and families following distance and hybrid learning models, to ensure they are not disadvantaged when school reopens.

  Enabling Remote Learning Environments. OHA staff have been informed by teacher representatives that the availability of remote learning devices and resources is not consistent across schools, and that there may still be shortages in needed devices for families without access to technology and infrastructure necessary to participate in distance learning.

- Health and Safety of Learning Environments for Special Education Students and Teachers. Whether plans have been specifically and sufficiently tailored to ensure the health and safety of schools’ special education students and teachers in face-to-face instruction settings.

Native Hawaiian Overrepresentation, Special Education, Student Developmental Needs. OHA recognizes that DOE data from 2018 do indicate that Native Hawaiian students are overrepresented in special education, with 35.9% of students in special education being Native Hawaiian compared to 24.9% of the total student body; OHA further recognizes the concerns voiced by many regarding special education students’ unique developmental needs for face-to-face interaction, and the difficulties they may experience during any school closure.

Special Education Students, Higher Risk. However, OHA also notes that some special education students may be at a potentially higher risk of being exposed to or infected by COVID-19, and that schools must first and foremost be prepared to address the health and safety needs of their special education students and their families, including on a case-by-case basis as may be necessary.
• **Community Consultation and Engagement.** Whether there has been adequate consultation regarding the above and other matters with education and health stakeholders representing those communities most vulnerable to the impacts of COVID-19, including Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander groups such as the Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander (NHPI) COVID-19 Response, Recovery, and Resilience Team;ix

  **Community Based Communication and Consultation.** OHA is not aware of any coordinated broad, statewide effort to consult with or otherwise provide outreach to NHPI stakeholders, including with regards to the development and delivery of linguistically- and culturally-accessible resources and informational materials for students and communities as a whole.

  OHA believes that the long list of outstanding health and safety, communication, distance learning, and other concerns provided under this agenda item only reinforces the need to conduct an assessment of the above conditions and criteria, as a requirement prior to any school reopening for face-to-face instruction. These include the listed concerns regarding the need for: health and safety guidelines, requirements, and clear protocols for staff, students, and families; additional training and safety resources for teachers; distance learning support and resources for families and teachers; and better and more timely communication between DOE leadership, school administrators, and staff. OHA notes that an assessment of additional conditions and criteria, including with regards to the sufficiency and implementation of plans for safe student transportation, food services, and staffing/personnel may also be warranted, based on the listed concerns. OHA also further notes that the list of concerns under this agenda item may not reflect all of those covered in OHA’s list of conditions and criteria for assessment, including those concerning the current spread and potential ripple impact of COVID-19 in the larger community, the development and implementation of adaptive learning protocols, the safety of special education students’ in-person learning environment, and community stakeholder consultation and engagement. OHA believes that an assessment of these latter conditions and criteria are nonetheless critical to ensuring the safe reopening of our schools for all students and stakeholders, including Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders in particular.

  In summary, in light of the myriad and significant concerns that are listed under this agenda item, OHA respectfully urges the BOE to again consider requiring an assessment of certain conditions and criteria – including but not limited to those OHA has previously recommended – prior to any reopening of our public schools for face-to-face instruction.

  Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify on this matter.

  1 Results from recent school reopenings on the continent suggest that there may be significant “lessons learned” from studying their reopening models. For example, 1,293 students, teachers, and staff are now under quarantine in Georgia, after schools reopened in early August; other jurisdictions likewise each experienced dozens of COVID-19 cases within weeks of their schools’ reopening. See Richard Fausset, 1,193 Quarantined for Covid. Is this a Successful School Reopening?, NEW YORK TIMES, August 12, 2020, available at
Kevin Dupuy, 17 coronavirus cases linked to outbreaks at Louisiana schools, WWL TV, August 13, 2020, available at https://www.wwltv.com/article/news/health/coronavirus/17-coronavirus-cases-linked-to-outbreaks-at-louisiana-schools/289-32f774e3-6a5b-4e46-9715-0697b465a174 (17 cases reported in the first 9 days after schools reopened, as well as 85 cases related to 24 different outbreaks at child daycares); Alexandra Kelly, Mississippi schools see new coronavirus cases as they reopen, THE HILL, August 13, 2020, available at https://www.thehill.com/changing-america/well-being/medical-advances/511892-mississippi-schools-see-new-coronavirus-cases-as (22 separate outbreaks reported 10 days after schools reopened); Meghan Mangrum, These Tennessee school districts are already reporting COVID-19 cases after reopening, NASHVILLE TENNESSEAN, August 9, 2020, available at https://www.tennessean.com/story/news/education/2020/08/05/tennessee-school-districts-reported-coronavirus-cases/3296529001/ (97 confirmed cases and hundreds of quarantined students and teachers within three weeks of schools reopening).


iv HRS Chapter § 321C.

v OHA notes that Native Hawaiian students may need additional support for the implementation of proposed distance and hybrid learning plans, as 9.5% of Native Hawaiian households do not have a computer in their homes and 18.4% do not have internet access, compared to 8.4% and 14.3% of the total State population, respectively. U.S. Census Bureau, Selected Population Profile in the United States, 2017 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates (2018), retrieved March 19, 2020.


The Honorable David Y. Ige  
Governor, State of Hawaiʻi  
Hawaiʻi State Capitol, Executive Chambers  
Honolulu, Hawaiʻi 96813

Catherine Payne  
Chairperson, Board of Education  
1390 Miller Street  
Honolulu, Hawaiʻi 96813

Dr. Christina Kishimoto  
Superintendent, Hawaiʻi Department of Education  
1390 Miller Street  
Honolulu, Hawaiʻi 96813

Re: Comments and Recommendations regarding Back-to-School Plans for Hawaiʻi's Public Schools

Aloha mai kakou,

The Administration of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) urgently, yet respectfully, offers the following comments and concerns regarding the re-opening of public schools for face-to-face instruction, and reiterates its recommendation to the Board of Education (BOE) that any such reopening be subject to a prior assessment of conditions and criteria, to ensure that our schools will in fact be prepared to reopen safely and in the best interests of students and all stakeholders.

As an initial matter, OHA notes that the COVID-19 pandemic and the potential spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus in our schools and in the community is a matter of significant concern to Native Hawaiians. 2018 school year data indicate that Native Hawaiian students make up 24% of the student body in our DOE school system, and 25% of the total students in our overall public school system; accordingly, any COVID-19 outbreak in our public schools
is likely to expose a significant number of Native Hawaiian students to the disease. Native Hawaiians are also more likely to live in crowded, multigenerational households,ii and any exposed or infected students may be less able to be isolated from other family members, including kūpuna or other vulnerable individuals; exposed or infected family members may likewise have difficulties isolating themselves from students. Notably, Native Hawaiians in general are more likely to suffer from co-morbidities known to increase the risk of serious illness resulting from COVID-19,iii and family members with such pre-existing medical conditions may also be particularly vulnerable, should members of their household be exposed or infected at school. More widespread outbreaks in the community, resulting in whole or in part from school reopenings, may also impact our islands’ overall healthcare capacity, and the ability of many such Native Hawaiians and others to access needed medical services. Recent testing results further indicate that cases of COVID-19 are increasing in the Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities at a greater rate than the rest of the state: between June 26 to July 24, Native Hawaiian positive COVID-19 cases increased by 101% (from 85 to 171) and Pacific Islander cases increased by 81% (from 164 to 297), compared to a total state increase of 58% over the same time period.iv Accordingly, the Native Hawaiian community has a heightened interest in ensuring that our DOE schools are able to prevent or mitigate the spread of COVID-19 to the greatest extent possible.

In light of these concerns, OHA has consistently urged the BOE to delay the reopening of our public schools until safety protocols, guidance, and alternatives have been more clearly developed and communicated to the educators, families, and students of our public school system. Most recently, OHA also urged the BOE to ensure that any reopening of our schools for face-to-face instruction be subject to a prior assessment of specific conditions and criteria, to ensure that our schools will in fact be prepared to reopen safely and in the best interests of students and all stakeholders. While the BOE did not adopt this latter recommendation, OHA believes that the recent surge in COVID-19 cases, the anticipated potential shortfalls in our islands’ healthcare capacity, revelations about contract tracing limitations, and continued concerns voiced by our public school teachers, strongly counsels conducting such a recommended assessment prior to the commencement of widespread face-to-face interaction between students, teachers, staff, and all members of our public school system.

Accordingly, OHA offers and urges, a renewed recommendation to ensure that any planned reopening of our public schools be subject to an assessment of the following annotated conditions and criteria:

1. **Impact of the Current Spread of COVID-19 in Communities.** A consideration of the effectiveness and success of county, state, national, and international strategies to control the spread of COVID-19 overall, and whether there may be an increased risk of danger based on testing data trends and anticipated events (such as the resumption of tourism and the commencement of large-scale multinational military training exercises), as evaluated by public health experts.

   **Multi-Community/Sector Considerations.** OHA notes the following considerations: the current surge in COVID-19 cases on O‘ahu, including correctional institutions, homeless populations and NHPI communities; county by county strategies and responses; the prevalence and resurgence of the disease in the
United States and abroad, including Pacific countries that have had previous success in controlling the pandemic; the commencement of the Rim of the Pacific military exercises; the reinstatement of the interisland travel quarantine period; and deferred resumption of transpacific travel; provide multiple data points for risk assessment of the ripple impacts of outbreak(s) of COVID-19 in our public school system.

2. **Preparation of Adaptive Reopening Protocols.** Whether there has been sufficient time to fully explore, develop, and implement reopening plan protocols, guidelines, and alternatives, including through the sharing of ideas, experiences, and resources between public and charter schools.

   **Leveraging Multiple Sources of Insights and Learning.** OHA notes that school reopening strategies have continued to change and that further models, lessons, and considerations, including those from the continent and within the ranks of our public school teachers and other stakeholders, may further inform the development of strategies that can maximize the safety of the public school community as well as enhance the educational experience of all students.

   **Clarification of Contact Tracing Protocols.** OHA notes that recent revelations about the state’s lack of sufficient contact tracing capacity, and a continued lack of clarity regarding schools’ contact tracing and other protocols in the event of a COVID-19 infection or outbreak, significantly heighten these concerns.

3. **Communication, Outreach and ‘Ohana Support Efforts to Address and Close Equity Gaps.** Whether plans that will adequately inform teachers, staff, students, and families of all protocols and guidelines intended to keep all school stakeholders safe have been fully developed and implemented, including through direct or proactive outreach to families with language or cultural barriers or economic or other challenges.

   **Communication.** Notably, OHA staff could not find linguistically accessible information specific to school reopenings on relevant Department of Education websites and is not aware of any coordinated effort to provide outreach or services to limited English proficient community members as otherwise required under the Hawai‘i Language Access Law.

   **Outreach.** OHA is also not aware of any coordinated effort to ensure that all public school families have been appropriately informed of school reopening plans and their responsibilities under those plans.

   **‘Ohana Supports.** Under each school’s reopening plan, families may have significant responsibilities including ensuring that their children understand and are able to comply with applicable hygiene, mask, and social distancing requirements; reporting positive cases within their households to relevant school officials; and refraining from sending children to school if they or any
family member exhibits signs of illness, despite work or other obligations; among others.

4. **State of Remote Learning Environments.** Whether remote learning training for educators and support and other resources for families has been made sufficiently available to meet the educational needs of teachers, students, and families following distance and hybrid learning models, to ensure they are not disadvantaged when school reopens.ix

   **Enabling Remote Learning Environments.** OHA staff have been informed by teacher representatives that the availability of remote learning devices and resources is not consistent across schools, and that there may still be shortages in needed devices for families without access to technology and infrastructure necessary to participate in distance learning.

5. **Health and Safety of Learning Environments for Special Education Students and Teachers.** Whether plans have been specifically and sufficiently tailored to ensure the health and safety of schools’ special education students and teachers in face-to-face instruction settings.

   **Native Hawaiian Overrepresentation, Special Education, Student Developmental Needs.** OHA recognizes that DOE data from 2018 do indicate that Native Hawaiians students are overrepresented in special education, with 35.9% of students in special education being Native Hawaiian compared to 24.9% of the total student body;x OHA further recognizes the concerns voiced by many regarding special education students’ unique developmental needs for face-to-face interaction, and the difficulties they may experience during any school closure.xi

   **Special Education Students, Higher Risk.** However, OHA also notes that some special education students may be at a potentially higher risk of being exposed to or infected by COVID-19,xii and that schools must first and foremost be prepared to address the health and safety needs of their special education students and their families, including on a case-by-case basis as may be necessary.

6. **Community Consultation and Engagement.** Whether there has been adequate consultation regarding the above and other matters with education and health stakeholders representing those communities most vulnerable to the impacts of COVID-19, including Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander groups such as the Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander (NHPI) COVID-19 Response, Recovery, and Resilience Team;xiii

   **Community Based Communication and Consultation.** OHA is not aware of any coordinated broad, statewide effort to consult with or otherwise provide outreach to NHPI stakeholders, including with regards to the development and
delivery of linguistically- and culturally-accessible resources and informational materials with students and communities as a whole.

OHA does appreciate the unique educational and developmental benefits of and need for face-to-face, in-classroom instruction, including in particular with regards to our special education and Hawaiian language immersion students. Accordingly, OHA does not oppose the reopening of schools for in-person student instruction. However, OHA also believes that ensuring safety protocols, guidelines, and alternatives are adequately developed and implemented prior to school reopenings may be critical to ensuring that Hawai‘i’s students are able to maximize their educational experience, and avoid the significant negative repercussions of unnecessary exposure to or infection by SARS-CoV-2 – which in itself could be significantly disruptive to their educational and developmental experience. For example, ensuring that distance teaching trainings have been adequate for all teachers, and that families have sufficient access to distance learning resources, will ensure a better educational experience for students who learn from home. The incorporation of “lessons learned” from other jurisdictions, and other epidemics, for public school reopenings may also ultimately further the DOE’s educational and development goals in the long term. Therefore, taking into consideration the above conditions and criteria prior to school reopenings may only serve to further the educational and development interests of Native Hawaiian and other keiki in our public school system.

As a Native Hawaiian-serving organization, OHA also appreciates that reopening schools is intended to allow more parents to return to work as expediently as possible, which may in turn reduce the significant and particular economic impacts the pandemic has had and will have on the Native Hawaiian community. However, ensuring that safety protocols, guidelines, and alternatives are adequately developed and implemented will only help reduce employment disruptions from avoidable exposure or infection of students returning to school, who must then be isolated and presumably kept at home with their parents for the requisite quarantine period. Allowing more time for protocols and guidelines to be communicated to parents and the broader community will also let parents, employers, and policymakers know what to expect in terms of such potential employment disruptions, and to plan accordingly. Moreover, any increase in COVID-19 infection rates due to avoidable outbreaks in our school system may have an overall dampening effect on local consumer activity and the local economy, quelling any benefit that may arise from the ability of parents to return to work. Therefore, OHA also believes that an assessment of the above conditions and criteria, which would serve to maximize school safety and minimize unexpected disruptions, may only increase the economic benefits of our schools’ reopening, and minimize the risk of unintended negative economic impacts that may reduce or negate any such benefits.

As reflected in OHA’s previous testimonies to the BOE on this matter, it may be critical to assess the above considerations prior to any reopening of our public schools, and determine whether more time may be needed to ensure the health and safety of teachers, students, and their families; to optimize the educational experiences of all students; and to minimize the potential for unintended educational and economic disruptions resulting from the spread of COVID-19 in our schools.
Mahalo nui loa for your time and attention on this matter. For any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact myself at 594-1973 or via e-mail at sylviah@oha.org, or have your staff contact Interim Public Policy Manager Wayne Tanaka at (808) 594-1945 or via e-mail at waynet@oha.org.

‘O wau iho nō, me ‘onia‘iono,

Sylvia M. Hussey, Ed.D.
Ka Pouhana, Chief Executive Officer

SH:wt

Enclosure: Testimony to the Board of Education, Regarding Agenda Item III.A. on the Meeting Agenda of July 30, 2020

cc:

Senator Donovan Dela Cruz
Chair, Senate Special Committee on COVID-19
Via E-Mail

Representative Scott Saiki
Co-Chair, House Select Committee on COVID-19
Via E-Mail

Board of Trustees, Office Hawaiian Affairs

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ii 24.8% of Native Hawaiian households, compared to 9.6% of state households include more than two generations or an unrelated individual. SMS, HAWAI‘I HOUSING PLANNING STUDY 34 (2016), [available at](https://dbedt.hawaii.gov/hhfdc/files/2017/03/State_HHPS2016_Report_031317_final.pdf).


v Results from recent school reopenings on the continent suggest that there may be significant “lessons learned” from studying their reopening models. For example, 1,293 students, teachers, and staff are now under quarantine in Georgia, after schools reopened in early August; other jurisdictions likewise each experienced dozens of COVID-19


viii HRS Chapter § 321C.

ix OHA notes that Native Hawaiian students may need additional support for the implementation of proposed distance and hybrid learning plans, as 9.5% of Native Hawaiian households do not have a computer in their homes and 18.4% do not have internet access, compared to 8.4% and 14.3% of the total State population, respectively. U.S. Census Bureau, Selected Population Profile in the United States, 2017 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates (2018), retrieved March 19, 2020.


xiv Office of Hawaiian Affairs, supra note iv (“Native Hawaiians are at greater risk of suffering financial hardship from the negative economic conditions that are likely to result from the spread of COVID.”).
The Administration of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) offers the following COMMENTS regarding the proposed reopening of the 2020-2021 school year. OHA appreciates the work of the Department of Education (DOE) and the Hawai‘i State Teachers Association (HSTA) in coming to an agreement to delay students’ first day of school to August 17, and further urges the Board of Education (BOE) to make any student start date subject to a prior assessment of conditions and criteria, to ensure that our schools will in fact be prepared to reopen safely and in the best interests of students and all stakeholders.

As detailed in the attached previous testimony, the COVID-19 pandemic and the potential spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus in our schools and in the community is a matter of significant concern to Native Hawaiians. Native Hawaiian students comprise a significant portion of our public school student body, and Native Hawaiians generally have higher risk factors with regards to impacts from the pandemic: for example, Native Hawaiians are more likely to live in crowded, multigenerational households where isolation of exposed or COVID-19 positive students from elderly or vulnerable family members can be extremely difficult; Native Hawaiians are also more likely to suffer from co-morbidities known to increase the risk of serious illness resulting from COVID-19. Recent testing results further indicate that cases of COVID-19 are increasing in the Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders communities at a greater rate than the rest of the state: between June 26 to July 24, Native Hawaiian positive COVID-19 cases increased by 101% (from 85 to 171) and Pacific Islander cases increased by 81% (from 164 to 297), compared to a total state increase of 58% over the same time period. For these and other reasons, OHA supported the concerns voiced by the HSTA regarding the proposed August 4, 2020 reopening date for public schools, and urged the BOE to delay the reopening of our public schools until safety protocols, guidance, and alternatives have been more clearly developed and communicated to the educators, families, and students of our public school system.
OHA accordingly appreciates the agreement reached between the HSTA and the DOE, regarding a delayed reopening date for students’ return to school. OHA does believe that an August 17 date for students’ first day of school will provide more time for safety protocols, guidance, and alternatives to be developed and communicated to all school stakeholders, and allow for more teacher training to enhance both school safety, as well as students’ educational experience. However, OHA does note that changing conditions and the actual timeliness of the evaluation and implementation of school safety plans may counsel a different reopening date for public school students. Accordingly, OHA urges the BOE to subject any planned reopening date on a prior assessment of certain conditions and criteria, and allow for this August 17 date to be further delayed should it be in the interest of school safety and educational capacity. Such an assessment should take place in the days or week leading up to the planned reopening date, and minimally include:

- A consideration of the effectiveness and success of county, state, national, and international strategies to control the spread of COVID-19 overall, and whether there may be an increased risk of danger based on testing data trends and anticipated events (such as the resumption of tourism and the commencement of large-scale multinational military training exercises), as evaluated by public health experts;
- Whether there has been sufficient time to fully explore, develop, and implement reopening plan protocols, guidelines, and alternatives, including through the sharing of ideas, experiences, and resources between public and charter schools;
- Whether plans that will adequately inform teachers, staff, students, and families of all protocols and guidelines intended to keep all school stakeholders safe have been fully developed and implemented, including through direct or proactive outreach to families with language or cultural barriers or economic or other challenges;
- Whether remote learning training for educators and support and other resources for families has been sufficient to meet the educational needs of students and their families following distance and hybrid learning models, to ensure they are not disadvantaged when school reopens; vi
- Whether plans have been specifically and sufficiently tailored to ensure the health and safety of schools’ special education students and teachers in face-to-face instruction settings; and
- Whether there has been adequate consultation regarding the above and other matters with education and health stakeholders representing those communities most vulnerable to the impacts of COVID-19, including Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander groups such as the Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander COVID-19 Response, Recovery, and Resilience Team. vi

As reflected in OHA’s previous testimony on this matter, it may be critical to assess the above considerations in the week leading up to the proposed date for students’ first day of school, and determine whether more time may be needed to ensure the health and safety of teachers, students, and their families; to optimize the educational experiences of all
students; and to minimize the potential for unintended educational and economic disruptions resulting from the spread of COVID-19 in our schools.

Finally, OHA notes and appreciates the concerns expressed by BOE members and Superintendent Kishimoto, regarding the importance of keeping the needs of special education students in mind when determining a school reopening date. DOE data from 2018 do indicate that Native Hawaiians students are overrepresented in special education, with 35.9% of students in special education being Native Hawaiian compared to 24.9% of the total student body. Accordingly, OHA has an interest in the education and development of our special education students, and recognizes the concerns voiced by many regarding their unique developmental needs for face-to-face interaction, and the difficulties they may experience during any school closure. However, while OHA again does not oppose the reopening of schools or the resumption of face-to-face instruction, OHA also notes that some special education students may be at a potentially higher risk of being exposed to or infected by COVID-19, and that additional time may be needed to ensure that schools can address the needs of their special education students, including on a case-by-case basis as may be necessary. Therefore, as reflected in the assessment criteria above, OHA believes it critical to assess, prior to August 17, schools’ ability to specifically provide a safe learning experience for their respective special education students on that date.

Accordingly, OHA respectfully urges the Board to ensure that any planned reopening date be made subject to a prior assessment of conditions and criteria, including but not limited to those posed above, to determine whether further time is needed to minimize any avoidable risks or unintended consequences for the Native Hawaiian and broader communities, and ensure the best educational and developmental experiences for our keiki and haumāna.

Mahalo nui for your consideration of this matter.

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ii 24.8% of Native Hawaiian households, compared to 9.6% of state households include more than two generations or an unrelated individual. SMS, HAWAI‘I HOUSING PLANNING STUDY 34 (2016), available at https://dbedt.hawaii.gov/hhfdc/files/2017/03/State_HHPS2016_Report_031317_final.pdf.


OHA notes that Native Hawaiian students may need additional support for the implementation of proposed distance and hybrid learning plans, as 9.5% of Native Hawaiian households do not have a computer in their homes and 18.4% do not have internet access, compared to 8.4% and 14.3% of the total State population, respectively. U.S. Census Bureau, Selected Population Profile in the United States, 2017 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates (2018), retrieved March 19, 2020.


Hawai‘i teachers returned to public school campuses on Wednesday, July 29; today is August 19. The last three weeks have looked like this from the perspective of teachers/schools:

— July 24 a letter from principals outlining the first week of professional development and first two weeks of blended learning with students. No bell schedule for the quarter or semester.

— July 27 a press statement from the Superintendent's office outlining a tentative agreement with unions to delay the start of school.

— July 29 teachers return to campus with no clear direction or understanding of what the school year will look like. Teachers begin to prepare classrooms without comprehensive safety guidelines or protocols. Teachers understand that this isn’t a statewide mask requirement, despite new CDC guidelines, and they will have to enforce mask rules on their own.

— July 30 a BOE hearing to discuss the proposed delay and two other agenda items. The delay is approved. Online learning is not discussed and is removed from the agenda. A mask requirement is debated. Comprehensive statewide safety protocols are debated. No clear indication or protocol for alerting schools when a student or teacher tests positive — Superintendent says its DOH's responsibility. DOH is not present at the meeting.

— July 31 Hawaii News Now infographic reports that 7 Hawai‘i summer schools (2 on Kauai and 5 on Oahu) had positive COVID-19 cases.

— August 3 teachers begin mandatory training modules to adjust to blended learning. Most of the modules are not yet available. Teachers work with admin to create safe in-person learning environments, adjusting furniture, removing shared objects, and drafting letters to students/guardians outlining new classroom guidelines.

— August 5 some schools have cleaning supplies; some schools are told that cleaning supplies are only for teachers; some schools are told students can use whatever cleaning supplies they want; some schools have strict protocols over cleaning supplies, both who can use and what products are allowed, while others do not. There is no consistency across the state on cleaning protocols in schools.

— August 7 most of the mandatory training modules are still not available and/or change daily.

— August 7 Superintendent and Governor announce "schools transition to distance learning for first four weeks of 2020-21 school year." KHON and KITV announce schools will be "fully online for the first four weeks." A closer look at the detailed plan outlines that the first week Aug. 17-20 will be in-person — exact plan to be decided at the discretion of the schools.

— August 10 teachers adjust to the new plan for online learning while waiting to hear from principals about what their school will do the first week. Teachers adjust curriculum design to 3 weeks of online learning. The list of mandatory training modules continues to be adjusted and amended. Many teachers do modules that have been removed. Many teachers stop doing modules to wait for a finalized list. The 44-minute "Nuts & Bolts of
"Safety" training module is presented by a local lawyer, not a healthcare professional or Dept. of Health employees, emphasizing liability a larger issue than health and safety.

— August 11 Roosevelt High School principal tells his community that a teacher has tested positive for COVID-19. School staff self-quarantine and principal closes campus to in-person learning. Many rumors of positive cases on other school campuses but no communication by HIDOE or DOH.

— August 12 teachers enroll students in their Google Classrooms and online learning platforms so students can start learning on the proposed start date of August 17. Many students email teachers confused about the first week of "in-person" learning. Many guardians send emails upset that there will be a week of in-person when the Superintendent and Governor "clearly stated that schools will be fully online for the first four weeks."

— August 13 the president of the HSTA threatens legal action against HIDOE for unsafe conditions; the superintendent responds by taking an adversarial position against teachers and specifically names HSTA president. Teachers keep doing their job, preparing students for whatever may happen the following week. The list of training modules finalizes — due the next day.

— August 14 teachers find out what their schools will be doing the first week. There is no consistency across schools. All schools with active COVID-19 cases announce no in-person for the first week of August 17-20. Many school principals opt for no in-person under mounting pressure from guardians and other schools. The Superintendent does not address the differences in school plans. Schools and teachers must plan, at the last minute, drive-on services for August 17-20 instead of in-person blended learning. Teachers again re-design materials to help students adjust to online learning.

— August 15 HSTA president announces that 7 schools on Oahu have positive COVID-19 cases. Superintendent says per HIPAA laws they cannot tell the public and instead release a map with complex areas that have tested positive.

— August 17 no consistency across schools. Some students drive onto campuses, some are in-person. Teachers adjust.

Everything you see above is the result of inconsistent, roughshod planning and extremely poor leadership. It did not need to be this way. The Superintendent and DOE had an entire summer to make Plans A, B, and C, anticipating that COVID-19 numbers might not stay the same once the state began reopening.

One example of this are the mandatory training modules — the Superintendent should have had HIDOE staff designing a health and safety and online learning training program for teachers and staff during the summer, ready to go. It should have been mandatory when teachers returned to school. With two months of planning, the content could have been exemplary; instead, the videos and presentations were cobbled together at the last minute, repetitive and redundant and, in some cases, inaccurate.

Once numbers began to rise rapidly, we needed strong, decisive leadership to adjust. Teachers and students/guardians need advance notice to plan. Guardians need state agencies to help them navigate childcare — all of this could have been anticipated and plans could have been put in place.

Do not cause further confusion to teachers, principals, and students/guardians by doling out new rules and regulations week-by-week. Make a plan and stick to it. Yes, this pandemic changes weekly, often daily — anticipate that and create a plan this is flexible and/or create multiple plans. Be transparent. Include all major stakeholders in the planning. During a global pandemic, the Dept. of Health needs to be involved in discussions and no one agency should be in charge of making decisions. Guardians and teachers also need to be involved — this year in particular — because they will be working hand-in-hand with students as they learn at home.
Inconsistent, last-minute decision-making results in lost learning. The first decision that you can make RIGHT NOW is to commit to online learning for all of Quarter 1. Why would you ask students and teachers to adjust to blended learning with three weeks left in the quarter? It doesn't make sense. Is learning your top priority? If it is, stop asking teachers and students/guardians to adjust to new plans with one week (or less) advance notice because it hamstrings all of us.

We don't need to argue about the superintendent's commitment to education in this state; however, she has none of the leadership qualities that ensure success and she is not fit for the job.

She has proved again and again that she is not interested in the health and safety of our educational communities. Teachers and guardians had to fight her over the most basic and fundamental safety protocols. If she was actually committed to reopening schools safely, why did we have to fight for a mask requirement? Why did teachers and guardians have to fight for comprehensive safety protocols? Why are we the ones working to keep not only our teachers but our students and communities safe? Isn't that her job?

The head of education in our state should be using science and data to drive educational policy; instead, she is using emotion and politics. Shouldn't the Department of Education be spearheading the campaign for accurate and comprehensive data before reopening schools? Dr. Fauci estimates that 25-50% of the infected are asymptomatic; Iceland screened the general population and found that 50% of the infected were asymptomatic. Here in Hawai'i, we have no idea who has COVID-19 because we don't do enough testing. Why wasn't our Superintendent insisting on testing to ensure a safe reopening? Why was she going to allow 180,000 people back onto school campuses without testing?

The role of Superintendent requires strong and creative leadership. If she was intent on re-opening schools, why didn't she offer innovative solutions? Instead, she tried to force an old model into a novel environment. She is surrounded by a wealth of experienced educators — people who have actually worked in classrooms and schools their entire professional careers. Principals, teachers and guardians in our state have proposed numerous creative ideas for the reopening, but all of these ideas were ignored. If she didn't want to hear from community stakeholders, she merely had to look at other districts and countries that have successfully adopted non-traditional ideas — like outdoor classrooms or staggered schedules. Some school districts in Germany have students self-administering tests. She did not present any new ideas or solutions; in fact, she has been working against those who are.

Lastly, and most importantly, the role of Superintendent of Schools in one of the largest school districts in the country requires strong communication skills. Ultimately, reopening schools during COVID-19 is a community outreach campaign that she has failed. She should be working to bring together all relevant stakeholders — from guardians to employers to state agencies — to ensure that this difficult school year is as successful as it can be. Instead, since her press statement on July 27, she has used language specifically intended to pit students and guardians against teachers and school staff. With her latest press statement, she has gone one step further to undermine the role of teachers in our state. Regardless of your opinion on the issue, taking an adversarial position against teachers is unproductive and pernicious.

Christina Kishimoto's contract is up in July 2021. While educators and guardians join forces to ensure this school is a success, we should also work to ensure the next one does not falter under blundering leadership. Take back control over this year and ensure that all future decisions reflect informed, inclusive, and transparent thinking.
Aloha,

My name is Sara Urabe,

I am a 20 year teacher with the DOE. I am a wife and mother of two young daughters. My older daughter attends a public school and my youngest will also attend next year.

I have always wanted to be a teacher. There was no other profession that has ever crossed my mind.

I love my job, I love what I do, and I would love to share with you just a few of many concerns.

Today, I will be testifying on item V.A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.

For the past weeks, since we have first returned to school, I have been asked by several higher ups to be "flexible." I have also been asked to be compassionate, empathetic, understanding, and to truly think about how our students must be feeling. All of these things are absolute as we try to navigate what seems to be a complete abyss. What I am not seeing from higher ups is "flexibility" from them, they are not being compassionate, empathetic or understanding, or even trying to think about what each teacher is experiencing, and what story they have to share. If you want flexibility, compassion, empathy and understanding, our leaders, our higher ups need to show that too. Instead, we are being told that being scared is not an excuse, that if you don't want to come, get a substitute. No telework, because I am not too sure why. If a teacher is scared to come to work, it does not mean he/she does not want to work, they just don't want to work at work. Please re-evaluate telework. Please evaluate all your expectations that you have for teachers, and ask if you are leading and following those expectations as well.

In teaching, we are selfless and constantly thinking about the needs of our students, our families, our schools, and always last is for us to think about ourselves. Right now, in this pandemic, our health and safety is most paramount. While I can and will be flexible as I teach, we cannot be flexible on how health and safety is handled at our schools. I ask and implore that someone please come and show us all the protocol that has been established, show me what a "deep clean" looks like-as I have yet to see it. Tell me what guidelines have been established should someone have covid, tell me why schools have become their own contact tracers, tell me why we are not on the same page. Please help me to feel safe in school-as a teacher, as a parent of a child that attends public school and for the general public. Show us what your plans are so that we can try to establish trust again.

We are only as strong as our weakest link...I know you have all heard this. Our lack of a cohesive leadership, lack of communication, and a lack of flexibility and compassion has exposed our weakest links.

Mahalo for your time,
Aloha, 
To whom it may concern,

My name is Annie Henbest and I am a teacher at Pahoa High and Intermediate School. I am writing to you today to request that we are 100-percent distance learning for the entire first quarter to ensure the safety of all students, staff, and families in our community.

As stated before, I am a teacher at Pahoa High and Intermediate School. Our administration may say they have a safe plan but that is simply incorrect. Administration made the decision to go face to face this week without any input from staff members, ultimately putting us at risk. It has been made VERY clear this week that they do not care about our safety or health.

Administration are having pregnant women temperature check students and staff members. Administration created alpha groups for each day of the week but are now allowing students to come whatever day they like which is causing large class sizes that we are unable to safely social distance within our rooms. Administration is allowing staff members parade around campus who have been on other islands within the last week WITHOUT quarantining. Students are passing health screenings but then showing symptoms within our rooms and are allowed to stay on campus. Administration simply does not care about their teachers. I have worked in multiple schools and never have I felt more unsafe and unappreciated as I do now.

I know I am still a probationary teacher...but I feel that my voice matters. My safety matters. The health and safety of my family matters. I am terrified that I will bring Covid-19 home and infect my husband. I am terrified that my students will contract it at school and give it to their families. It is NOT safe for students or staff right now with cases rising. It is best that we are 100-percent distance learning for the entire first quarter and possibly longer at the rate that Covid-19 is increasing.

I ask that you please consider teachers' voices and concerns. We want nothing more than to see our students...but their safety and the safety of our community is more important.

Mahalo.

Annie Henbest
Aloha BOE,

I am writing testimony on 3 issues.

Issue 1: Telework for teachers.

The governor has repeatedly called for employers to be flexible to support children in distance learning. **The DOE should be included in this.** Of my students this year, the two who are unable to join us live during our zooms are my children of fellow teachers. Many teachers come from a family of teachers, and everyone is being required on campus- thus, their children are being placed in outside care situations. This is not equitable either- teacher children are DOE students too and there are thousands of them. If we can telework (and we can), then we should. This would also reduce the chances of educators becoming sick ourselves, which would impact our teaching. On our campus, there is currently 1 staff bathroom working, for over 30 of us. Some of us are mask-compliant, some of the staff is not. This is how people get sick.

As an educator, should I come down with the sniffles, we have been instructed not to come to campus, and to call a sub instead. I have had one sub in almost a decade's worth of teaching who was comfortable using my computer, and I am not exaggerating. Many of our subs are not digitally savvy. If we are feeling unwell, or if we cannot find childcare, we were told to leave "detailed sub plans" and someone would come and teach from our room. I cannot write sub plans detailed enough to teach someone how to use a computer, much less the myriad programs we use and the wildly different formats each of them present in. As an educator, it has taken me years of actually using them from an instructor point of view to use them effectively. Most likely what will end up happening is I will assign them asynchronous work from home, and a sub (if I can get one) will sit in an empty room for a day. What a waste of taxpayer money, and what a disservice to our students when I could have worked with them from home- it is still distance learning whether the computer is in my classroom or at my house.

Issue 2: Safety of Special Educators

Special educators should also be protected from working in unsafe conditions. I have written to both the superintendent and the governor regarding the lack of safety at my campus, due largely to factors out of our control. I received no response from the superintendent, and the governor told me to contact my administrator. These are not things she has control over. Cleaning supplies have not arrived- they were ordered in the spring, but they are not due until the end of September. Due to years of defunding education, our old campus has not been expanded to meet our student capacity. Due to the nature of our job, we are up close and personal with the students no matter how much we try to distance in a physical space. The health and safety of our special educators is also important, and we should be trying to meet the iep goals digitally.

We all want our keiki educated. But our campus's are NOT SAFE ENOUGH. On our island, there are 24 icu beds, period. We cannot afford to bring our keiki and our educators into unsafe working conditions- if they get sick, we will not be able to care for them, our island does not have the capacity. I have already been informed of one of my students entering quarantine, the day before they were scheduled to return. Thank goodness their family was on it and notified us. Had they not realized, everyone in my class would have been exposed, as the hybrid method does not protect "bubbles"- I, as well as my vulnerables who are mixed into different groups, would have been the vectors. How terrifying, especially since many of my students are under grandparent care,
with some grandparents holding full-guardianship. Who will care for those children if the grandparents become very sick, or pass away? 6 hours in a room full of people from outside your family is contraindicated in every message sent our from the DOH.

Issue 3: Continuity of Learning

The vast majority of educators have been working extremely hard and very long hours to make distance learning effective and engaging. We have prepared in a variety of ways to be able to pivot to whatever format is asked of us, but this is exhausting us and our students and families. Allow us to continue with distance learning through at least first quarter, for sake of continuity. We can reflect and improve continuously as we get our feet under us and see what works. Bouncing teachers and students in and out of the classroom will not help anyone learn. We have been tasked with shifting over a hundred years of pedagogical practices into a wholly different system in only a matter of months. Allow us the time to get it working for our students. If we go back in September, in small, unventilated rooms with limited cleaning and unpredictable situations, we will close again in October, and we will have lost our online momentum. Give everyone, families and teachers, time to make it work. As a working mother, it also doesn't help me to be scrambling to adjust my childcare to a different schedule every week. We will not be able to go back full-class for many months- that is the reality of the situation. Hybrid is not a workable solution. Let us move forward with distance and make it good.

Please take these issues under careful consideration. Your teachers are working, hard. From our youngest to our oldest, we are trying- I work often with one of our teachers in her final year of teaching, both at school and on the weekend, as she works to try new digital techniques. I am not the tech teacher, she is not a digital native, we do not share a grade-level, but we are working together to make it happen for our students. We really care. We are telling you what we are seeing on the ground. Let us keep ourselves and our community safe, and give us the time to make our new learning reality effective.

Mahalo for your time,
Helena Costa
Hilo, Hawaii
To: Chair Payne and BOE Members

From: Catherine Caine
Waikiki School

Testimony: Item V. A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020

Please know I understand that online teaching is difficult for all participants and it is not how any teacher wants to begin the school year. Having said that I also know we as a community must keep our students, teachers, and family members safe and secure. We need to settle into teaching online and provide the best possible lessons for our students. However, it is extremely difficult to do if we are focused on switching back into the classroom while focusing on improving online lessons. There is just so much time in a day and so much to learn.

Therefore I am encouraging you to ensure the stability of 100-percent distance learning for all students across the state, including those in special education, until at least the end of the first quarter.

Next, in order to move back to face to face teaching there needs to be a requirement that the DOH and HIDOE provide clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students’ return. Many states and cities have specific triggers already in place for when schools should be open or closed based on COVID-10 cases, but Hawaii does not.

And last we need to know when we make agreements with the HIDOE they are honored such as allowing teachers to work from home (telework) for as long as distance learning remains in effect.

Thank you for considering my request for our learning communities.

Sincerely,

Catherine Caine

2015 Hawaii State Teacher of the Year/
National Finalist
Aloha Board Members,

Thank you for taking time to read my testimony and consider my concerns as a public school educator and parent of children who attend public school. I would like to testify regarding item V.A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.

I am asking that you please consider first, allowing ALL teachers to work from home (telework). In Tuesday’s press conference, it was stated multiple times that if you can work from home, work from home. As a teacher who is teaching virtually using an online platform, I am able to fully do my job safe at home, but that option is not available to me. Some principles are allowing teachers to telework, while many are not. If we are one unified school system, all teachers should have the opportunity to telework without having to go thru a bunch of paperwork to apply for exceptions that principals can just deny. How is it that students are deemed to not be safe on campus during a pandemic, yet teachers are expected to report daily to school? How is it that other DOE and state offices, including those at the BOE meeting are told to work at home, but teachers once again can be put into compromising situations. Teachers are not immune to Covid-19 as many seem to think. Teachers need a guarantee that the Department of Education honors HSTA’s contract by allowing teachers to work from home (telework) for as long as distance learning remains in effect.

Second, I am asking to ensure 100-percent distance learning for all students across the state, including those in special education, until at least the end of the first quarter. Bringing thousands of students back to school too soon will be devastating. I’m not willing to take my chances and hope that my children or me do not get sick. I live in a multi-generational home as many Hawaii families do and I’m scared that I’ll bring home the virus to a family member who is high-risk and chance that they don’t survive the illness. All students with or without special needs can learn virtually! They have done it at many schools and should not be treated differently in this pandemic situation.

Lastly, HSTA has asked that there be clear, written guidance to handle a safe return to school. The DOH has still not provided this! How long do we give them? Once again seeming like teachers and our students don’t matter! This is not acceptable when
the lives of our keiki are in jeopardy! And to hear that at yesterday’s conference Dr. Anderson wants to use FLORIDA as a model for opening schools is outrageous! They have thousands of students infected with Covid, including children dying from the disease. This is NOT the model I want to follow! Schools are making their own plans, which don’t always follow safety standards. I know of some schools that aren’t even going to fully shut down if a staff member or student is tested positive and only the class they are in will be disinfected. How can we ensure that person only stayed in one room? Also in regards to safety, although the HSTA MOU states that face coverings are required when on campus, my administration has said that since the Department of Education has not officially stated this and released a memo to the schools, they cannot enforce facial coverings. Where is the DOE in helping with safety? The few safety videos provided to teachers did not adequately train anyone on how to handle properly disinfecting for Covid-19.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I hope that you as board members who hold the power to make these difficult decisions do the right thing to help protect our keiki and teachers. More than anything teachers DO want to TEACH and support the students, but we also have our health and safety to consider, as well as our families. Teachers are people too and we should not feel pressure to return to school in an unsafe manner. It saddens me that Superintendent Kishimoto keeps saying how wonderful it is that teachers have a 95%+ attendance rate when in reality, do we have a choice to not report to school? Please do the right thing and make the changes needed to keep our schools safe!

Thank you,
Kehau K
Hi! As an educator I love to teach and would absolutely love to have the kids all come back to school! It would be wonderful but while we are in this pandemic with our hospitals getting full and numbers rising I do not feel it is a wise decision. With that being said, numerous teachers and staff have applied for teleworking, only to get denied. I don’t understand why this is happening, if this is supposed to be an option why would you deny anyone. Everyone has different circumstances and responsibilities and if they can do their work from home in a safe environment why do staff and teachers continuously be denied? With the Government’s orders as of August 18, 2020, going into effect on August 19, 2020 at midnight, they specified IF we can work from home we should do so. Why are we denied of this? Teachers and staff should have that option. We have to document to our supervisor of what we do at home and how we are working so No one will be slacking, if that is the concern.

It seems like the DOE would rather these employees take leave under the cares act and leave schools with a hole to fill and possibly pay a sub AND a teacher. Which makes no sense. Many teachers do NOT want to do that but if pushed in that corner will have to. Is this what you folks want or would it be smarter to grant telework so these people can work from home and still be an asset to the school. This is what many teachers want. You folks cannot say telework is an option if people are continuously getting denied! Teachers and staff have been more than patient with the lack of protocols and procedures. To have no state wide protocols and procedures in place is like waiting for an outbreak to happen! It doesn’t matter what area, what socioeconomic status, it doesn’t matter what type of student you are. If a student or teacher contracts the virus what are the procedures and protocols? Whatever the protocols and procedures are should be statewide. So with that why are these teachers and staff members still getting denied of teleworking???

Please help to straighten things out.

Thank you!

Sent from my iPhone
To whom it may concern,

I am writing to testify on item V. As you are aware, instruction has begun for most primary and secondary educational institutions. Students spanning from grade levels of kindergarten and their senior year of high school are met with unpredictable circumstances that could most likely exacerbate the ongoing crisis of the pandemic in our communities. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2018), a large percentage of Hawai‘i’s households are multigenerational. Though the implementation of a semi-distance learning curriculum during the first four weeks of instruction followed by track schedules can be viewed as an attempt to mitigate communal spread, the unclear plan of the Governor and the Mayor that was recently announced undermines the performance of the state’s efforts to contain Covid-19. Let me remind you that with the help of media outlets, there is a current ongoing pattern of confirmed cases reaching triple digits day by day. It is also worth noting that many are beginning to distrust institutions such as the Department of Health since their touting of an abundance of contact tracers was proven to be false. The rise of infections are inevitable if you continue to put students’ lives at risk.

I highly implore that you reconsider and further develop an objective that substantively ensures full distance learning for all students across the state, including those in special education until at least the end of the first quarter. Furthermore, I demand that you require the Department of Health and the Hawai‘i Department of Education to provide clear and understandable metrics to determine if school campuses are safe for the return of students. Many states and cities have done so by implementing such programs designed with specific triggers in place to indicate whether a school is safe or not. Lastly, it is with the interest of the masses that the Hawai‘i Department of Education honors the contract made with the Hawai‘i State Teacher’s Association to allow teachers to work from home for as long as distance learning remains in effect. The requirement of instructors to attend their campus and teach virtually is counterproductive and only worsens their conditions to practice safe precautions. Teachers are but one of the most essential workers that need protection as well. They may live with others, including their family and their health and safety is just as important as any one else.

Thank you,

Patrick Gill Aleta Pua
Dear legislator,

I retired on June 1, 2020 after 35 years. I was a K teacher for many years. Although COVID-19 is not my initial reason for retiring, it confirmed my choice. I can tell you that monitoring young children to be safe is VERY different from monitoring adults and other essential workers in an adult workplace.

Most teachers find their own substitutes when they are sick, when my regular subs are not available - I will go down the list. Out of 8 subs, 2 refused to sub in a Kindergarten class. It is too hard for them to manage. As professionals we manage our classrooms with explicit teaching, modeling, routine, humor, praise. Simple things experts are telling us to do, wear a mask, stay 6 feet for 6 hours a day, will prove to be impossible if the BOE allows students back in the classrooms after September 11. We regularly dealt with colds, flu, head lice, pinworms, scabies, and hand foot and mouth disease. It is a fact of life for an Early Childhood educator. Dealing with a life/death disease is more serious - on August 18th, Mayor Caldwell had to further Oahu’s restrictions. What makes anyone think that students’ and teachers’ health and safety are less valuable so they are “exempt”?

Children’s nature of impulsivity leadS them to take awhile to learn social norms. It is developmentally appropriate, the younger they are - the longer it takes to learn. Fingers are always in noses, mouths, ears, on eyes, and yes in their pants scratching private parts. When a child has a loose tooth, their fingers are always wiggling that tooth. This is our reality. I cannot imagine trying to keep students apart with a mask properly worn for 6 hours a day. I cannot believe that the Superintendent said that SPED students are allowed on campus. Many, especially preschool SPED students have a higher rate of distractibility and lack of impulse control. Many preschoolers need help with toileting, teachers and EAs need be close to help. It is not unusual for homesick preschoolers and Kindergartners to cry for hours or run from a room, endangering the health and safety of all in the room with additional droplets in the air, and need to stop a child from trying to run back home.

The last issue I want to address is why is the DOE making teachers work from school? The superintendent shows a lack of respect by not valuing hard working teachers who have had to be flexible, creative, persistent to develop distance learning. The teachers are put at additional risk by not being allowed to telework. My physician cautioned me about
public toilets, in addition to respiratory particles in the air in common spaces, fecal particles remain in the air in bathrooms. This is not frivolous, it is a scientific fact. Shame on the superintendent for being so blasé about the health and safety of teachers she is supposed to lead. Her flippant responses to HSTA’s concerns reflect Trump’s: “It is what it is.” attitude. Distance learning is exhausting- all teachers would rather be in the classrooms when Oahu’s rate of infection is lower! Where are the metrics for EVERYONE to know when a campus is safe?

I would recommend that the Superintendent telework for at least a month from a kindergarten or preschool classroom if she demands teachers to be there. My instructional goal for her is to develop a more mindful attitude of empathy to understand the what a teacher’s day looks/feels like. This is in support of her learning process to serve the students and teachers of Hawaii more effectively and efficiently.

I have a daughter, and 3 nieces and a multitude of friends who still teach in HIDOE system, BOE members - I plead with you to care about students and teachers’ health and safety!

Laurie Ishida

Sent from my iPad
To the Board of Education:

Why should a principal have the power to keep a teacher in a hazardous situation? Why is a teacher requesting to telework during distance learning being turned down and told to return to the classroom? If the Governor and state superintendent claim that it is safe for teachers and students to go to school, why aren’t they visiting the Kauai schools to assess the real situation? Is it because they are afraid of contracting Covid-19 and/or maybe shamefully passing the virus to their families? Some elementary teachers are in the front lines and facing unsafe, hazardous conditions every day and the Governor and superintendent want them to sacrifice their and their families’ lives during this crisis. They should be using their powers to protect teachers, not ‘throwing them under the bus’. Teachers are the most valuable resources to ensure Hawaii’s successful future!

I was born and raised and retired here. My family has always worked together to help the schools. As my daughter is an elementary teacher, we know how much time outside of paid hours she’s dedicated to her students. We know, because we have been helping her for over fifteen years. We spend our time and our own money for her students. On Sunday we even made a special trip to Walmart to purchase some things for her students to play with since the state and schools do not provide the best age based educational toys for outdoor environments.

We are not young and not in the best of health, but we wholeheartedly care for our grandchildren during this crisis. We have tried our utmost to follow all the community and state’s rules to keep ourselves and everyone safe. We are especially aware because I have a surgery scheduled soon and need to keep healthy and COVID free.

We are EXTREMELY afraid that our daughter will be exposed to Covid-19 at her school. We implore you to ensure 100% distance learning for all students across the state, including Kauai, including those in special education, until at least the end of the first quarter. We also plead with you to guarantee that the HIDOE honors HSTA’s contract by allowing ALL teachers to work from home (telework) for as long as distance learning remains ineffective. That way all citizens of Hawaii have an equal chance of keeping safe.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Respectfully,
Christine Nonaka
Chairwoman Payne and Board Members,

I am deeply frustrated and upset with the handling of the distance learning program for families that choose 100% distance learning. My husband immunocompromised and we cannot risk exposing him to the coronavirus. It's not an option for our family.

The only distance learning option offered by our elementary school is Acellus Academy, with no interaction with any teacher. As a parent of 5th and 8th graders, I have serious concerns about the use of this program, its founder and owner Roger Billings, and the content of its curriculum.

The first issue is Roger Billings' questionable education credentials. Billings goes by the title of "Dr." but this is a title he awarded himself based on a degree he CREATED (a 'doctor of research' degree) at an institution he founded (the International Academy of Science which is NOT accredited). It also seems that Billings has awarded a number of these 'doctorates' to others designing the Acellus curriculum, including a woman calling herself "Fire Angel" who designed the Social Emotional learning program. While Acellus is accredited, the International Academy of Science is NOT. We would never hire a public school teacher who had invented their credentials, so how can the DOE find this okay?

Second, while there is very little to be found online about Roger Billings and Acellus Academy beyond their own promotional materials, one exception is an article published in The Pitch, a Kansas City weekly, which highlights Billings' involvement in founding a polygamous cult. On the LDS Freedom Forum, people who report living on Billings' compound say they helped to design/worked on Acellus. I cannot imagine allowing Acellus Academy and Roger Billings to educate my sons. https://www.thepitchkc.com/dr-hydrogen/

Third, I've attached several concerning images shared by Hawaii public school teachers and parents. One is a screenshot of a text expressing concerns over part of the Acellus curriculum that states people who were enslaved in America were "only beaten if they were bad, taking too many breaks, or were late to work," attempting to re-historicize native genocide. Another is a Tweet from Billings
himself that has since been deleted, which advocates for allowing COVID to run through the population with the hashtag #MAGA. Another image, from a Hawaii parent whose child just took an Acellus assessment test, shows a multiple choice question where one of the options was "Towelban". This is a combination of the word Taliban and the racist slur "towelhead". I can't believe the DOE is okay with exposing our children to such racist and inappropriate ideas.

Lastly, we have been trying to assess the alignment between the Acellus curriculum and what our student would be learning in school, so when he does return to the classroom, he can do so seamlessly without gaps. Also, because he is in 5th grade, he will be expected to take the Smarter Balanced Assessments (SBA) at the end of the year and we want to make sure he is prepared. The curriculum maps we received from his elementary school show very little correlation to the Acellus program in Language Arts, Science and Math. The Acellus math program in particular begins the 5th grade with Positive Numbers, Addition & Subtraction, and Multiplication. My son learned multiplication and division in 1st grade at his public school, but we have not received any answers about testing placement that would allow him to skip these units in Acellus.

Who was responsible for the FULL and COMPLETE vetting of the Acellus curriculum by the HIDOE? It is obvious that such a vetting did not take place. These screenshots and complaints from teachers about racist, unscientific and historically inaccurate content suggests that if a vetting did take place, it was not thorough enough. Our students deserve better than this!

Students whose parents opted for distance learning will now be taught by Roger Billings and his employees, and will not be allowed to build a connection to their teachers or peers. This is UNACCEPTABLE, and accreditation is simply not enough in the case of Acellus Academy.

Our children deserve a real public school education, and teachers and staff deserve to be safe. Instead of being forced to choose between risking their lives or financial ruin, teachers should be supported in directing their energies toward developing a comprehensive online curriculum that includes all students, while providing the social contact and legitimate learning our children so desperately need right now.

Jamie Yamagata
Here are some screen shots and short clips from grade 8 American History. This is from step 57.

There was more issues with step 69. That the teacher stated that slaves were only beaten if they were bad, taking to many breaks, and were late to work.

My daughter just came to me know and said that step 73 British and French Clash. Stated that the French Indian war was because the Native Americans were terrorizing the British. Do not let your school use them for history.

AUG 03, 2:32 PM
Osama Bin Laden was the leader of what terrorist group?

A. Islamic Jihad Union  B. Al Qaeda (in Afghanistan)
C. Muslim Brotherhood  D. Towelban

Haven't learned this yet.

Many small polygamous groups are offshoots of splinter groups of one of the major factions. So far removed from the original Mormonism, their theology ranges from radical to bizarre. The Tolman group in Cane Beds, Ariz., bask nude in "the Angel of the Sun," while another group in the same area extends plural marriage to include sexual relations with all its members—of either sex. Joseph Smith declared Missouri the Mormons' promised land, so several groups have beaten the millennial rush there. One such group is headed by former BYU energy whiz kid, Roger Billings, who perceives himself as the reincarnated Jesus Christ. This group has fashioned an underground survival city in an abandoned limestone mine.

Families that espouse Fundamentalist doctrines, but don't feel that any other man has a right to direct them, maintain a loose-knit circle of acquaintances among other independent polygamists. They often function in traditional society while hiding their polygamous identities.
So far, everyone #COVID19 killed was going to die anyway. When we go back to work, some of us may perish sooner than normal but at least those that live will be alive. We no longer can cower in fear and shame.
#BackToWork #MAGA
#AcellusScienceLive

The world is about to see what it is that makes America great.
August 20, 2020

Board of Education
State of Hawaii

Testimony for BOE Agenda, August 20, 2020, 1:30 p.m., item V.A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020.

Honorable Chair Payne and members of the Board:

In the past few weeks, we have seen COVID-19 infection rates rise and members of our medical community express concern about our hospital capacity. We also have seen a lack of transparency in the disclosure of cases in our schools by the Department of Education (DOE) and problems with our Department of Health’s (DOH) implementation of contact tracing.

At this point, when we discuss the reopening of schools, we are no longer just talking about the safety of students and school staff, but also the health and safety of our State. COVID-19 must be addressed and levels of infection lowered before we can safely institute in person instruction. There is no plan to implement testing or proposal that limits the infection coming into our schools. Serious issues and concerns about reopening schools remain unaddressed, and so, preparations are incomplete. We do not want our schools to become the next super-spreader events.

To prevent this from happening, this Board must determine that there will be no in person instruction until infection rates go down. The DOH and DOE have yet to provide metrics or indicators of when schools are safe for in person instruction. We have seen, however, Dr. Scott Miscovich, Dr. Josh Green, and Dr. Bruce Anderson, indicate at different times, that it is not safe to open up schools for in person instruction. As long as infection rates are high, in person instruction should not be allowed.

Further, prior to opening up schools for in person instruction, this Board needs to:

Require the DOE to address the concerns raised about ventilation and school facility readiness. Much of the guidance provided by the DOE so far has been general in nature and left to school personnel to implement without much support. Research now shows that COVID-19 is spread through airborne transmission and that it is essential to address ventilation and
airflow. If we want to ensure that facilities are safe for in person instruction, the buildings and classrooms should be inspected and steps must be taken to address problems.

**Require the DOE to address the concerns listed in the Board’s memorandum.** It is only by listening to the concerns of school administrators and staff that there can be true understanding of the facts on the ground. It is only by considering their input that the best solutions can come about. As this Board has noted, school administrators and staff do not lightly voice their concerns about departmental directives. They need the Board’s support to ensure that their concerns are addressed so that they can take care of our students.

**Require the DOE to clarify the procedures that will be followed when students or faculty test positive or are exposed to COVID 19.** The steps that should be taken after the discovery of a COVID 19 case need to be explicit and easy to understand for parents and staff.* In addition, given the problems faced by the DOH with the implementation of its contact tracing program, the DOE should include additional safeguards and protocols to its reopening plan involving COVID 19 cases, to ensure that students, staff, and the community are notified in a timely manner and can take steps to safeguard their health.

**In a pandemic, public health concerns need to come first.** Students, parents, teachers, and school staff all yearn for a time to come together for in person instruction. However, during this pandemic involving a highly contagious, dangerous disease, focus must be on addressing COVID 19 first. Schools will be able to offer in person instruction once the health and safety issues of COVID 19 have been addressed.

Thank you for your work and commitment on behalf of our schools.

Sincerely,

Lynn M. Otaguro
Oahu, Hawaii

*An example that is easier to follow: [https://www.iolani.org/uploaded/PDF/Reopening.pdf](https://www.iolani.org/uploaded/PDF/Reopening.pdf), pages 16-18, 49-51, 54-56*
Aloha I am testifying on item V. A
My name is Brian Flatt and I teach 8th Grade Social Studies at Kawananakoa Middle School. While I truly support my union I do not want to be forced to work from home. I will be more effective if I am at school in my classroom. I have all the tools I need at school including colleagues that I can speak with (at a distance) to collaborate and improve. BUT I worry about colleagues that are immune compromised. They should not be forced to come to campus. I believe teachers that want to work at home should produce evidence from their doctor and then be given the choice to work from home or not.

Also, PLEASE pressure the DOH to do its job and come up with a plan for when it is safe to open schools. Teachers are so frustrated that opening schools up to students has been up to principals this week. That is NOT okay. Principals are not health experts and they should not be given the decision to have students or not, that is reckless. The DOE and DOH must come up with a plan with clear metrics that determine when it is safe for students to return and specific triggers when schools should close.

Lastly, as much as I truly want students in my classroom, it is obviously not safe. Also, think of what it will be like having some students in class and the rest at home....not only will teaching this way be near impossible or effective but for students in class how will that learning environment feel? Think about it, everybody in a mask at a distance, it will not feel comfortable for the kids in fact I think it will be scary for them.

Thank you for all you are doing to try to make things right. I do appreciate what the BOE has been tasked with.

Mahalo,
Brian Flatt
I am a Special Education Preschool teacher. After being in school for 3 days working face to face with students I can honestly say that ALL students can and should participate in 100% distance learning for at least the 1st quarter of the school year! My aide and I are constantly sneezed on and coughed on. We spend so much time trying to prevent our students from mouthing and licking materials and furniture and sanitizing. Distance learning was accomplished in the 4th quarter of last year using synchronous and asynchronous methods and although it was a learning process, it was achievable. Is it the most ideal option? No, but is it the most realistic and safest option right now during this global pandemic? ABSOLUTELY!

It is said that children are not as affected by COVID-19 as much as older adults are. Though that may be true, children are STILL affected! As “an older adult”, I am putting my life and my family’s life at risk by returning to the classroom to teach face to face. The State of Hawaii and the Department of Education are knowingly putting ALL teachers, students and school staff in danger by allowing face to face learning to happen at this time! I am begging the Board of Education to help us and take care of us so that we can ALL return when it’s safe to help and take care of our students! There is no argument that this virus is dangerous and extremely contagious. All the experts agree to the point of imposing restrictions to help stop the spread and keep our community safe. Why are Teacher’s, student’s and school staff lives the exception?

Please help us,

Jonnell Kupihea
Special Education (16 years)
Aina Haina School
Aloha,

I am writing regarding the Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.

As a Special Education teacher I have already seen students engage in unsafe behavior such as putting objects in their mouths after another child did so, not using appropriate hand washing procedures, sharing of materials, and not wearing protective gear (since we aren't allowed to require it despite having and enforcing student dress code requirements). Teaching students to follow appropriate procedures can be challenging. It can be even more challenging to teach a child with special needs these procedures and safeguards.

These conditions and behaviors are breeding grounds for germs. If face to face is continued to be permitted for students who qualify under IDEA, those student's health, and the health of their families, will be at greater risk.

In addition, teachers are put at risk by the continued presence of students on campus. As a single mother, I have no family in Hawaii who can care for my children if I am hospitalized with COVID (I am an at risk category).

Furthermore, I urge you to consider implementing clear and reasonable metrics for when students and staff should be allowed to return to campus. We as a state haven't managed to contain the virus adequately to warrant in person classes as of yet. We need clear standards to direct us when safe levels have been reached, when to shut down again if cases once again to begin to surge, and a phased reopening plan.

Mahalo for your time,

May, 
SPED teacher
Aloha and thank you for taking the time to read my testimony.

My name is [Redacted]. I am submitting testimony on the agenda items “Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, and focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning”

I am a first grade special education teacher. I have been teaching special education in Hawaii since 1998. I am a dedicated teacher who loves my students and their families. I have always been an advocate for my students who cannot speak for themselves. I protect them from bullies, I stand up for them when I feel that their needs are being pushed aside, I want them to be afforded every opportunity that their friends who do not have disabilities have. My job is to empower them, engage them, help enable them to lead a fulfilling life doing something that they love and are good at. I cannot protect them from this virus, I cannot protect them from the state’s haphazard restrictions which clearly are not decreasing our cases. I am being asked to tell parents that it is safe to bring their children to campus who desperately need face to face instruction. I cannot do this because I myself do not feel safe going onto campus and have had to take sick days just so I can work from home. One of my responsibilities before next week is to make ‘return to learn plans’ for my students with IEPs for in-person/face-to-face instruction. The checklist we were given by the DOE in preparing these in-person plans has a question that asks “is it safe and reasonable to provide SDI (specially designed instruction) in-person”. I voiced to my vice principal and to my department head that I would answer no to that question and do not feel comfortable creating a plan with families for their children to come to campus to learn face to face because I do not feel that it is safe right now for anyone to do so. I know that my admin and department heads are merely trying to follow the directives of the state. None of these directives have the safety of teachers or children at the heart of them. I ask that you please, please delay the ‘opening of schools’ for any on campus activities through at the least the first quarter. We are not even prepared to begin distance learning because we do not have enough technology to provide to all of our students.

I want nothing more than to be able to be back in the classroom with my students again. Unfortunately, I do not get to make that decision. COVID-19 makes that decision right now. It is the states’ job to protect us from harm when we are at school. They are not doing this right now. I am highly concerned at the recent spikes of COVID-19 cases and the fact that the DOE is willing to risk the lives of special education teachers and students in special education to provide face to face instruction amidst a pandemic raging in our communities, while the rest of our students and teachers can stay safely at home and remote learn.

Each week our islands seen even higher recorded cases than the previous week. I find it alarming that we are not on a full ‘stay at home and work from home’ status right now, and I am scared to return to in person teaching as I am at high risk due to a compromised immune system. I think that teachers should be able to chose to work from home if they are scared about their risk
because of health issues or age. The lack of any/consistent safety protocols at each school to daily screen even the faculty coming onto campus is highly concerning as we see outbreaks at schools all over our islands without the students even being there yet. That coupled with the fact that we have a dismally low number of contract tracers and we do not take temperatures or require covid tests to be in school is a recipe for disaster. The rate of contagion is also too high for anyone to be expected to be in an enclosed space with others in close proximity for 7 hours a day. Mayor Caldwell just announced that groups of more than 5 are not allowed to gather...my class will be bigger than that for at least 6 hours a day. This is not safe for any of us.

I urge you to please reconsider teachers and children returning to school for in person teaching in August. We must start online only for all of our safety. I ask the board to please take immediate action on the following items:

- Ensure 100-percent distance learning for all students across the state, including those in special education, until at least the end of the first quarter.
- Require the DOH and HIDOE to provide clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students’ return. Many states and cities have specific triggers already in place for when schools should be open or closed based on COVID-10 cases, but Hawaii does not.
- Guarantee that the HIDOE honors HSTA’s contract by allowing teachers to work from home (telework) for as long as distance learning remains in effect.

As I have mentioned several times, I am a teacher at high risk if I return to the classroom—this coupled with the fact that I am to teach on a military base where families are coming in from all over the world where cases are even higher than Hawaii puts our campus at the highest risk for community transmission. Without contact tracing, proper health screening and testing and clear health protocols at all of our schools consistently implemented we will be at a point of no return and teachers and children and teenagers and our kapuna will die. I will be forced into taking a leave if you do not protect us immediately. I cannot change my condition that puts me at risk just as I cannot change my age to be at lower risk. We need to be protected as it is clear the superintendent, the governor and the mayor of Honolulu do not have our best interests at heart.

Thank you.

Special Education Teacher
August 19, 2020

To Members of the Board of Education,

I am testifying on agenda item V, Personnel in support of the Department of Education continuing to use the current Telework policy (updated memo 7/24/20). I believe Telework is a management right and administrators can determine what is in the best interest of students and the Department on a case by case basis.

At Central Middle School, we have made great strides in creating a robust learning environment for our students to learn online this school year. Online instruction is very different from the Enrichment Activities we delivered in Quarter 4 of SY 2019-20, where teachers could manage the workload required remotely from home. Online instruction requires a structured work environment with minimal distractions and a reliable internet infrastructure to be successful. Both of these factors are very difficult to control from a home environment and many of my teachers have expressed how grateful they are to be able to come to work in a clean, safe environment to complete their work tasks.

Therefore, we support teachers continuing to provide distance learning from their classrooms for the following reasons:

- The school is the hub for centralized support for technical issues and coaching support to ensure immediate support to the greatest extent possible.
- There are safe conditions at school.
- Being on campus ensures that all teachers have access to devices and reliable internet connection.
- When in their classrooms, teachers have access to teaching materials, resources and equipment.
- Students see teacher within the classroom which increase the feeling of school is in session and connectedness to school.

I thank you for your time and continued support of our students.

Respectfully,

Anne-Marie Murphy
Principal
To whom it may concern,

This email's focus is on item V. **A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.**

I am an elementary teacher in the Farrington Complex, Kalihi. Kalihi is a hot spot whose population of Pacific Islanders is currently one of the groups of covid concern. It is also an area where several family members reside in one household.

I strongly agree that everyone, including teachers should be allowed to work from home and that all schools should have at least a full quarter of distance learning.

First of all, the phrase I've heard often was that our situation is "A marathon, not a sprint." Which is true. However, I feel that the present decision to do distance learning until Sept. 14th or so, is not an appropriate one. With all of the changes I experienced during the past two weeks, my parents have been really confused as to what's happening and what they need to do. My colleagues and I have been working nonstop to adapt to whatever changes were made. Literally, nonstop. Last week I called my 26 parents until 8:30 pm to inform them of a plan that changed the very next day. When things settle down, and everyone's in a routine, another big change will be dropped on us AGAIN.

Second, earlier this week, my colleagues and I were informed that someone on campus tested positive for Covid 19. I was scared and nervous to report to work when it was time in July to report to campus. You can talk about all the procedures that will be taken in an event where someone is positive, but it feels pretty scary when IT ACTUALLY DOES HAPPEN. I contacted my boyfriend who I live with and emailed my questions to my principal, who I feel couldn't give me the answers I needed, and who at one point, just didn't answer my last email.

No matter what Kishimoto says, we are not overreacting. We have the right and good reason to be fearful. By the way, every time she does an interview, it's virtual, not in person, like how we were first expected to be.

As I begin this round of distance learning, I feel confident that I can still give my students efficient instruction from the safety of working from my home. Also, when I have met my students these past two days, I'm finding that I can develop better relationships with them than I could in a classroom. I can give them more attention if they need it. Plus, my classroom on campus is extremely noisy with cars and airplanes passing by.

Please make reasonable decisions. It may not affect you, but it affects a lot of people who deserve to be treated fairly.

Hawaii already has a teacher shortage. Please work with us and give is the respect we deserve.

Sincerely,

Anna Harstad
Sent from my iPhone
To the Board of Education,

I am a public high school teacher with a medical condition that puts me at risk of getting severely ill if I contract Covid-19. I also provide help to many elderly and immunocompromised family members.

I am extremely grateful that we have started school online at this time, and I would strongly urge you to consider extending the distance learning period. This is SAVING LIVES.

It is not my favorite way to teach, but again: it is SAVING LIVES. Until we have more (medically approved) ways to battle and control this virus, the only safe way to continue school is remotely.

Here's the truth:
If we bring in-person classes back to campus too soon, schools will become hotbeds of Covid-19 spread - many preventable deaths and bouts of severe illness will occur.
If we bring in-person classes back to campus too soon, large numbers of good teachers will have to leave their jobs - crippling a system that already suffers from teacher shortages.

In addition, please honor our previous agreements with the state that stipulate that if the students are not in class because of safety concerns, the teachers should not be required to be in class either. Teachers can conduct their online classes and participate in meeting/trainings from the safety of our homes, and yet we are treated as if we are unprofessional and untrustworthy - requiring constant surveillance and checks as to our physical whereabouts by our supervisors. Also, teachers juggling their own children as well as their students can find ways to do so from home, but not with the current rigid requirements that mandate that they be on campus at all times. We are in danger of losing these teachers from the profession.

Please extend the remote learning period, and please allow teachers the option of teaching off campus.

Thank you,

Erin Thompson
Science Department
Kealakehe High School
Kona, Hawai'i
Testimony BOE

From: Christina Pascua <christina.pascua@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Christina Pascua
Sent: Wednesday, August 19, 2020 10:11 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Testifying on Item V. A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020.

Hello,

I am a Special Education Teacher and I want to provide my testimony in hopes that there is a reconsideration on the above item. Yes, these are uncertain times with a new virus, but we need to be able to collaborate with each other for the safety of our keiki and our entire community.

100% distance learning for all students across the entire state, INCLUDING those in Special Education, until at least the end of the first quarter must be implemented. SPED students, ESPECIALLY THOSE in a Fully Self-Contained Classroom (FSC) are NOT immune to the virus... in fact, they probably are placed in the higher risk categories! These students sometimes require 1-on-1 supports and sometimes classrooms may have way more than 10 people in these settings. I understand that we need to provide FAPE and equity to education...so why can't this be done virtually to the best extent possible? We are dealing with a pandemic, aren't our students' and teachers' health of utmost importance? Can't FAPE be provided in the FSC settings virtually? Dr. Kishimoto mentioned that the DOE purchased enough technology for those that need it, so why can't our FSC students be provided with distance learning, telepractice, and other services to the best extent possible?

Hawaii also does not currently have clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students' return. This is evidence that there is no priority for our education system in Hawaii. We can't take a "go with the flow" approach to planning. We need clearer guidance to ensure that we are working in a safe environment, to the greatest extent possible.

Also, telework should be allowed for teachers for as long as distance learning remains in effect. Teachers should be given an informed choice to telework or not. We shouldn't have to risk our own lives to work on campus if our students are doing distance learning.

Non-classroom teachers should also be provided the choice to telework. I have personally requested for ADA accommodations due to medical concerns and the process has been so stressful!! They provided paperwork for my doctor to fill out, and when my doctor filled it out they requested for MORE information and entitled it "Exhibit A" as if I was in a court setting. The follow-up questions that were posed were all or nothing. I don't think that is fair. Every case should be given consideration by a case-by-case basis but especially for non-classroom teachers... we should be given the opportunity to telework ESPECIALLY if one is at the high risk categories according to CDC. The Compliance Branch and the entire process makes it so difficult to even be considered to telework.

I don't understand how our state is limiting gatherings to 5 people indoors and outdoors but we in schools are exempt? Dr. Anderson stated that he will possibly look at Florida's approach in their schools' systems. Florida? Why Florida? They have had statistics on COVID related deaths even with students.

Government in Hawaii also expressed that our numbers are still low compared to other states. Regardless of how high or low the numbers are, the fact is, the virus is still present here and deaths are still occurring. I don't understand why we as educators must be forced to remain on campus to work when we should be going 100%
distance learning for ALL students (even the vulnerable population) at least for the first quarter or the end of the year. We must do our part to STOP THE SPREAD.

Thank you.
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8/19/2020

Board Members:

I am opposed to opening of schools for in-school attendance in Fall 2020. Attendance for Fall should only be by distance learning. Teachers should be allowed to teach online from home.

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. Requiring scores of teachers and staff to be at school, sharing restrooms, offices, etc, recklessly exposes them to risk of infection.
4. Many students live with grandparents or with parents who have compromised health. Illness will spread.
5. Many teachers also have compromised health issues.
6. We have seen what is happening around the country when people go to restaurants and bars and congregate in rooms. This is much like a school setting. The virus is spiking in Hawaii and all over the country. Hospitals are filling. People are dying. Mayors and Governors are closing establishments where people gather.
7. You cannot keep children away from each other, and cannot get many of them to always use masks.
8. Schools in other states trying to open are having to be re-closed because of infection spread.
9. 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.
10. You have a legal and moral obligation to keep staff and students, and their families safe.
11. Please do not open the schools this year for in-school attendance.
Thank you.
Gerald Garcia, Holualoa, Kona, Big Island

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Note: we have a new Suite Number: "108", because we moved downstairs in the same building.
Gerald A. Garcia, Attorney at Law
Hawaii Document Service
75-5722 Kuakini Hwy., Suite 108
Kailua-Kona, HI 96740
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I commend the Board of Education for making the thoughtful decision to delay students returning to campus. After your last meeting, I’m surprised something similar to the following wasn’t immediately posted on the Hawaii Department of Education’s website, tweeted on Twitter, posted on Facebook, widely distributed to media outlets, and emailed to every HIDOE employee as they have shown that they are more than willing to do by their recent action.

The Hawaii Board of Education today overreached by directing the Hawaii State Department of Education (HIDOE), alleging that our school reopening plan is “not ready” — a plan they jointly helped to build — and that our campuses are not safe for students.

Despite the Department’s efforts to work collaboratively and productively with the board, its chair Catherine Payne continues to work against what is in the best interest of Hawaii’s children.

What our keiki deserve is seat time with their teachers for nine half-days despite the teachers and administrators fear mongering with their submitted testimony.

The board’s misleading claim that “our schools are not ready” to receive face-to-face learning on campuses next week is a scare tactic that follows multiple publicity stunts, including forcing us to make schools that want to utilize less than six-feet distancing to submit exceptions, which creates further anxiety at a time when we need sound leadership.

As previously announced, our school leaders have designed plans to have students return to campus next week, unless they have opted for 100% distance learning (which we were forced to provide as well), to connect with their teacher, receive training on distance learning platforms if necessary, and address issues with connectivity and access to technology. In many cases, schools have designated six hours a day for certain grade levels to accomplish this, while enforcing safety protocols around social distancing and face coverings.

Chair Payne encouraged teachers to show up for paid training days for the first four days, and now she is telling teachers that students shouldn’t show up for two more weeks. The board demanded this additional training for teachers, at a cost of nine fewer instructional half-days for students, but is trying to prevent students from having those half-days to begin immediately testing them for learning loss.

Teachers have been back on campus full time since July 29, and we have no evidence of widespread transmission on any of our campuses. We have had individual cases at individual campuses, as we reported earlier this week, and will continue to report on weekly moving forward at the complex-area level only.

Over the summer months, when we had over 8,000 students engaging in some type of face-to-face or blended summer program, in addition to staff who supported these activities, we saw one case each at six campuses.
We will not allow Chair Payne to script out the work our principals need to do to lead, nor drive a wedge between our principals and their staff. Our students have physically been out of school since spring break. It’s time we all put the futures of our students first. That’s what our keiki truly deserve.

This is no way to Act with Care when your employees are crying out for relief during a worldwide pandemic. We understand that it is frustrating when you make plans and have them dashed repeatedly (less than six-feet distancing, August 4th start date, shortage differential pay). The union has done everything in its power to be collaborative in this process to try and come to common-sense solutions that work best for the health and safety of our keiki, kumu, kupuna, and communities. Had the Department followed recommendations given from the very beginning, much of the heartache and time wasted for other plans could have been avoided.

Mahalo members of the board for continuing to listen to those on the ground who are providing you the unvarnished truth. Please be mindful of this when the tri-level leadership tries to inform you otherwise.

Osa Tui
McKinley High School
HSTA Vice President

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! I am writing in regards to:

**A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.**

At this time, it is not safe for any students to be on campus, whether Sped students or not. While it is understandable that some Sped students need different types of instructional strategies, their health and well being is much more important! Teachers have the resources to make such learning possible.

After hearing about the various positive cases of Covis-19, I dont feel safe having students in my class. I am immunocompromised because of my autoimmune disease and because of all the medication I take. Even though I can control what is happening in my classroom, I cannot control what is happening at the student’s home. Coming into contact with someone who may potentially have Covid-19 or has been in contact with someone, could be detrimental to my health.

It is in the best interest of all students, faculty and staff to keep students doing distance learning until at least the end of first quarter. However, it would be even better to continue until things with Covid-19 are under control. While I am on Big Island where the numbers are not as crazy as Oahu, there are still people arriving on our island from everywhere! Not being able to control travelers is what scares me.

Mahalo for your time and efforts to help keep our keiki and teachers safe!

--

~ channa m. uyetake ~
Please work with Gov. Ige to get all essential workers back at work. Teachers can't continue to impose their
demands on the rest of the population. They pushed for a delayed reopening of schools, insisted on a staggered
school week with only 2 partial days of in person teaching per week. Then that became online only until Sept.
11. Now they want to push that back further all the way to Oct. 2. Our kids and families have had
enough. Teachers shouldn't be running our lives in that manner. All essential workers need to get back to work.
We have accommodated their needs. They had since March to prepare their classrooms. Nothing happened over
the summer and they told us they weren't ready in late July and needed more time. What are we as parents to do
and believe anymore? How are we supposed to work and run our lives, our families, when even essential
workers decide they can call it quits? Please help all of us taxpayers who pay for their salaries to get them back
to work. Two part-time days online isn't enough to properly educate and prepare our kids for the future they
face.

Thank you,

Freddy Courteau
Parent, taxpayer, voter
Dear BOE members:

I am an Associate Professor of History at UH Manoa and the mother of a fifth-grader at Waikiki Elementary.

I am writing to call your attention to the serious concerns shared by me and many other parents concerning the program selected for the "100% distance learning track" and its implementation.

I imagine you will be hearing from many other parents and educators, so I'll try to keep this short.

1. We received ZERO information from our daughter's school about what the "100% distance learning" platform would be, how it would be run, or who would supervise it. We were told only that we had to choose between the unsafe in-person option or mystery "distance learner" option by July 24 and sign a form committing to stick with it through the end of the semester.

2. We like Waikiki Elementary and appreciate that all of the teachers and administrative staff work extraordinarily hard. We were all the more dismayed, therefore, when we were finally told -- only three days before the delayed first day of school -- that the "distance learning option" would have no grade level instructor or even instructional assistant assigned to our child, and that in fact, there was only one "teacher" responsible for all of Waikiki's "100% distance learners." That person's only real role, moreover, is to take daily attendance -- not for pedagogical reasons but to maintain the school's enrollment and Federal School Lunch Program numbers.

3. We were also only informed of the name of the distance learning platform, Acellus, three days before the delayed first day of school -- well after we had already been required to sign and commit to it. What I have learned about Acellus in the days since has been chilling. The platform was created by a man who awarded himself his own make-believe PhD, spouts divisive and cruel rhetoric, and is linked to a religious cult of his own making. More and more parents are sharing content from Acellus that leaves me, as a scholar and teacher, flabbergasted. From dubious multiple choice questions to factually inaccurate historical presentation, the program is problematic at every level.

I work hard to train my students in critical thinking and research. Whoever it was at the Department of Education that chose this total sham of a "distance learning" program did not demonstrate either of these skills.

I accept that the perils of the pandemic have placed an enormous responsibility on parents, particularly mothers, to make up for what our children are missing out on by not being able to safely attend school in person. I am trying every day to supervise my child in a bit of math, history, reading, and writing -- all while trying to get my own work done, squeezed in at the dining table next to piles of my own work and piles of breakfast dishes. But to ask me to homeschool my daughter with an ideologically pernicious, pedagogically unsound "learning platform" created by a fraud?!? -- that is truly beyond the pale.

The State of Hawai‘i should cease its contract with the Acellus company immediately and work instead to support our Hawai‘i teachers who are working around the clock and deploying every tool they have to educate our children.
Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Kieko Matteson

***************************************************************************
C. Kieko Matteson
Associate Professor and Undergraduate Advisor
Department of History
University of Hawai`i at Manoa
2530 Dole Street, SAKA203 (mail), Office: SAK A412
Honolulu, HI 96822
kieko.matteson@hawaii.edu
Aloha,

My name is [REDACTED] and I am a Japanese language teacher at [REDACTED].

I am testifying on item A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18th, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements and communication.

Prior to the start of distance learning this week Monday, teachers at our school under the direction of our Principal and administration were planning to have face to face learning with four small groups of students (A,B,C,D) with different groups coming in different days into the classroom this entire week. Hearing that other schools in our district were doing full distance learning and not having other students come into their classroom due to risks of COVID-19, many teachers at my school were worried about their health and I heard many decided to take leave for those reasons. There were also teachers who said it was for the kids and it couldn’t be helped and would just come because that was the instruction and they did not want to receive any retribution. The sudden decision to have 100 percent distance learning came on Sunday 8/16 at 3pm and I know teachers were both surprised yet relieved to hear this. I know for me, if we were still continuing to do face to face even with the small group of students this week, I would still have come to school, but I told my family I would quarantine for two weeks and would not even attend my father in law’s 88th birthday this week, but it was for their own safety and health especially with the rise in cases on Oahu. I didn’t want to take any chances. I was also worried about my own life. There are still many teachers on Oahu who are doing face to face classes this week and have shared their worries about their health and safety.

Hearing the voice of teachers’, I have talked to, I felt why does each school Principal and Admin need to make these very hard decisions dealing with health and safety of our schools, students and teachers. I know each school has different make ups and are in different geographical areas with different student data, but I feel the decision should come from our State Department of Education and enable all schools to follow the same guidance and guidelines when it comes to issues like safety and health in our schools and re-opening schools.

Also, coming from a school where we have many students and not many classrooms and many teachers float to a minimum of 2 or more classrooms, The Department of Health and the Hawaii Department of Education need to provide clear metrics on when schools campuses are safe for students return. I say this because there are no set metrics on this and I worry for what will happen if a floating teacher like me is asymptomatic and goes all around campus because they need to travel to their floating classroom. Will the entire school shut down because of that floating teacher? What about all of the students? Especially for bigger schools, we all need clear metrics so we know what the procedures are to help the schools, our students and ourselves.

Third, the number of positive cases have been popping up at different schools and the active cases count is also rising on Oahu. I have also heard from people who have gotten COVID-19 and most of them don’t know where they got it from. I know the focus is on the family gatherings, but now the virus is all around in different communities and with students coming from all over to our school, I feel like it is still unsafe to have students come back to hybrid or face to face learning from Sept 14th. If teachers and adults, are not used to wearing masks and take it off, I know students will also do the same thing. There hasn’t been anything done to check the filtration of AC units and I was told that the same AC air flows
throughout the entire building. If we keep doors open to filter the room, then the AC will shut down. Any of us in any of the buildings without the appropriate filtration check could get COVID-19 through the air we are breathing. I feel all of these things need to be checked prior to enabling students to coming to school. I can wear all of the PPE possible, but I would still have a risk of getting COVID-19. Recently, I was told there was no gloves and spray bottles and I would have to use the base teachers’ supplies. The base teachers did not want to give me any supplies because they knew they would run out. I do not blame them for feeling that way, so I ended up buying my own PPE supplies. Floating teachers are also important and should have their own PPE supplies. I don’t feel my school is safe with the floating classroom situation, no AC filtration check and lack of PPE supplies for floating teachers. I have been coming to school to do distance learning and still worry about myself due to the issues above. Other floating teachers have nowhere to go to do their classes because they share rooms with other teachers, when talking to their students, both teachers can hear each other and it is distracting, they cannot do class. There are other places like the office and library where even if teachers try to go different times, there are still a lot of people in enclosed places. If we are using the online platforms with our students and for faculty meetings, why can’t we also have the option to work at home. I feel all of these things put teachers at high risk of getting COVID-19 and not effective for distance learning, if we are able to do distance learning from home, we should be able to do it from home for health, safety and instructional reasons.

In addition, if we are already teaching our students via distance learning and they are learning and getting adjusted to this, why should we stop what we are already doing. Since we started school online, I have had 97 percent attendance with distance learning. I have been in constant communication with students and they have been working on getting used to the platforms I will be using. As the weeks go on, they will get used to the procedures and platforms and perhaps be even more better at them than we are. Nothing can beat face to face teaching, but enabling both teachers and students this time to be safe and master distance learning instruction, curriculum and building community, this would be the opportunity to do so. For the safety and health and for being able to polish and enhance our technology and classrooms online, we should do one hundred percent distance learning for all students.

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 have the same feelings just like many other teachers do, we want to create relationships and help our students to learn and succeed, but we cannot do these things unless we feel safe and healthy. Teachers should not have to choose between their families and their students and jobs they love, that is not right. Please know that we are humans and have lives as well. I understand the issue is very complicated, but I know the teachers will work hard if you help and support our safety, health and lives. I also know the students and their communities will also be grateful and do what they can to help our children here in Hawaii. Please think about all of the safety, health and the lives of everyone being impacted (students, teachers, staff and communities)

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony.

Sincerely
To the Hawai‘i Board of Education,

I am once again writing testimony in a plea for the health and safety of our state’s public school teachers, students, administration, staff, families, and the greater community. I want the members of the BOE to consider two specific items: the lack of written guidance from the Department of Health regarding the opening of schools, and a request for a Telework option to apply to teachers who are instructing through distance platforms.

More than a month ago, the HSTA and the DOE agreed to the “Memorandum of Understanding” which states, “In person schooling will resume in conjunction with written guidance from the State of Hawaii Department of Health (DOE).” (lines 34-35)

As of Tuesday’s press conference (the most recent as I write this), there still exists no written guidance from the Department of Health. In Tuesday’s conference, when asked about specific metrics regarding the opening and closing of school campuses for in-person instruction, he mentioned that he was once again tasked with putting together an “ad hoc task force” to come up with a plan, but when discussing what info would be in the plan, he followed up by saying, “We don’t have that, at this point.” These statements are nearly identical to statements given by the state a month ago regarding the opening and closing of schools. When will there be a plan? I think most of us are starting to lose faith that there will ever be a plan.

Additionally, at Tuesday’s press conference, Honolulu Mayor Kirk Caldwell said, “The requirement is that if you can work from home, we want you to work from home. If you can work from home, we want you to work from home.” I believe his repetition of this directive is important; we are still in the middle of a global health crisis, and we take as many cautionary safety measures as possible. This requirement contradicts (and should override) the current requirement that teachers are present on campuses to conduct their online instruction.

Aside from the additional in-person interactions that come with people gathering on one campus, as a music teacher who has been displaced from my own classroom this year (to help provide more home classrooms for physical distancing), I do not currently have my own room in which to teach. All of my own personal teaching materials are at home and my school teaching materials are more or less in storage. If I am able to teach from home, I can sing, play instruments, and take off my mask so students can see my face -- things that would not be safe practices if I am on campus near other faculty. We should be taking as many safety precautions as we are absolutely able to take during distance learning, as well as in-person instruction.

Decisions for both of these items should be made for the long-term (at least first quarter, but perhaps the remainder of 2020), so students, families, and educators are able to plan and know what to expect going forward.

I trust that the BOE will make intelligent and reasonable decisions and recommendations regarding the disorganized distribution of information and guidance from the Hawai‘i State Department of Education and the Hawai‘i State Department of Health.

Thank you for your time,

Sara Ricer
Chair Payne and members of the Board of Education:

As a professional educator of over 3 decades, I’m saddened when the authority of those who chose to leave classroom teaching elevates their voices over those dedicated to staying in the classroom. Particularly at this time of heightened tension, the voices of those employees closest to our students deserve to be heard.

Given the guidance provided by Chair Payne, on behalf of my intermediate school, I’ve organized notable concerns which I’ve heard/experienced:

I. Health and Safety: Pursuant to HRS § 396-6, Respondents are required to provide BU-5 members with a place of employment which is safe and free from recognized hazards.

Adults are having physical reactions to chemicals being used, which is concerning. Even with classroom cleaning on Fridays to allow dissipation throughout the weekend, teachers returning on Mondays are having reactions.

Personal Protective Equipment (“PPE”): A.2.c. “Medical grade PPE must be used by teachers and staff who work with some high needs special education students.” Even if orders were placed, the PPE supply chain to neighbor islands especially has not functioned properly yet. Our high-risk Fully-Self Contained (FSC) classrooms do not meet their OSHA legal guidelines. When we operate schools out of compliance with the HRS §396-4(2) of Hawaii Occupational Safety and Health Laws, standards, rules, regulations, we are increasing our State’s liability and culpability.

By employers interfering, restraining, and coercing BU-5 members in the exercise of their basic human right to work in a safe workplace, the Employer’s unlawful and inappropriate conduct has a chilling effect on educators. Conversely, being held accountable for actual presence of PPE is essential to ensure safely.

II. Distance Learning (DL): Over 1/3 (290) of our school has opted for 100% DL. B.5.b. The “Opt In” forms for the online, virtual learning option tend to be quite harsh in demands, without fully explaining parental/guardian rights. Our learner’s high school is charging a cash $50 fee per device loan.

Professional Development should be: b. Tailored to the tools, services, and content schools use, particularly those related to online teaching if it proves necessary, either as part of a hybrid delivery model or during rolling closures next fall (Lines 335-344). How can we administer platforms such as Acellus, with its support in Kansas City, Missouri on Central Standard time (CST), without formal training and appropriately allocated time? Acellus has grading capability per quarter, but we have not yet learned how to port credit readily to Infinite Campus. Asynchronous learning should coincide well with telework, rather than telework being denied to Administrative DL facilitators.

III. Personnel not funded or addressed adequately.

C.4.a. “The Governor stated that he was asking employers to accommodate their workers’ needs for flexibility to be home with young children who are not able to be in school.” However, our teachers, many of whom have young children who will be home, denied their contractual right of conducting their distance learning from home.

Our school “sold” a custodial line, while the need for cleaning is very high. We simply are not funded well enough. This places our school level Administration in a very stressful situation.

VI. Reconciling Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBA) and Multiple Guidance Documents

Article X.B. of the CBA states in relevant part: “Teachers shall not be required to work under unsafe or hazardous conditions or to perform tasks which imminently endanger their health or safety.” Article X.G. of the CBA states: “When students are sent home from school or are not required to attend due to emergencies which endanger health or safety, teachers will not be required to remain at, nor report to, said schools.”
The Department has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) also with the Hawaii State Teachers Association. This short 16-page document amplifies portions of the contract, but does not abrogate the rest of the 120-page CBA. HSTA is filing a class grievance on behalf of Bargaining Unit 05 employees because of violations to the HSTA CBA (contract) and the June MOU.

The Superintendent and Corey Rosenlee, HSTA President, signed a letter dated June 27, 2020 regarding telework for at-risk teachers. At a crucial time in this pandemic when the Governor and Mayor of Honolulu are urging telework, a standard practice is for Administrators to deny this option. We should be planning for our long-term operations to face the realities of being unsafe to learn in intermingled small poorly-ventilated rooms.

d. “Identifying any required personal protective equipment and sanitation supply needs and coordinating with the Department’s State Level to obtain them.” When this is NOT completed safely, parent/guardians should be notified, and transportation of these learners to unprepared sites should not take place. How can we justify placing our most physically vulnerable learners at greatest risk?

c. “Instructions clearly explaining who is responsible for making determinations on school closures and instructional delivery mode transitions and how the decision-making process will work, which must include the flexibility for decision-making to occur at different levels (school, complex area, island, statewide) depending on the situation (Lines 154-172)” What determinations have been suggested so far? Why should COVID-19 cases have to appear on a campus for it to be closed, as by then it is too late? Our Superintendent intimated that as no widespread contamination has happened yet with just adults on campus, then it is safe to return to normal. That is an unacceptable breach of our trust.

The state’s dangerous plans for in-person learning while coronavirus cases are exploding in our state, along with other violations of labor agreements, prompted HSTA to file a prohibited practice complaint with the Hawaii Labor Relations Board (HLRB) against the state of Hawaii.

HSTA’s HLRB complaint said, “The Employer did not negotiate or bargain in good faith with the HSTA prior to its announcement in regard to the spike and rapid spread of COVID-19 cases that changed the working conditions of HSTA’s members and render their worksites unsafe, did not specify the number of students that were reporting back to school, in person, on 8/17/2020, and did not appear to comply with the MOU (memorandum of understanding) which required meaningful consultation and direction from the DOH on health and safety measures, a written procedure for health screening at each school and worksite, and the implementation of health check (e.g. temperature screening and/or symptoms checks) procedures upon reopening of schools.”

The HSTA requested impact bargaining with the Hawaii State Department of Education (HIDOE) over the changing community conditions (with COVID-19 spreading) and newly modified instructional plans. The state has refused HSTA’s demand to bargain over the change in working conditions, especially in light of the exponential growth in the spread of COVID-19 and infection at a growing number of schools since the beginning of this month and/or failing to bargain in good faith.

HSTA is requesting also that the HLRB issue a declaratory ruling that the state’s planned action violates the relevant state workplace safety rules by forcing teachers into a hazardous workplace, and an injunction to prevent the state from violating these rules.

h. A cease and desist order prohibiting violations of HRS §89-13(a)(1)-(5), (7) and (8);
k. That an order issue from the Board ordering Respondents to pay civil penalties of **$10,000.00 per violation** for willfully committing prohibited practices under HRS §89-13(a)(1)-(5), (7) and (8)…

Given the current state of Hawaii’s pandemic, how can the BOE and DOE Administrators ignore the significant consequences accruing and continue violating a legally binding CBA?

VII. Communication G.5. “The plea is for communication to be truthful and proactive… There is a pretense that everything is handled.” Our Code of Conduct includes Honesty, which should extend to full timely disclosure of summer COVID cases.

On Aug. 7, the department announced that during the first week of school, starting Aug. 17, “students will physically return to campus on a coordinated and scheduled basis.” The HIDOE claims inappropriately that there is *no significant change* in working conditions, buildings are open, *schools are safe*, and students can return and teachers will need to report to their worksites.

On Aug. 12, HIDOE notified HSTA “that it could not provide the union with the number of students expected to report to school on 8/17/20, had no update on any written guidance from the DOH, and could not confirm whether each school had the mandatory written procedures outlined in the MOU.”

Can anyone “rely” on the Department Of Health (DOH) in its current state of disarray? Pursuant to HRS § 396-4(6), the spike and rapid spread of COVID-19 cases presents a danger and hazard in the State of Hawaii, including its schools and related worksites, and could reasonably be expected to cause death or serious physical harm. “The spike in COVID-19 cases and the widespread transmission of the virus is an unsafe and hazardous condition which imminently endangers the health and safety of all BU-5 (HSTA) members.”

Given this entire “Discussion,” we’re so disappointed that the Board of Education Chair Payne did not choose to make a timely Action item. We ask you to ensure:

- ✔ 100% distance learning for all students on all islands until at least the end of the first quarter.
- ✔ teachers work safely from their homes, unless they opt-in to work on campus by notifying administration of a need for room cleaning.

For the Schooling Our Keikis Deserve, we need better Leadership, not less.

Sincerely,

D Anderson
HSTA Grievance Rep
I am a teacher at Kealakehe Intermediate on the Big Island. I am informing you that my campus is not safely following the CDC recommended guidelines and thus I request ASAP for telework options until the following can occur: sanitation of shared bathrooms and workspaces, i.e. xerox and printers and walkways. Currently there is a posted paper dated back from March where custodial staff note they have sanitized key touch points in the classroom and restrooms, etc. SANITATION IS NOT BEING DOCUMENTED, therefore it cannot be accurately noted as completed. My room has not been cleaned, trash has not been emptied except after I requested it, and I was handed a trash bag and instructed by custodial staff to place trash outside the room. I have been on campus since July 28. I have not witnessed a single door or switch or floor cleaned. I asked my TA Principal about the documentation of sanitation and she replied that custodial staff have been busy doing other tasks. THIS SENDS A CLEAR MESSAGE to me that teacher's work areas (classrooms, walkways, railings and restrooms) are not meeting the CDC guidelines.

Every task I am doing can be done via telework in order to assure my health and safety during this pandemic. Students are walking about our open campus unmasked. Teachers are walking about and meeting for multiple hours at a time unmasked. I joined a team meeting and 2 teachers were unmasked and one teacher was eating and then wiped her mouth with her hands and remained in the classroom.

During our drive through 2 day packet/schedule pick up, teachers were unmasked, shouting and not social distancing. I mentioned this to our admin. They said, "are they eating or drinking?" As we know, the act of eating increases the aerosolization of droplets and increases potential risk for virus spreading.

This is a serious health and safety concern which should be at the forefront of the school reopening plan. NO DOCUMENTATION OF SANITATION? NO PEOPLE ON CAMPUS! I was told every Wednesday no students and no teachers will be on campus for deep cleaning. THIS NEVER HAPPENED. Just because students are not on campus do not the teachers reporting daily, using shared spaces, restrooms and team classrooms DESERVE CLEANING?

Teams consist of groups larger than 7. Oahu Mayor just mentioned groups of 5 or less!!

I do not feel our school campus is safe due to lack of cleaning, sanitation and clear documentation of such. Additionally, peers are NOT following CDC mask wearing and Social distancing guidelines and openly speak about not wearing masks while working for hours with their team of teachers.

There are so many pivots and moving parts our ADMIN cannot manage our campus safety based on lack of documented sanitization. Many custodial staff DO NOT wear masks.

PLEASE extend DL until at least Quarter 1 ends. Please allow any classroom teacher to do telework UNTIL DOCUMENTATION of sanitation and wearing masks can be managed...I am not safe. I am not ready for students to return anytime soon until safety is a high standard-CDC guidelines!

Deborah Richard
English Language Arts teacher team 6B
This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.
To whom it may concern:
This testimony is to state that we are ready to return to school. The opening of school has been delayed by weeks to give schools preparation time to welcome students back in a safe manner and to prepare to teach those students that desire to distance learn. I have observed that schools have been working hard all summer to prepare and plan for the return of students (not just the last couple of weeks).

Schools have offered a complete distance learning curriculum to any student that desires to be at home instead at school. If students are feeling unsafe or do not want to chance exposure to COVID they have the choice to stay at home. By not allowing the opening of school, this minority is determining the outcome for all students. There is no choice for those that would like a face to face education.

The past two days we have invited students back for distance learning workshops. At my school we invited two students at a time in the classroom. I enjoyed meeting with the students and their parents. Every parent and every student in my class expressed the desire to come back to school, except one. This student had already chosen the distance learning option for the entire school year. Parents commented on the precautions that have been taken and all were cooperative in the requests we made to encourage physical distancing and wearing of masks.

For those that are genuinely concerned for their health I do not want to take away their option to be at home. Again, this is a choice every student can make. I am asking that every student be given the choice of face to face learning. And if their choice is face to face learning (or a hybrid plan) even with the known risks involved, then that choice should be honored and schools should be open.

After reading emails sent by the HSTA, I strongly believe the union is no longer representing all teachers, but only a minority. They need to show data that reflects that more than 50% of the teachers in the state of Hawaii do not want to teach face to face. They do not have this kind of data, and if their wishes are to be met, it should be demanded that they provide data showing the number of teachers who they are representing in their request.

I hope to welcome students to my classroom on September 14.
Thank you for your time.
Sincerely,
Chanda Tsing
Aloha Chair Payne and Board,

My name is Jennie Hancock, a 5th grade teacher at Waikoloa Elementary and Middle School on the Big Island, the Kona Chapter President of HSTA, and a parent of a 6th grader that ruefully selected the 100% distance option from our school.

I spent the last week (between "trainings" that varied from valuable--shoutout to the teachers that made the 7 Distance Learning Readiness Modules--to ridiculous--a super long cleaning video when we aren't supposed to clean?!) reaching out to families on my dwindling roster, encouraging them to both NOT pull their kids to full distance as well as NOT send their student to my class for the two full days they were scheduled for at our school. Therefore I had 4 students on the first day, and 7 the second...but from 8-2:15! Today, Wednesday, I have none. Beyond the health and safety of our campus, I feel like being here when it's so institutionalized and masked and sterile is more psychologically damaging for some students than it would be starting the year from home. Fortunately I've established relationships with families and the community here so when I shared my concerns, most felt comfortable sharing that they felt the same.

I watched and listened over the last weeks to parents--reacting out of fear of current circumstances or lack of information--pull their students to the fully online option (myself included) and I am so sad because now those students (hundreds at our school) will NOT have a positive relationship built with a teacher this year, since they're just placed on Acellus. We know through research on restorative practices and effect size that positive adult interactions are monumentally important to students, especially those facing trauma. A virtual relationship with a teacher they know or have seen around campus is much more valuable than videos recorded in Central USA by strangers.

As for the quality of education Acellus is "providing," I am appalled by the program's lack of dimension. My son is as reluctant to do work as most 11 year old boys, yet he's already well exceeded his weekly goals in that program. All he does is watch videos and answer questions. Yesterday after my school day I taught him how to take notes, at least. At this rate he'll finish the classes assigned to him well before the end of the school year, yet the quality of his learning is suffering. I can fill those gaps as a professional educator and willing parent, but other students won't be so lucky. Our Special Education teachers can't even modify lessons or provide accommodations, which students are supposed to be guaranteed through their IEPs and IDEA!

This could have been handled so much better.

The roll out of this school year has been a nightmare from a parent and a teacher standpoint. It's difficult to be a parent, teacher, and leader when things are missing or changing from the DOE while we're scrambling to get work done "on the ground." Please continue to hold the Department accountable for their lack of effective leadership while we're all in the trenches exposing ourselves and our students to mixed messages, not to mention germs.

Sincerely,
Jennie Hancock
5th Grade Teacher, HSTA Kona Chapter President
Waikoloa Elementary and Middle School
Having taught in Hawaii for over 30 years, I want to add my voice once again to those who are concerned about the safety, not only of ourselves, but also the entire community, and especially the children.

Listen to the teachers who are risking their own lives and safety because they are being forced to go into the schools to work. PLEASE allow all to telework from their homes.

PLEASE allow 100% distance learning FOR ALL THE CHILDREN OF HAWAII until the schools are 100% safe to enter. As someone who has taught ages 5 to 12, I can guarantee you that NO ONE can keep kids safe in the classroom right now. Impossible to wear masks all the time and impossible to enforce 6 feet of social distance.

STAND UP to those who would force our teachers and students into an unsafe environment. A FEW MONTHS LOST of face-to-face learning can never equal A LIFE LOST PERMANENTLY or PERMANENTLY DAMAGE TO HEALTH.

Join us in making sure no students physically come to school and allow teachers to work from home.
Katherine Balatico, Principal, Stevenson Middle School
Board of Education Meeting (Student Achievement, Finance and Infrastructure, Human Resources, or General Business Meeting (full Board)
Agenda Item V: Personnel
In support of Agenda Item V

Good afternoon, Madam Chairwoman and Honorable Members of the Board,

I am testifying on Agenda Item V, Personnel. I am in support of the DOE continuing to use the current Telework policy (updated memo 7/24/20). I believe Telework is a management right, and administrators may deny requests if they determine it is not in the best interest of students or the Department. Teachers should continue to provide distance learning from their classrooms for the following reasons:

- The school is the hub for centralized support for technical issues and coaching support to ensure immediate support to the greatest extent possible to students and their parents. (In the past week, students and parents who have needed individualized and immediate support have been able to receive it because teachers were available to them in their classrooms.);
- There are safe conditions at school;
- All teachers have access to devices, reliable internet connection, and immediate technology support from school level User Support Technician;
- Equipment such as projectors, screens, document cameras for demos, teaching materials, resources are readily available to teachers when in their classrooms;
- Stevenson Middle School’s instructional model is designed to provide returning students continuity to what they are familiar with and is designed so that students feel a sense of connectedness to their teachers and the school to which they will return. Teachers have not only designed their virtual spaces but their physical learning classroom environments to welcome back students;
- Middle school team teachers rely on being right next door to each other for teacher collaboration and planning.

Respectfully submitted,
Katherine Balatico
Principal
R.L. Stevenson Middle School
Office (808) 587-4520
Fax (808) 587-4523

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To the esteemed BOE members,

I am submitting testimony for Item A. Update on implementations of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health & safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.

I support, and would like to encourage the Board to take action to implement the following:

- Ensure 100-percent distance learning for all students across the state, including those in special education, until at least the end of the first quarter.

- Require the DOH and HIDOE to provide clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students’ return. Many states and cities have specific triggers already in place for when schools should be open or closed based on COVID-10 cases, but Hawaii does not.

- Guarantee that the HIDOE honors HSTA’s contract by allowing teachers to work from home (telework) for as long as distance learning remains in effect.

To summarize the following sentences: a student's right to education in this crisis should NOT supercede a school staff member's right to health and well-being, and local government orders, including the Governor and Oahu Mayor's declaration, as well as any DOE policy, should NOT have to create exceptions or loopholes to allow schools room to function.

The DOE's loose regulations on which student populations qualify for in-person learning means that up to 57% of Hawaii's public school keiki could be at school at once, when considering all SPED, ELL, homeless, or other "vulnerable" populations.

At some schools, SPED teachers are being given discretion on which students can distance learn and which can come to school, with the argument being that those needing in-person instruction are not able to get the full extent of their learning at home.

If for some reason these students' educational plans require more than 5 people to administer services to them at once in the same room, doesn't this violate the spirit of the Governor and Oahu Mayor's new order? Why are schools constantly exempt from social distancing orders?

Furthermore, if students are not able to practice safe hygiene or wear a mask, then this also means they should stay at home.

The DOE is taking a piecemeal approach to distance learning dates, and by doing so it is making teachers unable to plan in the long term for their students in this quarter of schooling. The DOE should simply call for 100% distance learning for the whole quarter.
Thank you for your time.

- Brandon Cha
Greetings:
My name is Liz Noetzel and I am a seventh grade English teacher at Waikoloa Middle School on the Big Island, one of the few schools who saw students in person during the past few days. I'm writing to share that experience with you and ask that you take this into consideration as testimony on item V.A., an update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the Covid-19 pandemic. The focus, of course, is on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, and many other areas. I would like to address health and safety, as this is the area where I've experienced a major breakdown within the past two days.

Students of all ages were unable to social distance. I even had my advisory walking directly behind me and I had to turn around several times and admonish them to stay six feet apart. This is not their new normal and it will not become one in the immediate future. Teachers' lives and students' families' lives depend on this critical piece of cooperation, and it just isn't happening. Students are social by nature and gravitate to each other. They literally do not know how to stay away from each other and no amount of reminding or begging is going to keep them apart. There are not enough adults on campus to watch their every move. This is a matter of life and death. I cannot stress this enough. We cannot expect these youngsters to just 'remember' to do something so unnatural to their very being. It was not intentional or malicious on their part, they were just walking and talking, as kids do.

While students were very good about wearing masks, there were several very concerning issues that arose in this area throughout the day: One student, in particular, had a doctor's note that said he did not have to wear a mask. This student should NOT have been allowed on campus and should have been immediately directed to our online option. The principal told him this but he left her office and went to his male counselor, who walked him to class and showed the note to the teacher. He attended classes all day without a mask on. That's all it takes- one person. He is a social student by nature with a large group of friends. I would not be surprised if he is the source of a super spreader event, to be honest. Additionally, we had another student who casually mentioned that her father was in quarantine, but that "He was not really doing it, he was hanging out with all of us because he got so bored." This child was also in school all day, coming in contact with 6 different teachers and multiple classmates. If parents are being irresponsible and careless, there is nothing we can do. We are helpless, and our lives are on the line.

It is literally impossible to not go near the students. They need help with their login information, their laptop won't download the new version, they need this or that...so I myself struggled to stay six feet away from them. I did not bargain for this and I was not provided wipes from the school. I purchased my own at Costco, and I have been doing my best to keep my room sanitized with those. We have been told to use hand sanitizer and paper towels to clean the desks but that takes too long and is quite messy.
At the end of the day yesterday, after two days of face to face learning, I began for the first time looking into my finances on a serious level to figure out if I can leave teaching before students are supposed to return in a month. I have not done that until yesterday. I have checked off 'no' on all of the surveys that asked if I would consider leaving. I did not think it could be this bad. It was far worse than I ever imagined.

What really surprised me was how terrified the students were. Traumatized. The statement that the DOE put out that kids were full of 'Smiles and joy'....well, that is a whole bucket of lies because these kids are absolutely terrified. I had them fill out index cards and asked them to describe their feelings and how the campus felt to them. Needless to say, the responses were depressing, sad and almost all negative. One sixth grade student even wet herself during class because she was so anxious. We are traumatizing these kids even more than they already are by dragging them back in here and slamming them with all of these new rules and regulations about what they cannot do- walk this way, eat there not here, go to the bathroom one at a time, sit away, don't touch, wash your hands, sanitize, stay away...what kid wants THAT??? That is not school! That is horrible! Why are we doing this to them and also risking lives at the same time? THIS IS ABSURD! I truly do not know that I can stay in this profession if the employer continues to insist on in person learning past the middle of September. I have taught for HIDOE for 24 years now, and it would break my heart to leave, but if I stay, I have a feeling it will probably get worse before it gets better.

What would make it better? Continued distance learning, and teleworking. There is no point in making people spend money on gas and time in the car when they can do just as good of a job at home. I need to know that the DOH and HIDOE have a clear set of metrics to determine when it is truly safe for ALL students to return. NO STUDENTS should be on campus, regardless of whether they are special ed students, until the end of the first quarter, at a minimum, across the entire state. These are unfortunate times but tough decisions must be made in order to save lives. Health and safety must be a priority.

I realize this is long, I apologize and I thank you in advance for taking the time to accept testimony.  
With appreciation, 
Liz Noetzel

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Liz Noetzel  
Waikoloa Middle School  
Seventh Grade  
English Language Arts Teacher  
(808) 887-6808  x263

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To whom it may concern,

My name is Germaine Juan. I am a student of the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa and a Hawai‘i public high school graduate. I am an alumni of Farrington High School, class of 2018. I am testifying on item V. A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.

A high school teacher of mine reached out to me tonight regarding the treatment of teachers by authorities. Teachers should not be ordered to go back on campus to conduct classes despite classes being taught virtually. COVID-19 cases are blowing up in our communities. The governor and mayor told the entire state to work from home but why are teachers being told to go on campus to work? Some principals won't allow teachers to telework, so concrete rules should be applied by respective authorities to get principals to comply, for the safety of teachers. Teachers should not risk their health when preventive measures are possible. DOE and BOE should not wait until teachers start getting sick.

I ask the board to:

- Ensure 100-percent distance learning for all students across the state, including those in special education, until at least the end of the first quarter.
- Require the DOH and HIDOE to provide clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students’ return. Many states and cities have specific triggers already in place for when schools should be open or closed based on COVID-10 cases, but Hawaii does not.
- Guarantee that the HIDOE honors HSTA’s contract by allowing teachers to work from home (telework) for as long as distance learning remains in effect.

I fully support the demands made by the Hawaii State Teachers Association. Respective authorities should place concrete rules that state that teachers be allowed to teach in the safety of their own homes.

Sincerely,
Germaine Juan

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Germaine Lindsay S. Juan
University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa
BS Candidate in Computer Science

Mānoa Peer Advisor | Student Academic Success Center
Vice President of Administration | Timpuyog Organization
Secretary General | Anakbayan Hawai‘i
Aloha Board of Education,

Reopening schools **now** is very important. The students need the face to face guidance through their teachers. I am a parent, grandparent and an educational assistant in an elementary school and have seen the importance of in school education. The students are in a different mode of learning when at school and in a classroom than at home in their bedroom. Additionally, socialization with their peers is of high importance. This is where they learn communication skills amongst other life skills through interaction. If the public can go to the store, bank, and other places by using safe protocols why is school not considered essential? I believe it is very essential! Please reopen schools now.

Sharon Mokiao

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Please get the students and teachers back in the classroom. Hawaii’s children are being left behind educationally.

We, taxpayers are speaking out and you are using our tax dollars so you need to represent our wants and needs.

First responders are in desperate need of having their kids in school. Please consider this and open the schools for in school learning.

--
Aloha, Kristen
100% Distance Learning for Quarter 1!

Provide clear metrics now. Clear metrics now will give communities, families, students, and teachers time to best prepare for school opening (or not).

I feel safe at home. I can give effective and efficient instruction and guidance to my students in my own home.

Take Action,
Casey P-Rabago
Aloha Board of Education:

I am a public high school teacher and if I were to contract COVID-19, I could spread it to my wife and my two of three children who have asthma. My wife, who is having more severe asthma lately, could be dangerously affected by contracting COVID-19. I also live with my mother who is elderly, months away from turning 65 years old, and struggling with her own health conditions.

I am very glad that we have started school online at this time, and I would strongly urge you to consider extending the distance learning period. By being proactive about this pandemic, rather than being reactive, this is saving lives.

This is not our preferred way to teach, but more importantly it is saving lives. Which to me is a much higher priority than having any face to face classroom time.

Until we have more (medically approved) ways to battle and control this virus, the only safe way to continue school is 100% remotely.

If we bring in-person classes back to campus too soon, schools will become hotbeds of COVID-19 spread - many preventable deaths and bouts of severe illness will occur.

If we bring in-person classes back to campus too soon, large numbers of good teachers will have to leave their jobs - crippling a system that already suffers from teacher shortages.

In addition, please honor our previous agreements with the state that stipulate that if the students are not in class because of safety concerns, the teachers should not be required to be in class either. Teachers can conduct their online classes and participate in meeting/trainings from the safety of our homes, and yet we are treated as if we are unprofessional and untrustworthy - requiring constant surveillance and checks as to our physical whereabouts by our supervisors.

The current rigid requirements that mandate that we teachers have to be on campus at all times (in an empty room) make things more difficult in an already difficult time. As a parent of three children, two who are of school age and one is about to turn five, it is a strain for the person who takes care of my children when my wife and I are working. This puts unnecessary strain on this person as well. Also, on days my wife works, I have to carpool since I have to leave my car at home with the person taking care of my children. This is another risk that I have to unnecessarily take. If I was at home, I would be able to manage both teaching and parenting and not have to worry about carpooling and burdening someone else to care for my children and the responsibility of being in charge of having them complete their school work.

At work, everyone doesn't always follow the social distancing and mask wearing guidelines. I have seen teacher lounges with up to three staff members at a time, conversing and sometimes not wearing masks in a closed, air-conditioned room. I have also seen some staff members on campus in close proximity of each other (within arms length), conversing for long periods of time.
Please extend the remote 100% distance learning period, and please allow teachers the option of teaching off campus.

Thank you,

Arash Steindamm
Science Department
Kealakehe High School
Kona, Hawai'i
Please allow teachers to work from home if they choose.
Mahalo
Gig Goochey
School administration need to step it up. They need to keep staff safe and healthy in order to keep schools viable. Protect the staff that provide the service so that schools can open safely.
Aloha members of the Board of Education and Superintendent Kishimoto,

My name is Rebecca Hadley-Schlosser and I'm a Kindergarten through second grade special education teacher at Nanaikapono Elementary School. I am writing today to address discussion item A. I would like to express my frustration with the quality of the training we received and the lack of guidance we received in relation to the training. I would also like to share information about my experiences over the last two weeks.

It appears that our Superintendent was being a bit disingenuous when she spoke at the last Board meeting because it is evident that most of the training materials were ready to be shared with teachers prior to that meeting.

We were given a two-page table of trainings available with the intended audience and category listed. Teachers were unsure of what trainings they had to do because some of them appeared to be repeats of the ones we are required to view annually. These trainings had a duration listed, but the duration was not accurate for most of the trainings. Some of the trainings had just PowerPoint presentations that we had to read through and others had broken video links. All totaled, there were 19 trainings available for teachers to participate in, with 10 of them being mandatory. The time listed for these 10 mandatory trainings of 12 and one-half hours is inaccurate. If a teacher were to take the time to do all of the activities listed in just the 7 modules, the time is at least double, if not longer. In addition to trying to complete the mandatory training, I was also tasked with trying to get my students with special needs in to be tested to begin the process to determine any learning loss and potential compensatory education services. This was in addition to many meetings throughout the additional 9 days we had.

I thank the Board for listening to our concerns and working with us to ensure that we were able to have time to prepare for our students to go to virtual learning during the first month of school. However, it was very frustrating to find the time to complete the required trainings when we had so many other things demanding our attention. For instance, I had to get my room set up to have student desks separated by six feet to ensure proper social distancing. My room is still not completely set up because we do not know how many students will be returning to attend face-to-face.

I have several friends who have been impacted even further by the decision to have some of our most vulnerable students attending class face-to-face. One teacher friend, who is a newlywed, has had her husband move out because she had students attending her class face-to-face this week. Her father in law is elderly and they do not want there to be any chance for him to get ill with COVID19. One of the fully self-contained special education classes at my school has had 10 out of 12 parents elect to have their child participate via distance learning. If this is our target audience that we feel needs to be on a physical campus, how is this teacher going to be able to meet the needs of those students who have elected to go virtual while also teaching to the students that show up to class?
I have 10 students on my caseload this year. These students are in six homeroom classes. My students will be attending their homeroom classes for whole child learning activities such as art and music as well as Social Studies and Science. I am now tasked with having to figure out how to be present online in six classes at the same time. My educational assistant and I will be working together to get a schedule set up, but this takes time. Unfortunately, because of all the meetings and training we had to go through, we have been unable to do this at the present time. This means that we will have to take our after school time to get a schedule set up. It is difficult, but we will do our jobs and get it figured out. It would have been nice to have the time over the last two weeks to actually do these various activities that are necessary to ensure that my students are having their needs met and I am addressing their IEP goals and objectives.

Please understand that we are in it for the outcome, but we cannot be effective if we are stressed out over ensuring that our classes are appropriately set up to meet the six feet distance requirement and have enough space for all of the students. I was also informed that when we do have face-to-face classes, that my students who would normally return to their homerooms for Science, Social Studies, and the whole child learning activities, will instead stay in my class and participate via computer from my room. This means that I will need to, again, figure out a schedule or way that I can be logged into their homeroom virtual classes at the same time in order to ensure that their needs are being met and that we are adhering to the IEP.

The availability of testing is of concern to me. We keep hearing on the news that UH athletes and professional athletes are being provided with tests, that they don’t have to pay for, but the opportunity for teachers, students, and staff to be tested or even monitored is not being provided to us. This shows that we are not a priority, yet we are being told we are essential workers.

I am very concerned about my personal health as a person who is in the high risk group should I catch COVID19. As a person with diabetes, asthma, and kidney disease, I may die if I catch this. Given that our numbers are increasing in the triple digits daily, please consider extending the time for virtual learning through the end of at least the first quarter if not the first semester for all students so that we can ensure the health and safety for all members of the school community. What happened to the guideline of two weeks of no positive results before opening schools?

We still do not have specific written guidelines from the Department of Health and our questions about what happens when a staff member or student tests positive have gone unanswered. We have had minimal students on campus over the last two weeks, but we are hearing reports almost daily of schools where a staff member or student had been present who had a positive test result. If we continue with the present plan to have small numbers of students on campus, we are setting ourselves up for an even greater increase in numbers of positive results. This is unacceptable, especially since we have students who are at a higher risk of contracting COVID.

While the Governor and Mayor of Honolulu may consider me an essential worker, I do not want to get seriously ill or die because I had to be in my classroom with someone who has COVID19 or has been exposed to it. If I have to quarantine, I have no place to go for that. I live in a household with three other people. My son is asthmatic and has not left the house since mid-March for anything beyond grocery shopping when he needs something or going to his physical therapy appointments. I don't want him to get this, but I may potentially give it to him because I came into contact with someone while at work who contracted it or was exposed to it. For the health and safety of all, please listen to us and do what is right; extend distance learning through the end of the first quarter or semester.

Thank you,

Rebecca Hadley-Schlosser
Kindergarten through Second Grade Special Education Teacher
Nanaikapono Elementary School
Aloha; my name is Zohreh Furtado and I teach at Kealakehe Intermediate School. Like the rest of the population, I feel burdened by the pandemic from multiple angles. I am a parent, grandparent, and a devoted educator. My students are part of my ‘ohana and as I contact my parents and hear their stories, I further feel the weight of human suffering on my shoulders. During the past two and a half weeks, we have been tasked with 8-hour-a-day demanding online trainings and home contacts and meetings, to configure our teaching and learning processes amidst the pandemic. The anxiety provoking postponement of face-to-face teaching, a few days at a time, further burdens me, my family, and my colleagues. We need to make a decision to be online for a quarter or a semester, until we can offer choices that will not bring harm to our children and the school staff. This is an issue of life and death, and schools are a major source of community spread. We also have to be mindful that education does not take place only within the four walls of the classroom and is a continuous cognitive, and sensory input and output process. Currently, we are aligning the online learning to brick and mortar structures of the schools meant to prepare students for factory work. We need to be more open to looking at the pandemic as an opportunity to upgrade our perception of factory models of teaching and learning, and consider education as an institution that can be rethought and retaught.

We have done well to provide meals for the children and we have done well to assess critically the dangers of face-to-face instruction. Yet, we need to not look at schooling as what affects the children only, but also how schooling affects educators and their families. Please consider the safety of teachers, rather than waiting for casualties to move the schools to remote learning. Please be mindful that stress is the number one cause of many major diseases and reduce teacher anxiety by providing some stability.

Mahalo nui loa for your dedicated service to education as the pillar of democracy and social equilibration, and please be mindful that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Me ke aloha nui
Dear Board Members,
I am keeping this short and sweet.
Teachers Love working face to face with their students. It is a hard job sometimes, but it is what we love to do. Right now, we basically had to take on a secondary career in technology. I do not know many other professionals, beside teachers who had to do this. Teachers always work hard, however, in these past couple of weeks, we have been working harder than ever so that our students can be successful.
TEACHERS ARE SCARED. THE HEALTH AND WELL BEING OF ALL STUDENTS AND TEACHERS SHOULD BE A TOP PRIORITY.
PLEASE KEEP DISTANCE LEARNING GOING AS LONG AS POSSIBLE. EVERYONE NEEDS TO FEEL SAFE. IT IS A VERY SIMPLE REQUEST.
THANK YOU!
A very Concerned Teacher
This is my testimony for: V. A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.

My name is Marina Keizer. I am a teacher at Holualoa Elementary School and I have been a public school teacher in Kona for 15 years. My children attend Holualoa Elementary School and Kealakehe Intermediate School.

We need clear metrics or written guidance from the Hawaii State Department of Health and Department of Education on closing schools due to high case counts and fully reopening school buildings when it is safe to do so. In order to minimize the number of individuals on campus during the pandemic, no students should be physically coming to school and teachers should be allowed to work from home if they choose.

I urge you to consider the following actions:

- Ensure 100-percent distance learning for all students across the state, including those in special education, until at least the end of the first quarter.
- Require the DOH and HIDOE to provide clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students’ return. Many states and cities have specific triggers already in place for when schools should be open or closed based on COVID-19 cases, but Hawaii does not.
- Guarantee that the HIDOE honors HSTA’s contract by allowing teachers to work from home (telework) for as long as distance learning remains in effect.
- Food Service: Please allow students to pick up their Grab and Go Meals at any Public School. Please also consider asking for a hot breakfast and a cold lunch so that families can pick up multiple meals for their children at one time. Currently parents have to have their children present and must go to the child’s school of registration to pick up meals. On our large island, many of us live in rural areas at an inconvenient distance to drive for pick-up. For some families with multiple children at multiple schools, this means driving to multiple schools to pick up breakfast, then again for lunch. This is unreasonable and will result in children not being fed. Another idea is to have buses deliver meals on their routes for families.

Every one of the four members of my family in my household is at high risk for coronavirus complications. I also provide care for my 92 year old grandfather. For the sake of my family, our many multi-generational households, and our Hawaii'i community, please demand that schools continue distance learning at least through the first quarter. Demand written guidance with clear and safe metrics to guide a reopening plan. Demand that individual schools with Covid-19 positive cases connected to it (either a staff member, student, or immediate household member) be made public. And demand that teachers be allowed to telework from home for as long as distance learning remains in effect.
I am a teacher on the Big Island with preexisting medical conditions that would increase my risk of complications of Covid-19. I am urging you to grant telework for teachers and keep school online for the foreseeable future. I can serve my students and my school if school continues through distance learning. If school goes back to face-to-face learning, I may be forced to take leave to protect myself and my family, leaving my school and my students without a teacher—a substitute would be a less than ideal situation for my students.

Please keep teachers safe by granting telework. My school has many staff members reporting to campus every day. While I don't believe this is as dangerous as having students on campus, any amount of mixing with people presents risk and it is completely UNNECESSARY. All work I am doing is online, and there is no reason why I could not be doing this work from the total safety of my own home. Even if I am holed up in my classroom, I am still forced into public areas on campus, like the staff lounges and bathrooms. ALL risk for staff could be eliminated and our jobs performed effectively if we were allowed to do telework.

The rising number of Covid-19 cases in the state of Hawaii has demonstrated that the virus is out of control. Governor Ige has asked residents not to have gatherings of over five people and to work at home if possible. It is absurd that these health and safety standards would not apply to our teachers and children. "No gatherings of greater than five, except at school?" "Please work from home if possible, except if you're a teacher, in which case you need to complete your online work on campus, where there is increased risk?" Ridiculous. This risk is not limited to Oahu--The Island of Hawaii has VERY LIMITED medical resources that would be strained by even a small increase in COVID-19 cases requiring hospitalizations.

Please make these decisions for the health and safety of our keiki, our families, and our community!

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Marina Keizer
5th Grade Teacher
Holualoa Elementary School
Aloha Board of Education Members,

Thank you for your time in considering all matters regarding the opening of schools. This testimony would fall under the discussion of distance learning, personnel, and communication.

I feel few parents have been heard on the issue of academic opportunities, criteria, and standards. We have been informed as best as possible to procedures for doing school but not what level of academics we should expect when our students return. The clear message from our schools, Keaau Elementary and Keaau Middle, has been that the delivery mode of education is changing but academically, the same quality should be expected and pursued by teachers and students. This gave me some peace of mind knowing that my two son’s educational needs and potential would continue to be at the forefront of the school’s priority.

My son and I were disappointed to arrive at school to pick up materials, class schedule, and meet his teachers only to find out that when he begins instructional classes in 24 hours, he will be doing so without any honors classes. Christopher has maintained a 4.97 GPA while being an honor student last year. As he starts 8th grade and prepares for his high school years in 2021-2022, he will do so with no opportunity to pursue his potential. Speaking with Keaau honors teachers, they were also upset regarding this change. They expressed their willingness to create the material, however, they were not given any decision-making power. The principal decided to eliminate the program. As a parent, I was not made aware of any changes. As a matter of fact, in June 2020 when I was contacted by the registrar’s office to choose a method of schooling, I asked if honor’s classes would be continued. I was told that they would so our family chose the face-to-face option.

The issue of quality of distance learning should be the same. Honor classes should be continued as previous years in preparation for a return to “normalcy” next school year. The principal of Keaau Middle should not have devalued the voice of the student or parent by excluding us from the discussion. I understand and agree with the freedom that school districts need to address concerns based on the demographics of their district, however, that should not mean decreasing the quality that has always been a part of the learning opportunities.

I believe it is a collaborative effort with county, schools, and families to create a successful school year so please, invite the parents into the conversation and take our voice serious. If teachers are willing to teach honors, if parents and students are willing to work the honors program then one voice should not prevent us from moving forward. I implore Ms. Gomes to reinstate the Keaau Middle School Honors Program for the 2020-2021 school year.

Thank you,

Christina Harper

Students: Christopher J Harper, 8th & Lucas A Harper, 5th

(808) 938-7598
Aloha BOE:

I am testifying on item: A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.

My name is Joanna Kobayashi and I teach at Moanalua High School. On Sunday, August 16th, my school administration made the wise, responsible choice to move to 100% distance learning for the majority of our campus. Had this decision not been made, I was prepared to take 4 days of sick leave and had secured a sub who was familiar with my school and my plans for that first week. Instead, over the past two days, I have used GoogleMeets to start building my classroom communities.

Over the past two days, my students got to meet a better version of me. This teacher was in her classroom, alone, NOT...
- in fear of undue, unnecessary exposure,
- in a mask & face shield, so her students could see her expressions and funny faces

This version of me was grateful that my school made the decision to go 100% virtual, reducing my chances of bringing home the virus to my 2 small children, husband and elderly mother-in-law.

At your next meeting, YOU decide the fate & health of my colleagues and our students. YOU are our last hope.

Please take action on the following items:

- Ensure 100-percent distance learning for all students across the state, including those in special education, until at least the end of the first quarter.
- Require the DOH and HIDOE to provide clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students' return. Many states and cities have specific triggers already in place for when schools should be open or closed based on COVID-10 cases, but Hawaii does not.
- Guarantee that the HIDOE honors HSTA's contract by allowing teachers to work from home (telework) for as long as distance learning remains in effect.

During Quarter 4 distance learning and the 5 week summer school session, I was able to FULLY teach from home. I set up dual monitors to monitor my GoogleMeets/WebEx meetings, was able to call parents/students to follow up, all the while adhering to whatever Covid related mandates were imposed and being a responsible citizen by staying at home. If I needed something on campus, I was able to contact my Admin and pick up items.

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

Aloha,
Joanna Kobayashi
Good morning BOE members,

I am submitting testimony for Item A. *Update on implementations of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health & safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.*

I support, and would like to encourage the Board to take action to implement the following:

- Ensure 100-percent distance learning for all students across the state, including those in special education, until at least the end of the first quarter.

- Require the DOH and HIDOE to provide clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students’ return. Many states and cities have specific triggers already in place for when schools should be open or closed based on COVID-19 cases, but Hawaii does not.

- Guarantee that the HIDOE honors HSTA’s contract by allowing teachers to work from home (telework) for as long as distance learning remains in effect.

I should not have to endanger my own health to provide services to a student, simply because the Governor and Mayor are providing loopholes in their proclamations so that schools can continue to operate in less stringent manners.

The DOE's loose regulations on which student populations qualify for in-person learning means that up to 57% of Hawaii's public school keiki could be at school at once, when considering all SPED, ELL, homeless, or other "vulnerable" populations.

At some schools, SPED teachers are being given discretion on which students can distance learn and which can come to school, with the argument being that those needing in-person instruction are not able to get the full extent of their learning at home.

If for some reason these student's educational plans require more than 5 people to administer services to them at once in the same room, doesn't this violate the spirit of the Governor and Oahu Mayor's new order? Why are schools constantly exempt from social distancing orders?

Furthermore, if students are not able to practice safe hygiene or wear a mask, then this also means they should stay at home.

The DOE is taking a piecemeal approach to distance learning dates, and by doing so it is making teachers unable to plan in the long term for their students in this quarter of schooling. The DOE should simply call for 100% distance learning for the whole quarter.
Thank you for your time.
TESTIMONY BEFORE THE STATE OF HAWAII BOARD OF EDUCATION

THURSDAY, AUGUST 20, 2020

COREY ROSENLEE, PRESIDENT
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

To Chair Payne and Members of the Board of Education:

On August 15, the Hawaii State Teachers Association Board of Directors overwhelmingly voted to state that they have no confidence in Schools Superintendent Christina Kishimoto’s handling of the reopening of Hawaii’s public schools. The day before, on August 14, HSTA filed a prohibited practice complaint with the Hawaii Labor Relations Board against the DOE for refusing to bargain with HSTA in regards to the changing conditions related to reopening of our public and charter schools during this pandemic. The HIDOE has taken the position that our schools are safe for students to return. This failure to bargain has put our keiki and our educators in jeopardy. HSTA is asking the BOE to take action on the following concerns:

1. Hawaii’s public schools should not reopen until at least the end of the quarter.

The constant uncertainty of teaching has led to confusion and stress among teachers and students. There needs to be immediate direction in closing the schools until at least the end of the first quarter. This will not only allow teachers to plan and give predictability for our students and teachers, but provide time to ensure our school buildings are safe for all. Right now the complexes of Lahaina, Lanai, Maui, Kekaulike and Baldwin have delayed opening until the end of the first quarter, but other complexes have not.

2. Develop and release clear criteria from the Department of Education and the Department of Health.

Right now, some of Hawaii’s public schools are scheduled to reopen on September 14, without any criteria to determine if they are safe to reopen. The Department of Health and the Department of Education still have refused to develop and publish metrics to determine when it is safe for schools to reopen. Before any students return to school buildings, there must be clear metrics to determine if a school is able to properly mitigate and reduce the threat of COVID-19 reopening. One of those criteria must be evidentiary proof that a school system with a similar size to Hawaii has been able to successfully open without an increase in cases in the schools and...
the community. In an August 18, 2020 New York Times article titled, “Can N.Y.C. Schools Open on Time? De Blasio Is Under Pressure to Delay” the article stated, “Mr. de Blasio has been hoping to reopen the nation’s largest school system on a part-time basis for the city’s 1.1 million schoolchildren this fall — a feat no other big-city mayor is currently even attempting.” No other major school district is trying to open right now and neither should Hawaii. In Georgia, where authorities opened schools, more than 2,000 teachers, students, and staff needed to be quarantined and cases spread.

Hawaii and the rest of the nation must begin to face the reality that it may be too difficult to open schools for in-person learning during this pandemic. The sooner that decision is made, the clearer it will be for all parties.

3. HIDOE must implement 100% distance learning for all students.

Starting on August 24, at the direction of HIDOE, vulnerable students will continue to report to campus for in class instruction. Vulnerable students as defined to HSTA by the HIDOE are special education (19,171 students), English language learners (16,578), homeless students (approx. 3,000) and disadvantaged students (92,377). Only 43% of students do not fall into one of these categories. Right now there is no clear direction who should or should not be on campus. According to a survey of our HSTA head faculty representatives at each school:
There is inconsistency across the state that is confusing both teachers and principals on who to allow on campus. As long as there is not clear instruction, Hawaii can’t claim that our public schools are using full distance learning. This lack of consistency is frustrating for teachers and with that many people on certain campuses, people are unnecessarily at risk. Multiple Fully Self-
Contained (FSC) teachers have also shared the dangerous environment that is occurring in their classrooms with their students with special needs. Educators have been providing disturbing reports of anywhere from 15-20 adults and students in one classroom because many students may have one-on-one situations with educational assistants, paraprofessionals, et al. These students and teachers are not able to maintain six feet of social distancing and some students are unable to wear masks. A child’s special needs do not make them nor their teacher impervious to the coronavirus. The safest decision is 100% distance learning for all students.

4. The DOE should honor HSTA’s contract

HSTA’s contract states, “When students are sent home from school or are not required to attend due to emergencies which endanger health or safety, teachers will not be required to remain at, nor report to, said schools.” It is very evident that students are being sent home for health risks, but the DOE will not admit this obvious fact, and maintains that schools are safe for students to return. This claim is disingenuous and fails to protect the health and safety of teachers.
HSTA is asking the BOE to give clear guidance to HIDOE that teachers should have the option and be allowed to work from home at their request during this pandemic when state and county leaders are instructing employers to be flexible and allow employees to work remotely. Requiring educators to work from their classrooms, even if all their students are learning from home, will risk exposure to the virus on campuses that have already occurred statewide, even before students arrive on campus. Also this flexibility will help teachers who have their own childcare issues.

These are important decisions and HSTA is asking for the BOE to give clear guidance to the HIDOE. Time is of the essence and if the BOE does not make a decision on them today, HSTA is asking you to set an emergency meeting to deal with these specific issues.
Aloha Board of Education Members,

This email is to submit my testimony on item V. **A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.**

I teach performing arts at Hilo High School. I have taught at Hilo High for 28 years. This year, I'm considering leaving service due to grave concerns about my safety with regards to Covid-19. The DOE and DOH have not followed through on the promises they made when the MOU was drafted with HSTA.

To date, there are still no concrete plans, nor guidelines, about procedures and criteria for Covid-19 infection in the workplace. How many cases are considered too many to safely be in my classroom? How are cases to be reported? Who is responsible for decision making regarding these things? This uncertainty creates an unsafe working environment.

My school has shifted to all distance instruction at least until mid September. Yet I am expected to report to school to teach in an empty room. If it's not safe for students to be at school, how is it safe for teachers? I'm 65 years old with underlying conditions. I would be much safer if I could exercise an option to telework from home. There are teachers who have children at home as well. How are they to care for their children and also be at school? I plead with the members of the BOE to consider allowing teachers to work remotely.

Presently, school hybrid plans have been put off until September. Cases have been rising daily, and we're approaching the end of August. Tourism is tentatively scheduled to resume October 1st. Surely, this will add to the count of Covid-19 infections. I would ask that the Board consider keeping schools on distance learning for the first semester for everyone's safety. This will give the State time to implement policies and plans to combat the rise of Covid-19 across the islands.

In this challenging time, I appreciate that the Board has been willing to hear the concerns of teachers and the community when making decisions about our safety. Please continue to support us by allowing flexible options for teachers who are at risk and those who also have children to care for while working.

Mahalo for the opportunity to express my views.

Malama pono,
Jacqueline Seaquist
I am testifying on item V. **A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.**

- Guarantee that the HIDOE honors HSTA’s contract by allowing teachers to work from home (telework) for as long as distance learning remains in effect.

Teachers need to be given the opportunity to telework from home. Teachers are not allowed to bring their children onto campus or have the flexibility to be able to work from home. The Mayor and Governor encourages employees to allow employers to work from home. Why is the DOE exempt from this, as well? We need to show more compassion and allow flexibility during this very fluid time. The livelihood and wellbeing for our teachers needs to be met. Requiring the teachers to teach from the classroom is not acceptable. They need to be given the flexibility to report to campus to teach OR telework from home.

Thank you
To whom it may concern,

My sister is a teacher who is forced to go into school and physically be near other teachers, staff members, and students who are not prepared to be near others safely and do not take the Covid pandemic seriously. She loves her job and teaching students however this undue stress of forcing them to go into work during a pandemic is ridiculous. Your number one priority should be the health of your students, staff, teachers, and everyone in your community. Have you not seen the scientific research of how quickly this virus can spread?

College campuses are shutting down, cities are closing back up, but you are willing to keep the schools open for what purpose? The schools are not prepare for students to be back there. Teachers and staff members are not trained enough to deal with health issues nor have they been given adequate supplies to keep their classrooms sanitary. They go home to families too, so now you’re risking the virus exposure to more than who sits in the classroom.

Adults cannot comply with the mask regulations and you expect children to? What will it take for you to support 100% distance learning? Be smart about this and keep people at home.

Sara
Dear BOE committees,

I am a high school teacher on Oahu.

I would like to ask you to consider 100% distance learning at least for the whole quarter, ideally for the 1st semester.

When we have no cure or prevention, it is not safe to have the students on campus any soon. Students will need consistency and DOE should have faith in all the teachers who completed the mandatory training in this busy time.

It is dangerous to have the students back. Look at the prison, as you already know schools and prisons share the same structures in the system. It is going to create a big second wave or make the first wave bigger.

Each school should have the power to close upon any positive case or potential exposure. We need to stop the spread swiftly without consulting CAS, DOE, or DOH.

We even do not have any convincing, clear metrics or protocols that have scientific support. It does not make everyone safe at all.

Are the hallway should be one way? Two way?
How many students can be in the bathroom at the same time?
How are we going to monitor?
Who will wipe the desk after every class? Or is it going to be done before the class?
What is the scientific supporting idea to say it will be safe? (It was not presented)
SO many questions as you see and this is NOT all.

Reopening should be also decided by science, not just because the superintendent wants to open the campus for her personal evaluation.

As the contract clearly says, we should not be required to be on campus when students are not on campus. As the governor and mayor say, we ALL should try hard to stay home. The majority of the classes can be taught from home without problems.

WHY it has to be a constant battle to have basic safety?
Just for this week’s opening plan, our school had a proposal, initial plan, and the admin revised the plan at the end, which was a very wise decision for everyone’s safety.

We do not need this battle when we all need to unite and support each other to get over this pandemic.

Dr. Kishimoto stated "My expectation is that if the Board approves the two-week delay, that our labor partners will do an aggressive push to their members to be at schoolhouse doors on day one for our students"

I really want you to know that many teachers took this statement as a threat.

We received a survey to give feedback for the mandatory training that only took away the time to plan from us, and because of her threatening message, we are afraid of retaliation for honest
feedback. (It is not anonymous. ) Recording the completion of the training and feedback must be separated if she really wants honest feedback.

**WE TEACHERS DO KNOW HOW TO TEACH.**

it is just going to be through Zoom. **NO teachers are saying we will not teach. We WILL, and We CAN.**

Also, PLEASE imagine, both teachers and students have to deal with fear if we go back to the campus. It is not a good environment.

Can you solve a quadratic equation accurately when the lion is about to jump on you? And that fear will continue for a whole day.

But this is what DOE is trying to make all of us---the teachers and the students--- to do.

Please consider
- Keeping distance learning mode for the first quarter or first semester
- Give teachers at least an option to teach from home
- Set the clear safety protocol that is scientific

Best regard and thank you so much for your time.

Shino Hee
I live to teach but I don't want to die because I teach!

I am testifying on item A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.

In the interest of saving lives I beseech the BOE to take action on the following items:

1. Ensure 100-percent distance learning for all students across the state, including those in special education, until at least the end of the first quarter.

2. Require the DOH and HIDOE to provide clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students’ return. Many states and cities have specific triggers already in place for when schools should be open or closed based on COVID-10 cases, but Hawaii does not.

3. Guarantee that the HIDOE honors HSTA’s contract by allowing teachers to work from home (telework) for as long as distance learning remains in effect.

If I may, I'd like to present to the Board my current reality.

I have devoted 28 years of my life in dedicated service to the DOE because teaching is not just a job to me, it is my Life’s Calling, after almost 30 years in the classroom teaching has become as necessary to me as breathing but now my very ability to breath is endangered, as are the lives of my colleagues, students, and community -- we are all imperiled by dangerous and deadly State mandated school re-opening plans.

As a cancer survivor I am immunocompromised with scarred lungs and over 60, and yet I was ordered by the DOE to report to campus August 17 - 20 for face to face instruction and 6 hours of interaction with groups of 60+ different students each day from 7:45 am to 2:00 pm for four consecutive days. There are 15 students plus an EA in my classes, for six full hours in a small, crowded, confined space with extremely poor ventilation (not to mention wasps that regularly fly inside necessitating closing windows to protect students from potentially deadly allergic reactions to wasp stings thus further compromising ventilation).

The safe option is to implement 100 % Distance Learning for ALL students and staff. I am fully able and qualified to teach from my home -- I was rated highly effective last year in my EES, and am a nationally recognized Constitutional Scholar through the James Madison Memorial Fellowship Foundation with a Masters Degree in American History & Government. I am trained in online learning, and am confident in my abilities to implement Google Meets virtual classes and am able to create high quality, engaging Hyperdocs and other distance learning curriculum that addresses the standards for 8th Grade Social Studies as well as the Literacy standards, from the safety of my home so that no lives are endangered!

Additional concerns follow: there was no time to effectively sanitize desks and surfaces between classes, and even if there was, how long will 1 small bottle of spray disinfectant, 2 small bottles of hand sanitizer, several pairs of disposable gloves (and I'm allergic to latex btw), a couple of
small hand towels, and 1 pack of loose, single sheet paper towels from the bathroom, last? Where is the promised PPE?

Every day I wake up afraid of exposure to, and death from, Covid-19 because of interacting face to face with students. Every day I fear bringing death home to my son and spouse. Every day I relive the memory of being hooked up to machines and tubes in the ICU for weeks when I battled cancer, sepsis, and pneumonia - my lungs were left scarred; being forced to teach face to face not only triggers past trauma but could kill me. It's not a matter of if, because Kaua’i has a lower number of Covid cases than Oahu, it's a matter of when, because it only takes a momentary exposure to an asymptomatic or contagious student or staff member, to impart the deadly disease, and the DOE and Superintendent Kishimoto’s indifferent and hazardous policies required interaction with over 165 middle school students over four, six hour days!

What's even more heinous about these deadly circumstances is that they're completely preventable because other schools are not requiring any face to face interaction with students this week, and other schools have already provided telework to their teachers while I am denied telework by my school even though I have a higher risk of infection from the mandated face to face interaction. The Governor, DOE, and State Superintendent left the power to decide who stays healthy and who becomes infected, who lives and who dies, up to the discretion of each Principal; not all of them are taking Covid seriously and there are eyewitness accounts of staff without masks and overcrowded school busses, hallways, and bathrooms.

With all due respect I ask you, how is it okay for some teachers and students to be provided far greater safety and protection from this deadly disease than others?

How is it okay that some have more of a chance to live because they were allowed to telework this week while others could contract life-long debilitating after-effects and even DIE just because the particular school they happen to teach at decided to either: eschew face to face interaction, opting for curbside pick up of materials, while other other schools' teachers' safety lies in the hands of a Principal who views Covid-19 as "just another flu"?

Since when did the Hawaii Department of Education knowingly allow discrimination and inequity to exist in our public schools statewide?

When did it become acceptable in the State of Hawaii for a teacher's life to be less important than administering Math & Reading Diagnostic tests to assess learning gaps? I ask you, would any Board members imperil their health for the sake of a test that could be done virtually?

Students and staff should NOT have been required to be on campus this entire week on neighbor islands like Kaua’i, but they were, and thousands of keiki and teachers, staff, and family members have now been exposed to potential contagion and death. How devastating to discover later that you brought death home to your kupuna or own children, from school, when it could've been avoided!

Next week, from August 24 - Sept 11 schools will be 100% distance learning, however ALL teachers must still report to their classrooms, the same classrooms in which 165+ potentially contaminated students occupied for 6 hours, for four consecutive days. Can you 100% guarantee that our overworked, overstressed, insufficiently trained, poorly equipped custodial staff will be able to completely clean a week's worth of adolescent hanabata from all surfaces for a completely sterile and safe work environment for this highly at risk teacher? Vulnerable
teachers, in fact ALL teachers, should have the option to teach totally from home because we are ALL susceptible to this deadly disease!

Then too, the DOE’s current definition and application of “100% Distance Learning” has false intent because it will be breached every day, every second, every minute, by students deemed "vulnerable" and allowed on campus to dangerously interact in face to face instruction with equally vulnerable teachers and staff. And once again, the power to define which students are vulnerable and must be on campus, rests with each individual Principal. Some are expanding "vulnerable" to include ELL students and students with 504 and behavior support plans; in my case I'll be required to provide face to face instruction each day all week to approximately 12 ELL students PLUS an additional 30 students with 504's, behavior support plans, and IEPs. This is outrageous in its inequitable allowance of total safety for some teachers and students, and forced exposure to potential death, to others! It has already been duly noted that the DOE has breached the safety clause in our contract by forcing teachers to report to, work within, and interact in an unsafe and potentially deadly work environment while they allow most students to remain safely at home.

I implore you to help save lives, including my own and my family's, by immediately taking action:

1. Allow ALL teachers the option of telework, working from home or reporting to campus, especially teachers at high risk

2. Do not force ANY teachers or staff into face to face interactions with dozens of "vulnerable" students when other teachers don't have to have face to face interaction just because random registration favored them with zero students defined by their particular Principal as "vulnerable."

3. Extend 100% distance learning through the end of the first semester, or at the very least the end of the first quarter, and then reassess the prevailing situation

In closing, I want to teach. I DON'T want to die!

Thank you for your time,

An immunocompromised veteran teacher from Kaua’i
Aug. 19, 2020

TO: BOE Chair Payne and members of the Hawai‘i State Board of Education

SUBJECT: V. A. Discussion on Reopening of Schools Resolution Implementation

Aloha,

Thank you, Chair Payne, for your thorough and detailed 68-page document outlining concerns from our administrators, teachers, school staff, and community members at large. This is the kind of leadership that these challenging times require.

As a teacher “on the ground” witnessing large gaps and inadequacies in implementation, I would like to share insight into how our teachers and substitute teachers are being not only disrespected, but oftentimes bullied or silenced. This toxicity in our public education system is unacceptable and adds to the threats of health and safety of our islands’ communities. Only with your oversight can these obstacles to “acting with kindness, working toward togetherness, and giving hope” be remedied.

HORROR STORIES BELOW!

HIDING INFORMATION, MISCOMMUNICATION, and INCONSISTENCY:

It is appalling that the DOE has not been transparent and reported all exposures to positive cases occurring on school grounds. There is an example of a principal who knew of a case at the end of July and chose not to reveal the incident until the second week of August (see attached document, if attachment doesn’t work, please contact me to provide a copy). Even if the principal felt the danger was minimal, it is only right that the school staff be informed in a timely manner, especially when there are people who work on campus with risk factors that put them in greater danger of getting seriously ill, having permanent damage to their bodies, or even DYING if contracting COVID-19.

Furthermore, this same principal denied an employee her rights to negotiate with him to have interim accommodations while her application for the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) application was being processed. The DOE Equity Specialist, his supervisor, and the Director of the Civil Rights Compliance Office of the DOE were all contacted to correct the misinformation being given employees applying for ADA by telling an employee that she “had no choice” but to take sick leave while awaiting her application when they should have facilitated a negotiation between the employee and her principal which is her civil right under the law. This was never rectified and misinformation is still rampant throughout the system putting DOE at risk of lawsuits in the near future.

HEALTH and SAFETY NEGLECTED:

Telework is being denied as an accommodation by principals throughout the state, despite the memo added to the MOU between HSTA and DOE regarding telework being allowed. This is bad for our students. The “guidance” being handed down to Complex Area Superintendents and principals to refuse telework is leading teachers at risk of dying from COVID-19 to be bullied into taking leave as an accommodation when
they could deliver instruction from home safely. To refuse this sensible option will result in substitute teachers, many who are possibly lacking a college degree or devoid of experience in a specialized curriculum, to be tasked with teaching our keiki. It does not make sense to refuse our QUALIFIED teachers’ personal safety.

**DISRESPECT FOR and TRAINING of SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS:**

Substitute teachers were mailed letters to complete voluntary training “at no cost to them” by December 2020. The letter stated they “may” be paid for doing this. This made substitute teachers upset, devaluing the service they provide. Also, the training was not what a substitute teacher would need to effectively provide safe and productive lessons with students. The training did not include the safety protocols absolutely necessary when students return to campus. The chaotic policy to have each school create their OWN safety protocols and use their OWN budgets to order necessary PPE, cleaning supplies, and handwashing stations or other needed items makes it impossible for substitute teachers to know what to do!

**INEFFICIENT TRAINING PROVIDED:**

The training offered to substitute teachers was the same “7 modules” that all teachers statewide were required to complete. The training was obviously put together in a rushed and reckless manner resulting in a lot of repeated information and often irrelevant information. For years, teachers in the Hawai‘i State Department of Education have provided feedback on training they have received (and often been required to complete, as is the case here) expressing their frustration that the training is not applicable to their teaching assignment or it is so fundamental and basic that it is insulting to think that they would not know the content of the “professional development.”

When the BOE agreed that teacher training unique to distance learning and the special protocols needed in schools was necessary, DOE wasted teachers’ time by requiring over 20 hours of videos when teachers could have been collaborating and planning for these challenging circumstances. I have heard and read teachers calling it “abusive,” “torture,” and “insulting.” As a result, teachers were further disheartened and felt like quitting or retiring.

**CALL TO ACTION:**

I, and many of my colleagues too afraid to speak for themselves in this toxic workplace environment, urge the BOE to immediately do what so many other school districts around the country are doing, many which are not experiencing the surge of cases and the complete failure of their departments of health to provide needed guidance based on science and reality. Not only are our schools unsafe under this horrifying leadership, but our entire community is in danger. We must stop bullying teachers and substitutes who are in such short supply, grant telework to keep our most vulnerable employees safe, and extend distance learning until December or AT LEAST until the end of the quarter so that teachers can actually plan and focus on their students instead of on the next press conference. Help us do our jobs and VALUE TEACHERS! A teacher’s working conditions are our students’ learning conditions!

As a whistleblower, I intend to maintain my rights as a state employee and will expose any retaliation that is taken to put my employment status in jeopardy.

Mahalo,
Mireille Ellsworth,
Teacher,
Waiakea High School
Hilo, Hawai‘i
Aloha Trojan Families

In an effort to provide as much transparency as possible without compromising the privacy of individuals involved, I am sharing a timeline of events for a confirmed case of COVID-19 in our community and those individuals’ brief interaction with our staff in July:

- July 22: A student and parent met with a counselor and the principal on campus in an outdoor setting, with everyone present wearing face coverings. The meeting lasted for less than 15 minutes.
- July 28: The individual tested positive (6 days after the on campus meeting).
- July 29: School was notified about the positive result. The principal and counselor that met with the individuals were informed before they came to school. Each quarantined for the day and got tested (results were negative). The principal followed up with Department of Health and was informed that the case was deemed “low risk” due to:
  - The meeting was shorter than 15 minutes, was held in an outdoor setting, all participants were wearing masks, and 6 days had passed since the meeting before the individual tested positive.
- Meeting area was cleaned.
- Following HIDOE’s Health and Safety procedures, a message to the school community was pending confirmation from the Hawaii Department of Health (DOH).

We are happy to report that the individual has since recovered and is doing well.

In order to avoid any potential Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and/or Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) violations, all notifications about this case to those who might be potentially impacted is being handled by DOH.

If you have any concerns, please consult with your health care provider and continue to monitor the state’s COVID-19 website at www.hawaiicovid19.com.

Sincerely,

Fred Murphy
Principal
Mililani High School
Aloha Chair Payne and members of the Hawaii Board of Education,

Thursday, August 20, 2020 1:30p.m.

Testimony on Discussion item V. A. [Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication]

My name is Justin Hughey and I have taught at King Kamehameha III Elementary in Lahaina Maui since 2005. I do not feel safe working at school during this pandemic. I do not want to bring the virus home and that could possibly kill my wife and one year old child.

It needs to be made crystal clear that wearing a mask is required and enforced! Our office staff have not been consistently wearing a mask in the front office and while walking on campus, even though we have signs all over campus stating that masks are required. One individual made statements that since the office has plexi glass on the front desk, they don’t need to wear masks in the front office. One thing I have noticed is that Republicans who listen to the guy in the White House, don’t feel they have to wear a mask. I think we need a required video on how to wear masks properly and the reasons why we wear them is because science has proven it is an easy way to stop the spread of a virus. No matter what your opinion is, wearing a mask on school campuses has been mutually agreed upon, in our contract and should be enforced.

This week we finally received hand sanitizer, gloves, masks for kids and Clorox wipes but the first week teachers were not even given hand soap to wash their hands with.

Overall I believe the legislature has failed at providing adequate funding for our public schools. The state constitution never provide adequate funding to public education. Historically they have refused to allocate adequate funding that would remedy the problems that have been documented in Hawaii since 1911; too few teachers, dilapidated buildings and meager funding. If we can’t fill those three essential items, how can we operate properly during a pandemic?

Please take action on the following items:

1. Please ensure 100-percent distance learning for all students across the state, including those in special education, until least the end of the first quarter.

2. Require the DOH and HIDOE to provide clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students return. Many states and cities have specific triggers already in place for when schools should be open or closed based on COVID-10 cases, but Hawaii doesn’t.

3. Guarantee that the HIDOE honors HSTA’s contract by allowing teachers to work from home (telework) for as long as distance learning remains in effect.

4. Guarantee wearing a mask while on any school campus is mandated and enforced.

Mahalo,

Justin Hughey
Special Education Teacher at King Kamehameha III Elementary
37 Poniu Circle
Wailuku, HI 96793
I am a teacher who is 64 with underlying health conditions. I do not think that I should have to report to my school for distance learning. Our principal has also informed our staff that some students will be allowed to come on campus during this time. I do not think it is a safe environment. We need to have the right to choose to work at home or work at the school. Thank you,

Gretchen Cummings
Members of the Board,

Today I am testifying to Item V: A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.

I ask that the BOE take the following actions:

• Ensure 100-percent distance learning for all students across the state, including those in special education, until at least the end of the first quarter.
• Require the DOH and HIDOE to provide clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students’ return. Many states and cities have specific triggers already in place for when schools should be open or closed based on COVID-19 cases, but Hawaii does not.
• Guarantee that the HIDOE honors HSTA’s contract by allowing teachers to work from home (telework) for as long as distance learning remains in effect.

I have been a teacher at Farrington High School for going on 13 years and am also a parent of two children at a DOE school. I will be mainly speaking to the telework issue.

I am deeply concerned with the Hawaii DOE’s lack of “flexibility” during this pandemic. With school buildings closed for distance learning for at least the next 4 weeks, we are still being told to report to work physically. On July 24th a memo from Superintendent Kishimoto came out regarding telework. Many teachers across the state applied to telework and were promptly denied. There seems to be a huge inconsistency on telework being granted. Some principals are approving telework with no questions asked and are even telling their staff if they would like to telework, they may, while others are denying all requests.

Another excuse I have heard is that we need to be available for the special education students to come to our rooms. This doesn’t make sense for many teachers because these students are not receiving minutes in our classrooms. They would be attending our classes virtually along with the other students and would be allowed any accommodations and modifications that we need to provide. Special education students are not immune from the virus. They should feel safe at home as well and can virtually meet with their teachers for extra help if needed. They should not be forced to come onto campus because DOE is trying to cover themselves.

Childcare is an issue for many of us, HSTA estimates 40% of Hawaii teachers have kids in school as well. Teachers who are parents are being told that we need to take sick pay or family leave due to the current telework rules. I am very concerned with this message. Instead of allowing staff to teach their class virtually from home through telework, they would rather we go on leave so an unqualified sub would teach our classes online. The telework guidelines were written pre-pandemic and should or could be amended to accommodate workers for this WORLDWIDE PANDEMIC that is impacting ALL parents.

The substitute requirement has also been lowered to allow someone with only a high school diploma as well as the completion of their substitute teaching course to be able to substitute teach. This means someone that just passed my class in May with a D could teach my students. How will a substitute know what to teach on my online course? How will they get access to my Google Classroom? As a teacher, the thought of subs teaching my class, even when I am fully capable of doing so, enrages me. I care about my students and want
them to learn the best way I can teach them during this unprecedented time. As a parent, I am also enraged that my kids might get a sub over a highly qualified teacher due to this seemingly blanket no to telework. What is going to happen going forward when teachers go on leave and there are not enough subs to cover teachers “online” classes? Who is going to suffer? The students receiving junk online instruction are those who will suffer.

During last week's news conference, Governor Ige pleaded with employers to be flexible during this time and allow work from home. UH recently encouraged their staff to try to work from home as much as possible. At yesterday's news conference, both the Mayor and Governor urged people to work from home if they can. Many businesses across the world have figured out how their employees can work safely from home. Many districts on the mainland are letting their teachers go into the classroom if they need to teach virtually or they can telework if they are not comfortable. Many are also allowing telework if the teacher has children at home.

It seems like here in Hawaii, telework is being discouraged from the top down. Was this telework memo just for show? We are considered an essential service but if we do not need to be on campus to teach virtually, why is this being forced during a pandemic? Why are teachers forced onto campuses that are deemed unsafe for students to be at right now? What is the difference between going to my classroom to turn on my computer vs. turning on my computer in my home office. Is it to show the public that teachers go to work physically so they are working? I am at a real loss as to why our higher ups are not trusting their teachers to be professionals and that we too can balance work and personal life. This seems like yet another way to micromanage the DOE staff instead of support their staff. When we were forced to suddenly go online in March, it was such a shift but we stepped up and did what we could with what we had. I can only speak for myself when I say I worked longer and harder during the shutdown than ever before and I was at home with my children in the house who were also trying to learn. Now that we have had the “practice”, we know what we need to do, we are highly qualified professionals, and we should be trusted to do work where we feel safe.

Thank you for your time,

Jennifer Grant
Dear Members of the Board of Education,

I am writing on behalf on Item A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.

Just during these past two days of face to face training, I feel that there have been too many close calls—a child who was exposed at day care; another whose parent tested positive. And I keep wondering when will it be a child in my class? We should not be playing Russian roulette with the safety of our keiki and safe.

Each school appears to have had their own plan in implementing this training week and what distance learning looks on their campus. Why does my campus have nearly half its student body doing in-person teaching while another has only FSC? I feel that stress and worry teaching in these times bring can only be alleviated with the following:

- 100% distance teaching for all students for this first quarter (not on a date by date basis)
- clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students’ return and
- by allowing teachers the option to work from home (telework) for as long as distance learning remains

Thank you for your time.

Anonymous 4th Grade Teacher
Testimony in regards to:
Item A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.

Dear Board of Education Members,

My family consists of two teachers. I am an elementary school teacher and my husband is a high school FSC (fully self-contained) SPED teacher. We have two children- one is preschool age and my other child is almost 2 years old and is watched by my 75 year-old mother. I am very worried about the COVID situation and the increase in cases both in general and the growing numbers in children. More and more, they are finding that children are asymptomatic days before showing symptoms, which means that they spread the virus to others readily before we can even detect it. As you can see, my concern is for myself and my husband (he has asthma) being exposed at work, my 4-year old's preschool is not able to maintain social distancing and children are not required to wear masks because of their age. Should we be exposed at school, we could easily pass it on to my at-risk mother.

I am asking that the following measures be put in place for the safety for teachers and our extended families and our students and their extended families.

1. I would like to see 100% distance learning for all students, including those in special education, until the end of the first quarter. That would allow the state to get control of the spike in cases and give teachers enough time to prepare and implement quality distance learning.

2. I would also like the Department of Health and the DOE to give clear guidelines (metrics) as to when school campuses are safe for students to return to in-person learning.

3. I would like teachers to be given the choice about whether to telework during the distance learning period. Right now it's in HSTA's contract and that should be honored. At yesterday's press conference with the Governor Ige and Mayor Caldwell, it was stated that those who can work from home should work from home. Teachers who are doing distance learning can work from home. Please give teachers a choice about work location. Some may feel safe to work with the technology that they have at school, but some may feel safer being at home within their own family bubble.

I am requesting that these three things for the health and safety of the public. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Kelli Uyeda
Dear Board of Education,

I am a parent of a freshman at Mililani High School and a former contract teacher and substitute teacher for the DOE. I must say that this entire process has been such an embarrassment and an excessively anxiety-ridden time for both parents and educators alike. Aside from the pandemic, we have been forced to deal with so many poor decisions from Superintendent Kishimoto, who seems to not care at all about the health and safety of students or staff. On top of that, I’ve heard Dr. Kishimoto speak, seen her condescending videos and read her email to teachers—all of which make me furious as a parent and strike me as someone who is only checking off a list of talking points. She has consistently ignored the concerns from a vast majority of the community, and even worse, has insulted and demeaned the educators who have been jerked left and right and will be on the front lines of this pandemic. We need a unifier and someone who will prioritize health and safety above all. Not someone who will divide our community even more.

Another important issue is the Acellus program. My son has opted for 100% online learning, and it seems to be quite remedial and not very challenging at all. The clips also seem outdated and like they’re from the 90’s. Many parents have concerns about this program (there’s a Facebook group discussing it) and there are also troubling accusations about the founder of Acellus, Roger Billings, being a cult leader. PLEASE consider allowing those who have opted for distance learning early on to be taught virtually by *actual* DOE teachers. It is completely unfair that we were the first to choose distance learning back in July, yet we are left without live teacher instruction. The rest of the students were given an option that wasn’t even available to us back when we locked into Acellus.

Lastly, I would love to give credit where credit is due. The staff and our wonderful principal at Mililani High School, Fred Murphy, has done a great job of informing parents every step of the way—including when a MHS employee tested positive for COVID. Even Jump Start last month was very well-planned, organized and felt very safe due to staggered appointment times. Mr. Murphy has stepped up as a leader and offered online options early on, including opting for this first week of “training” to be virtual. While that doesn’t affect my son since he is doing Acellus, I appreciate the initiative he and the staff have taken.

Thank you for taking the time to hear our concerns.

Cassie Favreau-Chung
--
Cassie Favreau-Chung
Film/TV Creative
(808) 497-6412
...Sent from my iPhone, please embrace the typos.
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 V. *A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.*

I am asking that the board to take action on the following items:

1. Ensure 100-percent distance learning for all students across the state, including those in special education, until at least the end of the first quarter.
2. Require the DOH and HIDOE to provide clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students’ return. Many states and cities have specific triggers already in place for when schools should be open or closed based on COVID-10 cases, but Hawaii does not.
3. Guarantee that the HIDOE honors HSTA’s contract by allowing teachers to work from home (telework) for as long as distance learning remains in effect.

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 until the end of quarter 1. 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
Dear BOE,

Agenda Item V
8/20/20 Meeting

Distance Learning: Opposition to Acellus for Distance Learning

The content Acellus is serving to thousands of students is irrelevant (see attached screenshot about Ronald Reagan's wives) and racist, as shown in the screenshots attached (Japan's geography - 7th grade) and (Osama Bin Laden - 5th grade).

A two-tiered system has been created among students at Hawaii's public schools. Those who opted for in-person classes are still taught online by qualified educators and will develop relationships with their teachers and peers (albeit online). Alternatively, the students whose parents opted for distance learning are being taught by Roger Billings and his employees at Acellus. These students have a limited connection to their teachers and peers because the majority of their 'education' is through Acellus. This is unacceptable, and accreditation is simply not enough in the case of Acellus Academy. Acellus is inappropriate for all students.

Our children deserve a real public school education, and teachers and staff deserve to be safe. Instead of being forced to choose between risking their lives or financial ruin, teachers should be supported in directing their energies toward developing a comprehensive online curriculum that includes all students, while providing the social contact and legitimate learning our children so desperately need right now.
Thank you for serving the needs and best interests of Hawaii's students.

Mahalo,

Adrienne Robillard

--

Stay safe! 😷
Aloha BOE,

I am writing to implore the Hawaii Board of Education to ensure distance learning for all students across the state for at least the first quarter of this school year. It is what is safest for students and for everyone they encounter every day. As students will be learning virtually from home it makes safe sense that teachers be given the safe option to teach virtually from home as well. This is what is safest for students, teachers and everyone with whom we share our world.

Please keep our keiki and educators health and safety foremost in your minds when making this decision. And ask yourself, what if there was no future for a loved one because of the spread of this virus through our educational institutions.

This is not our future forever but for all the people who tragically lose their lives to this virus there is no future and that is forever.

Mahalo,

Laurie Faure

STEM Resource Teacher
To whom it may concern,

I am writing to testify on item V. **A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.**

I am a teacher at an Elementary school in Hilo, Hawaii. I have a class of 33 students. Even with my students in two groups, I have two groups of 15 students.

I firmly believe that we should ensure 100-percent distance learning for all students, including those in special education, until at least the end of the first quarter. This is the safest option for students and educators. Being exposed to such a high population of students, while cases are rising in Hilo, does not make sense.

The DOH and HIDOE need to provide clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students' return. Not all schools have clear guidelines as to what to do when a case does emerge on campus or when it is deemed safe to return when one is exposed to the virus.

Guarantee that the HIDOE honors HSTA's contract by allowing teachers to work from home (telework) for as long as distance learning remains in effect. Teachers are in the medium-risk category from being exposed to students and working with special needs students. We need to ensure that we, as well as the students, are safe by doing telework.

All in all, it is just too risky to return to work right now with such large numbers of students. I feel that it is unethical to risk the health of so many people. Rather than trying to force a sense of "normalcy," proactive measures should be taken to ensure that there is less possibility of the spread of the virus.

Thank you,
A Concerned Teacher
A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.

I believe that schools need to have 100% distance learning across the board. I am a mother of 3 children under 5, my eldest is enrolled in kindergarten at my school, and kindergarten will be full distance learning. I am a pre-k teacher under EOEL, and we were told that we will be offering face to face learning. My child will not be allowed to mix bubbles with my class, yet she has no class to go to. This is unacceptable and irresponsible on the DOE's part. Parents need to have the ability to work from home if need be.
Testimony BOE

From: Keri Nakamura <knakamura05@yahoo.com> on behalf of Keri Nakamura
Sent: Wednesday, August 19, 2020 11:47 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY - OUR LIVES MATTER

Testifying on Item V.

To Whom It May Concern,

I am a FSC special education preschool teacher, and I am scared for the health, safety, and well being of my students', colleagues, and myself. When I signed up to be a special education teacher, I didn't know I was going to become a "front liner" worker. Thankfully our school has given us some PPE, but it is definitely not enough. Not to mention, I share a classroom with another FSC SPED PREK class. We have to share some of our PPE supplies. As a PREK special education teacher, we go through gloves like it is tissue. I became a teacher to make a difference in the keikis' lives, and for some, my classroom is their safe haven. But not anymore, because it is UNSAFE for us all. I do not understand why we (special education teachers, EA, 1:1's, etc), have to put our lives in danger, while the general education teachers can do distance learning. We are the most hands-on with our students because of their needs, but yet we have to do face to face learning. It makes no sense!!!

Let me give you a snapshot of our classroom. Remember, we share our classroom with another FSC SPED PREK class, so we have 4 adults to start. I have 3/5 students choosing to come face to face, while the other side of the class has 3 students coming face to face. Majority of our students' will not tolerate wearing their face mask or a face shield. Although we spaced the desks out by 4 feet, social distancing is non-existent!!!

Majority of our students' \textbf{do not} know how to:

- cover and cough/sneeze
- wash their hands independently
- use the toilet independently
- wipe/blow their nose
- change their clothes
- feed themselves
- follow 1 step directions
- sit still independently
- hold a writing utensil

and the list goes on. Our students need hand over hand assistance with pretty much everything. We are constantly in the "line of fire", where social distancing and masks can\textbf{NOT} help us prevent the spread. As much as I want to have face to face instruction, it is \textbf{NOT SAFE}! More children around the US are contracting COVID19. For the last two weeks, there were no students' on campus, and look, COVID19 was spreading among the schools. I have a 1 year old at home, and I'm scared to come home to her because I'm exposed to my students' and their families. My partner is also high risk because of his past medical conditions, where he almost died!!! My EA lives with her mother in law who is 94 years old!!!! I fear for her to go home to her family. What do we need to do, to be heard? What is it going to take, for our lives to MATTER? Why do we need to come to work, while other schools are doing 100% FULL distance learning (students with AND without disabilities). Why do other schools offer telework for teachers? Why is the state so inconsistent?!?

As of yesterday's (8/18) press conference the Governor and Mayor enforced more restrictions:

- Gatherings with more than 5 people are no longer allowed (indoors and outdoors) - But yet we can have classrooms that exceed that. Basically, I can't go and help take care of my parents because we will be exceeding the 5 people restriction. But yet I can come to work and be exposed to my students' and their families. I have NO clue: who they see, where they go, what their at home situation is like, etc. But thank goodness for the Ohana Bubbles, right?! Because that makes a lot of sense...\textbf{NOT}!!!
- Employers are being urged to allow people to work from home if possible. If not, they're being asked to limit the number of people at the workplace by staggering schedules. - Again, non-existent and schools don't have to honor this!
Face coverings are required at all shopping malls, including the open air ones - but yet, not mandatory for students'. Special considerations for special education students' is the go to line.

Churches are allowed to congregate, but NO singing or wind instruments - have you ever been in a preschool classroom?! We sing and makes songs for everything. If they're doing distance learning, they can sing at home!

and there's more restrictions, but no one cares about the teachers and staff at school because we're deemed essential right? Did you know, that I was told yesterday, that if one of my SPED PREK students are showing symptoms, that I am to KEEP THEM ISOLATED IN MY CLASSROOM. If a student cannot sit in the isolation room by themselves, they are to be kept in the classroom until they are picked up. HOW IS THIS SAFE?! So just expose the rest of the class more because they can't sit independently in the isolation room??!! Have you ever been in a classroom room before? Have you ever had to contact their parents, which some don't have ANY working numbers?! Or when their child is sick (pre-COVID19), and they need to come and pick them up, they take forever to come? But right, when we call them about COVID19, they'll come running in a heartbeat...

Monday (8/17) was the first day for students' to return to campus for orientation. Thankfully, on Friday (8/14), our principal gave us the option to do grab and go, virtual, or in-person orientation. I switched my classes orientation to grab and go. Within the first hour of families being allowed back on campus (not even a half hour), I witnessed the following:

- **TWO** adults with **NOOOOO** face masks: The first woman ran past us, and about 5 minutes later she walked by with two students. I was speaking with one of my parents, so I could not say anything. The second woman with NO face mask (remind you it was within less than 30 minutes apart), walks by me. So I asked her if she has a face mask. She said she did not. So I told her to wait, and I'll get her one because it was mandatory to wear a face mask while on campus. As I went to grab her one, I was so upset! NO ONE was outside to enforce the safety on our campus. No signs were posted to remind the families. My heart was beating fast when I had to hand her a disposable mask. What's going to happen when we run out of disposable masks, because this is NOT the last time it will be happening. Remind you, it was the *first* day back!
- While families waited outside the classroom for their orientation, they were NOT social distancing. They were LESS THAN 6 feet apart. Again, no one to enforce the safety measures that were "supposed" to be happening.

I also heard from colleagues:

- Even though families had a designated time, sometimes there were more than 10 people inside the classroom. Some parents weren't following the protocol within the classroom, and wanted to just sit and fill out their forms. Teachers were **SCARED**!
- One student was brought onto campus for assessments to be conducted. Multiple colleagues were "exposed" to the student. When one of the assessors sat down in the classroom with the student, the student mentioned that the mother was getting tested for COVID THAT MORNING!!!! They immediately stopped, and asked the father why he never said anything. His reply was, "**I FORGOT**"!!!!!!! How many more I FORGOT need to happen for this to be put to a stop.

**ALL THIS HAPPENED ON THE FIRSTTTTTT DAY OF STUDENTS' RETURNING!**

I am not one to complain to the union and I try my hardest to a team player. If admin asks for a favor or to help in other areas, I'll do it! Even if I feel it is unfair, I keep quiet and just do it. But this, this is not acceptable anymore. When the safety of myself and others are put at risk, something needs to be done. **OUR VOICES** need to be heard.

WE teachers are NOT IMMUNE TO THE VIRUS! There are more and more cases of children contracting the virus! Trust me, it is a lot easier for my students to return to the classroom for face to face lessons. Honestly, it's less work for me and my EA. But our health and safety is far more important than just the easier route! My family and my health and safety comes first, and if my students return to the classroom on Monday, I will be using my leave. I've already risked it this far by coming to work, when I feel we should be teleworking.

I hope that our voices are heard, and **ALL** students, no matter what school will go to **100% distance learning**. I understand some teachers would rather teach from their classroom, but we're **given the option to telework if we want to**. Please put our health and safety FIRST.

Mahalo for taking the time to read my testimony and everyone else's.

Warmest Regards,
Concerned SPED TEACHER
Aloha,

It is a big concern with all of the schools on the big island going distance. I have four school aged students at home currently on distance learning with their school. Whatever I am doing in my classroom to teach my students and conduct zoom meetings can easily be done at home. As of right now we are unable to use telework to be at home with our children, which forces us to use our sick leave and have to call in a sub. Not being able to telework at this time makes it a BIG risk to push teachers to find other careers and or quit their jobs because of child care. Our salaries do not allow us to pay for childcare services when we are asked to be on campus. Telework should be an option for teachers as long as their children's school are in a distance learning model.

Mahalo
This testimony is for the General Business Meeting in support of telework for all teachers.

August 19, 2020

To the members of the Hawaii Board of Education,

My name is Evette Gallant. I am a sixth year teacher with the DOE and hold my Master of Arts in Teaching. I maintain my full-time commitment to my students while being a wife, mother to two young children, and a caregiver to my terminally ill mother-in-law who is valiantly fighting cancer. I am not unique in my challenges. Life is hard for all of us in the midst of a pandemic. As an educator, I know the importance of managing my responses and focusing on what I can control. Therefore, I write to you today in a last effort to stabilize my professional uncertainty.

I will firmly say, this is the most undervalued, confused, defeated, and anxious I have felt in recent years. As I sit here, attempting to write a powerful testimony, all I can do is ask you to complete a simple task: empathize.

My spouse is unemployed, so I accounted for the cost of gas to get to and from my worksite, and adjusted my budget. My mental health has suffered as diagnosed by medical professionals, so we manage my symptoms as best as possible to minimize anxiety attacks while at work. I cannot expose my mother-in-law to my work bubble, so I no longer visit her. My husband is our primary childcare, so I try not to think about the impact of him getting sick. I share a restroom with an unknown amount of coworkers without assurance of disinfecting protocols, so instead I anxiously wait to use the restroom at home. I was asked to be flexible, so I continue to report to work hoping for answers and the professional courtesy we all deserve. Through all this uncertainty and stress, I continue to fulfill my professional duties to my students, though I know my productivity and wellness would improve through telework.

DOE leaders are quick to boast about the support and empathy their teachers extend to Hawaii’s students, yet they are delayed in extending us the same humanity. Telework is not unproductive or unprofessional, it is humane. Please hear my story and empathize.

Respectfully,

Evette Gallant
Aloha,

I am a parent of two elementary school children, married to another teacher, and provide help to many elderly and immuno-compromised family members and extended family members in my community.

I was relieved when our state decided to start the school year (mostly) online, and I feel that we are likely already saving lives. Meeting my students over google meetings this week was not ideal, but it worked and we were able to avoid gathering in groups of people in unsafe conditions.

Many teachers are trying to juggle learning what we need to in order to reach our students and to teach them from a distance. We also have to juggle our families and their well-being, as well as our own personal health. Please honor our contract by allowing us to work from home during the times when students are at home. This will relieve so much stress over childcare and the worry that we will bring a deadly disease home to our loved ones. It makes no sense for me to be sitting in an empty classroom. I put myself at risk every time I go to use the shared staff bathroom. I could be teaching just as effectively (if not more so) from the safety of my own home. I would be less-stressed, more able to manage the needs of my family and still able to connect with and help my over 100 students.

Please extend the remote learning period until it is safe. Please treat teachers like the professionals that we are. Allow us to work from home. Keep us safe so that we can continue to live, thrive, and teach the keiki.

Mahalo,
Tina Rossman
Math Teacher-Kealakehe High School
Parent -Holualoa Elementary School

I was very uncomfortable when I saw Special Education students entering campus today. While the aids that were greeting them were wearing PPE, they were definitely all in the high-risk category. I don't want our kupuna to die because they didn't have the luxury of deciding whether to report to work or go hungry.

With so many multi-generational families in Hawaii, and with so many of our fellow staff members, administrators, custodians and security guards being high-risk for complications from Covid-19, 100% distance learning is the only responsible decision during this time.

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Aloha Hawaii Board of Education:

I have been teaching in Hawaii for 17 years at Kealakehe High School on Hawaii Island. I teach social studies. Teachers should not be required to have face-to-face contact with students until the COVID-19 pandemic has ended. Although teachers prefer face-to-face teaching, the health of teachers, students, and everyone else should be the priority. People's health and lives are at risk.

We should all be an example to students that their well-being is of the utmost importance. No student, teacher or anyone else working at a school should be sacrificed so that we can go forward with face-to-face teaching. Too much is at stake.

Respectfully submitted, Ezra Witsman

Item V. A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.
Dear Board of Education,

I am testifying on item V. My name is Trina Oato and I am a preschool special education teacher at Queen Kaahumanu School. During this Covid 19 pandemic, it is dangerous and reckless to force special education teachers to teach special education students face to face on campus. My students do not tolerate wearing a face mask. Due to their ages, understanding, and special needs, social distancing is not feasible in my classroom. For the majority of the school day, my aide and I are inches away from them and get coughed on and sneezed on regularly. I have spent hundreds of dollars of my own money buying PPE because I’m scared to death that my classroom/teaching situation isn’t safe for me, my aide, and my students. Please ensure 100% distance learning for all students, including special education students until at least the end of the first quarter.

Mahalo,
Trina Oato

Sent from my iPhone
I am a high risk kupuna member of the community. I am also the parent of a DOE teacher and grandparent of students in our Hawai‘i schools. My children are all graduates of our Hawai‘i public schools. This is not my first testimony to the BOE on the matter of opposing our schools reopening in the midst of a deadly, highly contagious, and complex pandemic. I have listened to each of your BOE meetings on this crisis, often disappointed by the lack of decisiveness and concrete actions required during this deadly pandemic.

The facts are out there that our schools in the US are not able to reopen safely. Thousands of positive infection cases. Thousands of students and teachers in quarantine. Schools and universities shutting down immediately after reopening due to exponential infection rates. Increasing numbers of children becoming sick and dying from this deadly and highly contagious virus. Children and young adults with heightened health issues during and after recovery from Covid19.

Since the last BOE meeting several glaring truths have been revealed. Among them:

1. Your superintendent is gaslighting all of us. She has targeted our teachers and their rightful union, the HSTA, as her enemies, wrongfully accusing them of fearmongering, when HSTA is doing their job by leading, informing, and educating their members and the community. She then turns around and makes saccharine, empty platitudes, with no sincere apologies for her vitriol. Textbook gaslighting behaviors and absolutely unacceptable now and ever, especially from one in her position of authority.

She has, in very trumpian fashion, continued to avoid taking responsibility for this debacle our teachers, school staff, students, parents, and communities face. She has avoided making tough decisions required of her position and instead put individual school principals in extremely difficult situations.

Does she don a MAGA hat under her title of superintendent, because during this deathly crisis she consistently appears to inhibit all of the negative attributes, willful ignorance of truths and facts, deflecting responsibilities, denial of the severity of the pandemic, shirking accountability, all traits reeking from the cult of that red hat fear-mongering, science denying demagogue.

2. Principals are having to conduct their own contact tracing efforts due to the failure of your superintendent to obtain the full commitment of necessary actions from the DOH before reopening our schools.

Principals, with their expanding responsibilities due to lack of leadership from above, are wrongfully applying pre-pandemic policies regarding telework, childcare, safety protocols.

Principals forced into last minute decision making on schools reopening and operations, resulting in heightened anxieties for parents, students, and teachers, frantically scrambling to rearrange their own schedules and lives.

Without a clearly defined and committed partnership between the DOH and DOE, each of our schools is now having to deal with untenable situations far beyond the scope of their areas of profession, knowledge, and responsibility.

3. The refusal and inability of your superintendent to make necessary and timely decisions has resulted in chaos and increasing anxiety and fears for our schools and our communities. Period.
4. Superintendent Christina Kishimoto has shown herself to be the wrong person for this job and lacking the skills and fortitude to lead during this crisis. Her lack of respect and appreciation for our heroic, selfless teachers is reprehensible and unforgivable.

5. People are dying from this deadly and extremely contagious virus. This isn’t a fire drill. This is a full blown raging fire that is on the brink of exploding into an inferno. Yet, here we are, with those in positions of leadership standing by watching the fire instead of putting it out and preventing its spread.

So now it’s up to you, our Board of Education, to finally and urgently take the needed actions in a decisive and urgent matter.

Stop the chaos. Stop the gaslighting. Stop the hate towards our teachers fueled by the superintendent. Stop the fragmented and unsafe operations of our schools.

Are you going to also continue to standby or will you contain the fire and stop it from spreading further and farther? Our keiki, their teachers and families, our schools and communities are in dire need of assurances and actions that prove they are being protected and respected and valued.

Save lives. Put out the fires.

Nora Schubert
Member, HGEA Retirees Unit
Aloha,

My name is Theresa Schubert and I am the Student Activities Coordinator (SAC) at Wallace Rider Farrington High School. I have been a public school teacher for over 20 years, spending my first five years as a long-term substitute teacher. I am proud to be the SAC at the Home of the Governors, as I love working with our budding student leaders in both the classroom setting and creating large scale school- and community-based events to ensure school spirit and pride. I am also a single mother of five children and have lived in my Farrington district for over 20 years. My five children have attended both private and public schools, including Farrington High School—my youngest daughter is now a Junior at FHS.

Today, I am testifying in regards to the reopening of schools, specifically in the areas of health and safety and distance learning (telework). Thank you for allowing me this opportunity. It was my understanding that we would open our campus adhering to the MOU. In the MOU, lines 48 and 49, it states that "Each school will have a written procedure for health check screening of employees, students and campus visitors;".

In regards to Distance Learning, I have been actively engaged--since the beginning of quarantine (March-April) in this form of communication via virtual meetings with our Associated Student Body Executive Team, as well as all class councils and club representatives. In the MOU, lines 87-90, it states that "Schools should continue to promote student voice, civic engagement and responsibility as aligned to their school design model. Student activities are an integral part of the curriculum and should be continued with adherence to health and safety requirements while practicing necessary social and physical distancing;". I meet weekly, or even bi-weekly, with our various student leadership teams. They have attended online conferences. Our student leadership team has been actively promoting on their social media platforms, doing their best to be creative as they reach out to their peers and keep them engaged in all areas relevant to their education. Student Voice is alive and well, in spite of the pandemic.

This is why I am baffled as to why telework is not an option for myself and my fellow colleagues, as we have been doing this for months! To hear our principal tell us, over and over, that he will outright deny telework "because that's just how it is right now" or citing the HIDOE Telework Program Guidelines to explain why Telework cannot be used creates a catch-22, especially since these guidelines were written for NORMAL work situations. We are NOT in a normal work situation; we are in a PANDEMIC and our numbers in Hawaii are in triple-digits. You are asking teachers—who care deeply about their students and the nature of their work—to now choose between taking a sick-leave to ensure their health and safety for both themselves and their loved ones at home and leave teaching to a substitute teacher who has not been properly trained on how to run classes virtually or physically show up to their empty classroom and teach, while they figure out childcare and/or take the chances that no one on campus is going to compromise their health and safety. Teaching virtually from our classrooms, on campus, does not make business sense at all. We are asked to show up daily, use taxpayers money to turn on our classroom lights, air-conditioning (if applicable), use water, paper
towels, toilet paper and soap in the shared restrooms, and more. Why? Also, why did the Mayor declare that if anyone can accomplish their work from home, that they should stay at home and telework, yet, teachers get denied. Why do some high school teachers here in our district have the option, but others--like Farrington--do not? Why isn't everyone on the same page? I can understand the frustration for parents.

Continuing with Health and Safety, I witnessed our custodians ‘Deep Cleaning’ our campus with a mere bucket with some liquid and a rag. She was wiping the outside of the doors to my classroom (very haphazardly--didn't do the handles) and declared she was going to wipe down my classroom desks. When I asked her where she 'deep cleaned' prior to my room, she rambled on about all the rooms prior to mine. I was appalled. I declined and told her I have my own Clorox wipes, gloves and Lysol spray; I would deep clean myself. I feel lied to. This does not make me feel safe if THIS is the 'deep clean' touted by the Superintendent and DOE, per MOU. If the Superintendent is so confident, she should show videos of this so-called Deep Cleaning in action and show the parents who are being told that our campuses are safe.

Yes. I am upset. I feel lied to. Do I want to teach? Absolutely. I haven't stopped my Leadership Training via virtual meetings for the past 5 months. If I am not allowed to Telework, due to the health and safety of my children at home--as I am the primary caregiver and they are 100% Distance Learning (Punahou and Farrington), then I shall use all my sick leave to stay home. I feel like I have no other reasonable choice. I can teach from home. I've been doing it. Please make sense of this for us and not back us into a corner.

Mahalo,
Theresa Schubert
808-497-7843

Thank you,
*Theresa Schubert*
To the Board of Education:

My name is Adrianne Hale. I teach at Holualoa Elementary on Hawai'i Island. 
I urge you to delay the start of school and ensure distance learning for all students across our 
state. This will limit and even contain the spread of Covid 19. It will also protect families, students, 
teachers, kupuna and our communities at large for the ever increasing spread of this virus.

I also ask that the DOH and HIDOE be required to provide clear metrics on when campses are safe 
for students to return. This should be based on clear guidelines and available data so that we can 
best assure the safety of students and school staff.

I also ask that HIDOE honors HSTA’s contract by allowing teachers to work from home i.e. telework 
for as long as distance learning remains in effect. This will further serve to safeguard the health of 
teachers and school staff.

Mahalo, 
Adrianne Hale
Aloha Hawaii BOE,

My name is Sarah "Mili" Milianta-Laffin and I teach STEM Lab at Ilima Intermediate. This is my 15th year teaching. On Monday, our campus opened with roughly 1/3 of students and nearly all teachers present on campus. When I posted a photo to social media of me in my classroom, I started getting messages from friends, other teachers, and former students & families.

Most of the messages asked why I was teaching in person when the news said all students were "going virtual" for the next 4 weeks. After listening to the last BOE meeting, I thought I'd be teaching virtually also. But having "local control" my principal who I greatly respect elected to offer in-person onboarding for students this week, so over 60 teachers like me have spent this week on campus with students.

I have maintained quarantine since we started teaching virtually in quarter 3 of last year, only going out weekly for groceries. Yet, in the last 3 weeks, I've been around dozens of teachers, and now students. I'm terrified of getting sick, not for my own health, but because as a teacher charged with the care of students, it's my job to protect them, and I can't protect them 100% from COVID19. I would never forgive myself if I participated in the transmission of this virus that could hurt our students, or other faculty members and their families. The mental burden of that fear alone makes it difficult to focus on teaching, and I know I'm not alone in feeling like this.

Moving forward, if you believe in and support teachers like me, please do the following:

- Require 100% distance learning for all students, including our special education students, for all of Quarter 1.

- Require the DOH & HIDOE to provide clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students to return. (Please make sure they are not using models from hot spot states like DOH did talking about FL in yesterday's press conference.)

- Respect HSTA's contract by allowing teachers to work from home as long as distance learning is in effect.

Mahalo for Reading my Testimony,

--

Sarah "Mili" Milianta-Laffin
Ilima Intermediate STEM Lab Teacher
Electives Department Head & STEM Department Head
Faculty Sponsor: Gender Sexuality Alliance & Activist Club

Follow our STEM Lab adventures on Twitter & Instagram @STEMwithMili Support our class on DonorsChoose.org

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Testimony BOE

From: Vickie Parker Kam <vlpkam808@gmail.com> on behalf of Vickie Parker Kam
Sent: Wednesday, August 19, 2020 11:58 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Written Testimony - Item V

Aloha Board of Education members.
I am writing today to share alarming and desperate concerns regarding the roll out of the Dept of Educations roll out of the "Return to Learn" covered in item V on the agenda.
We educators had hope that you heard us and understood our concerns at the board meeting June 6th, however, due to the disingenuous play on words, individual interpretations, and misleading public statements from the Dept... each school admin is left to decipher implementation and this has led to dangerous work settings.
Distant learning doesn't mean students and teachers go to school for four days then maybe some of you stay home but some of you can come everyday for the following 3 weeks!!! Teachers in some schools have been told they will teach in person daily for potentially up to 57% of enrolled students.
Is that what you meant for the dept to do? THAT IS THE REALITY WE ARE DEALING WITH THIS WEEK...
How is this respecting the health and safety of students, all staff and families?
WHY is the Dept continuing to gaslight the teachers by publically claiming one thing is happening when teachers are living a totally different reality? Distance learning means something specific...
At this point the State of Hawaii Dept of Education is in violation of the contract and MOU with HSTA. This is absolutely intolerable. For a state with a desperate teacher shortage, this lack of concern or consideration for educators health and safety will be devastating as many find an exit to other career paths.
Please, require clear consise consistent directions from the Dept of Ed to administrators, CAS, educators and the public... no more games with our lives. Please.
Mahalo for your time,
Vickie Parker Kam
Veteran Educator
To the Board of Education:

I am writing to testify on item V. A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication. I am an at-risk public school teacher with at-risk family members and am concerned with the current state of the school reopening plans.

Currently, schools are set to transition into a “100-percent” distance learning period until September 14, 2020. I put “100-percent” in quotation marks because this statement is incredibly misleading as it implies that all students, including those in special education and disadvantaged students, are participating in schooling from the safety of their own homes. This is false. With the current reopening plans, students who do not have access to technology at home and students receiving special education services through the DOE will be reporting physically to campuses. This puts those students as well as the staff who work directly with these students at an increased risk.

Students without technology at home who are required to physically report to campus for distance learning are being deprived of the opportunity to work from the safety of their home for no reason other than their socioeconomic status. These families should not be punished and forced to risk themselves for being less financially fortunate. In addition to this, the resources in the DOE are not being disseminated in an equitable manner. Currently, each school is loaning out the devices available at their schools. This means that schools with a higher population of low-SES families are unable to meet their students’ technology needs while schools with a lower population of these families have more than enough resources to do the same thing. In the current state of the pandemic, it is unforgivable that some schools can have an excess of these resources while other schools are being made to cut corners. A full-inventory should be taken of the currently available devices at all schools, as schools have had the opportunity to distribute and assign these devices. If any are left over, they should be redistributed accordingly. There is no reason not to employ all available devices to families during these unprecedented times.

The risk for staff working with students in special education is even greater than staff working in a normal classroom setting as these positions require close physical proximity and physical contact and many of these students are unable to wear masks. It is unfair to ask the staff who give up so much to service these students to further give up their own safety as well as put their own families at risk. It is also unfair to ask the families of students in special education to further put themselves at risk in order to receive an education. These families are being deprived of their FAPE - Free Appropriate Public Education. Is it really an appropriate education if students are required to put themselves and their families at risk during a pandemic for no reason other than their disability while their able-bodied peers are allowed the privilege to not do so?

100-percent distance learning should be ensured for all students across the state including those in special education at least until the end of the first quarter. The uncertainty and constant change of plans is putting undue stress on both schools and families. Families need to know what is happening in advance so they can plan accordingly rather than being given a week’s notice to plan for the next step. Schools also need advanced notice to adjust their procedures and teachers need to
have the necessary information to plan their curriculum in order to make the most meaningful learning experience for families. Although I understand that the situation around the virus is constantly changing and this is why the situation regarding school reopening plans are changing, this is creating unnecessary stress and uncertainty during a time in which people are already stressed and live in fear. The best thing to do in this situation is to err on the side of caution and firmly decide to implement the safety measures of distance learning for the entirety of the first quarter so that administrators and families are equipped to plan accordingly.

The DOH and HIDOE must also provide clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students’ return. We currently do not have any specific triggers in place based on COVID-19 cases. This is the biggest failure of the state of Hawai‘i in regards to dealing with the pandemic. We keep setting arbitrary dates for when to reopen things, when to ease restrictions, and when things will be safe. However, the COVID-19 virus does not follow deadlines. Because we keep setting these arbitrary dates and the virus does not behave the way we want it to in that timeline, we keep having to change course. Rather than using time, a metric that has no relation to the state of the COVID-19 pandemic, we should use a relevant metric that can give a more accurate picture of the state’s status regarding the virus.

Triggers for reopening schools should be based on case counts rather than dates. An example of a case-count based trigger would be “When a county has 0 new cases for a period of 4 weeks schools will be allowed to reopen for face-to-face learning.” Metrics like this gives all schools clear and unified guidance while allowing for each county to make decisions based on their specific COVID situation. We are currently seeing a huge increase in cases on Oahu but not as many cases on other islands. This means that other islands may become safe quicker than Oahu and if they do, those counties should be allowed to reopen accordingly. These guidelines MUST be created in collaboration with health experts as the health experts are the people with the necessary expertise to create these metrics.

Lastly, the HIDOE must honor HSTA’s contract by allowing teachers to work from home for as long as distance learning remains in effect. In HSTA’s contract with HIDOE it is clearly stated in Article X Section B that “Teachers shall not be required to work under unsafe or hazardous conditions or to perform tasks which imminently endanger their health or safety.” It is also clearly stated in Article X Section G that “When students are sent home from school or are not required to attend due to emergencies which endanger health or safety, teachers will not be required to remain at, nor report to, said schools.” The reason students are not being required to attend schools is because of the emergency caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. This is a global pandemic. There is no way to classify this other than an emergency.

In addition, Mayor Caldwell clearly stated during the August 18, 2020 News Conference that “If you can work from home, we want you to work from home.” At least on Oahu, conditions are so unsafe now that business must limit workplace interactions by allowing telecommuting or staggered work schedules. It is impossible to stagger DOE work schedules as we cannot stagger students’ school schedules - however, we can effectively telecommute.

There are many effective models for instruction available with the use of increasingly advanced technologies. For example, I will be using a “flipped classroom” approach to my teaching this year. This means that I will pre-record lessons and instructional material for students to watch and study on their own time (during asynchronous learning) and utilize synchronous learning time (such as through Google Meets) to provide extra help to students who do not understand the material. This will allow differentiation of instruction to those who need it while giving flexibility to the students to study at their own pace. Students can pause, rewind, and rewatch the material as they need and ask me any questions they may have. Even for younger elementary students, my school is implementing a resource called “Seesaw” in which we can create interactive lessons and activities for students to complete through the Seesaw app. Parents are not being required to teach any material. I, the teacher, will present all of the material. All parents need to do is keep their child clothed and make sure s/he shows up to class and completes their homework, which is no different than traditional schooling.
Please take all of this information into consideration when making decisions regarding these issues. Effective distance learning is definitely possible and we, the teachers, will do everything in our power to make it happen. What we are asking for is the DOE honor students’ right to an appropriate, safe education and our right to a safe workplace.

Mahalo,

Aoi Shinagawa

--
Aoi Shinagawa
(808)439-5093
Please consider 100 percent distant learning for all students across the state, including those in special education, until at least the end of the first quarter.

It was deemed unsafe for general education Hawaii public school students to return to campus...but why is it considered safe enough for students in special education to return to campus? There is no guidance or clear procedures and rules in place to make sure students, teachers and staff are safe. Teachers were not given proper cleaning supplies or guidelines to help keep the classroom clean and safe for all.

These days many places that you go to, your temperature is taken and a document that states that no one in the household is currently sick and no one has recently traveled, needs to be signed before you can enter...doctors office, hair salons, preschools, etc. But none of that is required for public schools. Schools are supposed to be a place where students and teachers feel safe and parents have a sense of comfort, knowing that their child’s safety is the school’s first priority. But none of those precautions are taking place before a student steps on campus.

I am a fourth grade SPED inclusion teacher. I have a few students (who normally would have received instruction with their general education peers all day, with accomodations) that are scheduled to start face to face lessons on campus starting next week Monday. They will physically be in class while listening to the lesson being taught live while the other 20 students are online at the same time from home. What will the 2 students feel and think when they have to be physically in school while others get to stay home to learn?

Furthermore, teachers did not receive any guidance for the following:

- as to what to do if a student refuses to wear a mask or follow social distancing guidelines. Many of our students in Special Education will have a difficult time wearing masks for long periods of time, which will put the student and teachers at risk.
- How to safely help a student if they have a health issue or has an outburst and a teacher or EA needs to use QBS or safety hold to assist with a situation or assist with a medical condition.

For many teachers, school is like their second home. At our school we consider ourselves one big ohana. Coworkers and other teachers on campus become like family. Students are called “my kids”...not my students. Having anyone who is part of our school ohana become infected with COVID, especially from being on campus would be a nightmare. We all have families at home who would also be in danger of becoming infected due to the lack of precautions taking place and proper guidance.

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony,

Aimee Nakama
SPED teacher/SPED GLC
Hawaii State Board of Education Members,

Thank you for your time and deliberation on the matter of school reopening plans. I have 9 YES or NO questions about COVID 19 in regard to the school setting here in Hawaii.

1. Can the DOE prevent COVID 19 from being spread to anyone at school?
2. Can the DOE prevent a child or teacher from dying if they catch COVID 19 while at school?
3. Can the DOE prevent small asymptomatic children from spreading the virus to their parents?
4. Can the DOE prevent small children from becoming orphans if their parents die from a virus they spread to them?
5. **Has the DOE been honest** with the teachers and parents in confirming "all" school sites that have had the virus?
6. Are the schools prepared to deal with a teacher shortage and substitute crisis because of thousands of (stress) sick days?
7. Has the DOE honored the contractual MOU and avoided a complaint/grievance filed with the Hawaii Labor Relations Board?
8. Do you believe that teachers and MANY PRINCIPALS will faithfully follow Superintendent Kishimoto and not work against her plan?
9. Do you believe that Superintendent Kishimoto has been or will be honest and forthcoming with all stakeholders in the educational community?

- **EXTRA PERSONAL QUESTION:** Are you prepared to be the board member that sends the last teacher to die because an Asymptomatic Child gave them the virus?

If you answered NO to any of the above, **please strongly consider VIRTUAL ONLINE learning for all students until there is a cure for this virus.**

The DOE does not have a safe plan to reopen schools for face to face learning. The DOE and the DOH continue to deceive and withhold information about the virus count to the general public. The DOE has violated the contractual MOU. Please don't wait on the HLRB, or kick the can down the road. I urge you all to take responsibility for this ship now.

I know this isn't an easy time for anyone and I sincerely appreciate your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

David Wright
Kapolei High School
10th Grade US History / AP Psychology
My name is Skye Darnell, 7th grade math teacher at King Intermediate in Kane'ohe, O'ahu.

I am testifying on item V. A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the Covid-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.

Although I support the autonomy for each school to consider their unique needs and situations of students, communities, staff, resources and design the best plan for health, safety and learning, I am aware that some school level leaders just have not done right by their teachers and there needs to be some clear metrics or written guidance from the Dept of Health and DOE on closing schools to prevent our case numbers from rising more and how to phase reopening school buildings when it becomes safe to do so.

Teachers, especially those of us who are caregivers to family members should also be allowed to work from home if we choose, Many of us are sacrificing the well-being of our own school age children who are in latchkey conditions, kupuna and other family members who rely on our care.

Teachers have been resilient, cooperative, flexible, positive and resourceful since the pandemic first broke out. Comments from the community, when homeschooling started were that we deserve more pay and respect for the jobs we do. While I know that was personally validating to me, right now we need to focus on everyone's health and safety. People seem to be making decisions that affect us without "walking in our shoes" to see if that's something they'd find acceptable to themselves or their loved ones.

Please do right by our teachers to keep a good working relationship and public trust. With the weight of demands from our jobs and the looming pandemic, many of my invaluable colleagues are quitting or retiring, which will in the long run hurt our keiki most. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Mrs. Skye Darnell
testifying on item V. A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.

Dear Board of Education,

We, teachers have been working hard to make adjustments week after week as decisions have changed. It’s tiring and wished you could’ve been proactive from the get go and look where we are now.

I’m writing to you for the third time and tired not because I have to write to you but because I’ve been working and planning to get ready to finally teach my students. You have put teachers, administration, staff, students, and parents all in a bind. I am asking that you be more proactive in protecting students and teachers. This means extending distance learning for as long as possible. The public has clearly not learned their lesson about the seriousness of covid. Put pressure on DOH and DOE to outline clear measures of what is safe, what happens when there is a positive case on campus, and what’s the threshold of what means when it is no longer safe to be on campus. It is unacceptable that we still do not have any protocols in place or in writing. Why do teachers need to be on campus? Give teachers the option to telework from home.

I, no longer have the time to write to you, BOE. I have to readjust my curriculum, create online worksheets, and prepare to teach virtually. I’m sure to you it doesn’t sound like a lot but it is. So, it’s time to stop playing around. Teachers are really busy and if you can’t understand where we are coming from, I’d like to ask you to plan and teach one of my classes.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Melissa Obayashi
Aloha Board Members,

My name is Andrew Grant and I am a teacher in the DOE at Jarrett Middle School, a parent of two elementary aged daughters at a DOE school, and a husband to a teacher at a DOE high school. I am providing testimony regarding: V. A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.

Please vote to ensure that we have 100 percent distance learning throughout the state for quarter one. Case numbers may be going down, but they are still nowhere near a level where it is safe to re-open schools. Our students, their families, and teachers across the state need a clear message on what they will be doing this quarter. Doing half distance learning then opening too soon only to shut down again leaves us teachers with zero chance of ensuring learning is happening with our students.

Furthermore, with Governor Ige and Mayor Caldwell announcing that there should be no gatherings above 5 people, the small amount of ICU beds in our hospitals, and the DOH’s multiple documented problems with contact tracing it is not only irresponsible but a complete fantasy to assume that we could safely open schools by September 14. We need to keep the schools closed to all students, even special needs students, until the end of quarter one. After that, the Fall break would be a time to reassess the reopening plan.

But before any school can reopen, the DOH and HIDOE need to provide crystal clear criteria that will show when it is safe to return to campuses. What are we basing our decisions about now? Testimony from doctors? Political ambitions? The economy? We need a real plan. Make one, stick to it, and be leaders. Part of that means defining what “safe to re-open campuses” looks like.

Finally, if the campuses are not safe for students, then they are not safe for staff. Let us work from home without having to beg our principals who may or may not feel like granting us the ability to stay safe. As Governor Ige said on 8/18/20, if you can work from home, work from home. Well, us teachers can work from home. Teachers are professionals that have integrity. Teachers do what they say they are going to do. Teachers follow through. All we are asking is that the BOE votes to make sure that the DOE honors our contract. If the campus is not safe for students, then it is not safe for teachers.

Thank you for your consideration,

Andrew Grant
Teacher, Parent, and Husband
Jarrett Middle School
From: Cassandra Jones <cassandrashones808@gmail.com> on behalf of Cassandra Jones  
Sent: Wednesday, August 19, 2020 12:00 PM  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
Subject: TESTIMONY

Dear Members of the Board,

Thank you for all of your efforts to protect the people of Hawaii and create safe learning environments for our children, teachers, and staff. Unfortunately, HDOH’s failures are endangering the entire state. The Department of Health’s failure to produce clear metrics regarding school policies and protocol, particularly the lack of county specific PREVENTATIVE school closure metrics, is unnecessarily putting all of our island communities at risk.

With only one hospital and extremely limited healthcare capacity on Maui, even a small surge would create overwhelm in our healthcare system. We have yet to truly experience the first wave on the outer islands and without a clear set of metrics, public and private schools across the state of Hawaii are currently open for in-person instruction. As a result, there are private schools operating without uniform enforcement of mandatory mask or distancing policies in place. Public schools, each operating in isolation, have vastly different approaches ranging from full face-to-face instruction for all students, some providing in-person instruction only for specific grade levels or student groups, and others who are attempting 100% distance learning with no consistency with regards to platforms and models. The situation is highly unsafe and unacceptable.

My husband and I are teachers and our child attends public school; we have requested 100% distance learning for the foreseeable future. The DOE’s decision making regarding distance learning is also cause for concern. The use of Acellus, which is known to have racial and religious bias in its curriculum and is owned and operated by a questionable non-accredited group of “educators” historically associated with a polygamist cult. The DOE should never have spent precious resources on this online platform.

My husband was fortunate in that his application for telework has been approved by his administrators. The fact that this option is not universally available to teachers with childcare needs or high risk households is a serious problem that will only intensify the teacher shortage.

Until HDOH is functional in it’s testing, tracing and isolating cases of SARS-CoV-2 across the state, we must be committed to creating and providing the best distance education possible and support our communities in the creation of small childcare groups.

HDOH must produce science-based metrics for each county that incorporate infection rate AND healthcare capacity as measured before the discussion of in-person education can continue. Dr. Kishimoto’s continued emphasis on students return to campuses without appropriate metrics and without ensuring the availability of critical supplies, training, and implementation of EFFECTIVE risk mitigating strategies statewide continues to create conflict rather than a unifying our communities around our common goals: safety AND education, in that order.

Sincerely,
C. Jones
Good Morning

I am testifying on Item V of the agenda as it is a directive towards the Hawaii Department of Education preparation for reopening schools due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and comprehensive safety guidelines for employees.

I am a Teacher of Social Studies at James Campbell High School and as many of my fellow colleagues: Administrators, Faculty and Staff, we are all vulnerable and susceptible to this disease being present on school grounds. As we all also know, Campbell High School is the largest student body and faculty sized school in the state. Meaning that on a daily basis, there are up to 300 persons on campus and that is faculty/staff alone, not including students. I applaud our Administration team for doing the best that they can to put us in the best position to be successful. However, as already addressed by Mr. Rosenlee and many other, it is clear that our Principals are not health professionals. I fear for my safety on school grounds right now as there are no solid metric procedures to determine the safety of our school campus. I am also in a High risk category for contracting COVID-19. BOE, I please ask that there is some sort of directive from you all allowing Hawaii Public School employees (Faculty and etc.) to telework from home. What I do at school without students, I can also do safely at home.

Thank You
Testimony regarding V. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.

Dear Board of Education Members,

My name is Christopher Hale. I am a recently retired public school teacher. My wife currently teaches at Holualoa Elementary School on the Big Island.

I am begging you to please implement 100% distance learning in our schools allowing student to safely learn from home and allowing teachers to safely teach from home. By doing so, you will be saving lives of our keiki, teachers, and the community at large.

Schools are known for being vectors of spread for viral and bacterial illness. Please do not allow the pressures of opening our economy outweigh the lives of our keiki and kupuna. Our state has still hasn’t created clear guidelines for how to deal with or communicate Covid positive cases to schools or the community.

Please do the right thing to prevent live from being lost.

Respectfully,

Chris Hale

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone
Aloha,


My name is Dr. Howard and I am a Special Education Teacher at Waianae High School for 11th and 12th grade English Resource. I have been teaching special education for 26 years, 20 years in Hawaii and 6 years in Brooklyn NY.

These are scary and uncertain times. We have been sitting on edge for the past four months in hopes to see a remedy to this pandemic that has taken over the world. Millions have been affected, hundreds of thousands have even died. Sadly babies, children, young adults, middle-aged and elderly have been infected and many have died because of the COVID-19 outbreak. Doctors and specialists have been on the front line trying to combat this virus and yet to no end. Now here we are two weeks before students are to come back to school and we are being asked to don masks and have ample supplies of hand sanitizers and personal protective gear to teach our keiki.

I personally do not feel that we are ready as a school system to enter the 2020-2021 school year. There are many uncertain factors that have yet to be answered by the DOE which leaves many teachers especially those, such as myself, with pre-existing health conditions. It is unconscionable to ask teachers, many who are of the ages of 50 and over to gear up and get ready for a new school year with a pandemic that has the potential to kill (and has killed many thus far), to now go into the schools to teach in what can be considered as an unsafe environment.

Governor Ige recently put restrictions on gatherings of more than 5, yet my classroom has 10 or more students! What hypocrisy! You, the BOE and teachers are holding meetings via video conferencing and Sped teachers are asked to do face to face instruction! How absurd! The state of Hawaii has been closed to tourism and is slowly beginning to open in order to stimulate the economy. But now that cases of coronavirus are beginning to spike across the United States as well as here in the Islands and teachers are being asked to now get ready to teach as if this were a normal school year and it is not. There are over 180,000 keiki and 13,500 teachers not to mention support staff faculty and others that are part of school communities. That is nearly close to 200,000 plus adults and children coming together which is equivalent to a small city or town. This is unfathomable!

Teachers have been asked to deal with a lot of things over the years and in my 26 years of teaching I have never had to decide either to teach or face the possibility of contracting an ever changing virus with the possibility of dying. Hawaii already has a high teacher shortage due to the geographical location of the island, due to the difficulty of obtaining and maintaining qualified, certified, licensed teachers, due to the high cost of living, and now we are being asked to teach in what can be considered an unsafe environment. This is unconscionable!
Instead of forcing us to go back to school right now the DOE should take the first quarter to train teachers how to do effective distance learning so in case we have to shut down just as other school districts have when they opened in the midst of this pandemic. We will be more skilled and ready to handle the issues of distance education and be well prepared should we have to close again.

I urge you to be on the right side of history and make a decision that could save the keiki, your teachers, and your staff. I urge you to save your condolences and your prayers for the possible death that could occur should you prematurely open the schools and cause an outbreak amongst the 200,000+ children and teachers. We teachers are and have been on the front lines of education, many of us for decades, and just as much as we know you love the keiki of Hawaii and want the best for them, please show the same love (or even more love) for the ones who educate our keiki.

Please push back reopening schools. Thank you for considering my testimony in this important decision.
To Whom it May Concern (BOE members)...

My name is Jeff Uyeda and I am a Special Education Work Study Program teacher at Pearl City High School...

- I am testifying on item *A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.*

I am asking that you seriously consider the following for the health and safety of our students and teachers/school staff:

- Ensure 100-percent distance learning for all students across the state, including those in special education for a quarter AT THE LEAST
- To provide clear metrics, from the DOH and the HIDOE, on when school campuses are safe for students’ return. I understand that a lot of states have clear and concise triggers already in place for when schools should be open or closed based on COVID-19 cases... and unfortunately Hawaii is NOT one of these states
- To honor HSTA’s contract by allowing teachers to work from home (telework) for as long as distance learning remains in effect.

I am afraid of face-to-face instruction because of several factors... a lot of my students live with their grand parents who are in the high risk category for COVID 19; my classroom has not been thoroughly cleaned since we have returned to school (3 weeks ago); this school is not prepared for an outbreak... protocols are not clear yet; and my own families safety - mother in law who is elderly that babysits my child when I am working, wife who is on medical leave, and 2 young children at home. I understand education is important but SAFETY should trump anything at this time!!!! Educating my students can be done 100% distance learning and from the safety of my home.

Thank you,
Jeff Uyeda

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.
I am testifying on item:

A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.

As a teacher I am asking the board to please take action to:

- Ensure the option for special education and teacher to go 100-percent distance learning for at least the end of the first quarter. - While I believe a lot of our students needs to be face to face, I do not believe all students need to be in a small enclosed room with limited ventilation.

- Require the DOH and HIDOE to provide clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students’ return. Many states and cities have specific triggers already in place for when schools should be open or closed based on COVID-10 cases, but Hawaii does not. - As a parent and educator, I believe in the right of informed consent. I believe the DOE is taking that right away from me to know if my school and community are safe. It is unfair and not in good faith to those in the community to withhold this information.

I believe my school has done their best to try to protect my students and myself. But the truth is, 9 masks and a handful of gloves is not enough to keep my students or myself safe. Until, the BOE, DOE, and DOH can keep us safe, I asking to give us the option to offer distance education to all students without penalty (be it misinformation in the media or from the superintendent herself).

Thank you.
Testimony for the BOE Meeting on 8/20/2020

To the Hawai‘i Board of Education Members,

I am a 50 year veteran teacher for the State of Hawai‘i DOE. Since 1970, I have taught Grades PreK to 12—English, Social Studies, and for 10 years I served as the certified Librarian at an Elementary School. With three college degrees, and my many years of experience, I am very qualified to teach in our school system. I am dedicated, loyal, and I love teaching.

This is the first year that I am seriously considering retiring immediately from my position because at age 72 (my only risk factor) I am livid about the callous and insensitive manner in which the superintendent has disparaged teachers and our union for trying to keep everyone in our schools safe. I do not want to die from a preventable cause because someone wants to “look good” and pretend that it is okay to put our lives at risk.

I am incredibly thankful for my excellent principal who is working tirelessly to keep our community safe. He is doing his best to keep students at a distance, have them wear masks, etc. But it is impossible to have this happen. Teenagers simply are not built to socially distance—and they don’t.

“It is not if, but when.” There have already been cases of Covid on our campus. It is NOT acceptable for all of us to be here at this time.

I am urging you to:

- Have 100-percent distance learning for all students across the state, including those in special education, until at least the end of the first quarter. The acceptable exceptions might be Hana, Molokai, and Lanai where there are no cases of Covid and very small numbers of students in classes—easy to figure out ways to manage distancing.

  Special education students are often medically the most fragile students—how can you justify putting them at risk? I do not understand the thinking. It does not matter how much in person time you had in school if you are dead!

- Require the Department of Health and the DOE to provide clear metrics on when school campuses are actually safe for students to return. Many states (and cities) have specific triggers already in place for when schools should be open or closed based on Covid cases, but Hawai‘i does not. Maybe one or more people in our DOE offices who are teleworking from home should research this???

  How many times do we have to say this—how many people need to contract Covid? How many people need to die before you pay attention?

- Guarantee that the DOE honors HSTA’s (our) contract by allowing teachers to work from home (telework) for as long as distance learning remains in effect.

  In the Spring, I did a great job teaching online from home. I was on my computer delivering lessons, creating instructional videos, and meeting virtually with students from 7:00 am to nearly 8:00 pm daily. My students learned many skills and they were engaged in learning many new things in addition to reviewing content. The only thing that impeded participation levels was the crazy caveat that said we were not to grade our students during the 4th quarter and then putting that information out to the public. Only someone who has never taught in a classroom or worked as an
administrator in a school, would consider that a good idea. Especially with packets and other modifications, we could have found ways to provide instruction that also allowed every student to receive and benefit from that instruction.

Every student I have spoken with and all those who have signed in to my Google Classrooms and received a confirmation/welcome email from me and responded back—each and every one of them has expressed excitement and anticipation about learning **online** this year.

The DOE has already lost many excellent teachers to retirement (some many years before they actually should have left teaching). I do not want to be one of those. If disregard for my health and safety continues and if I am disrespected in official emails that have to be corrected/updated—I will have no other recourse than to retire—to leave—to give up doing something that I love doing and something that I am very skilled at doing—teaching and inspiring young people to learn and then go out and make our world a better place.

Do the right things—you know what they are!

Sincerely,
Sherry Rose
Testimony from Burke Burnett to the Hawaii Board of Education

20 August 2020

I am testifying on item A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.

Aloha kakou, my name is Burke Burnett, and I am the parent of an 8th grader at Kaimuki Middle School. I’m one of the founders of the group Hawai‘i for a Safe Return to School, and I’m also a scientist based at Bishop Museum – although I am writing to you in a personal capacity.

I previously gave testimony to BOE about the critical need for the DOE to mandate that each school assess and improve the ventilation systems in its classrooms before they can be considered safe to reopen for teaching. That is absolutely imperative, because close, confined, poorly ventilated rooms are exactly the conditions most conducive to airborne transmission of COVID-19.

I also gave testimony to BOE calling for common sense and decency in delaying the return of in-person classroom instruction, which in the midst of a major COVID surge in our community not only makes no rational sense but is also lacking in basic human decency. I noted that opening in-person classes at this time would contribute to what is already a major public health disaster.

The decision on 7 August to delay in-person classroom instruction until at least 14 September was a welcome step but still insufficient to protect the well-being of our community.

The COVID surge continues. We also know that there have been multiple reported cases of COVID at our public schools. While don’t yet know of any community spread related to those cases, had in-person classes been on-going it is a virtual certainty that they would have resulted in increased transmission of COVID in our public schools, putting the lives of teachers, parents, kupuna – and our keiki at grave risk.

The current surge will continue for at least several more weeks – this is simply the nature of pandemic disease curves – and that of this disease in particular because of its high rate of asymptomatic cases and the current inadequate state of disease testing.

It is therefore imperative that BOE extend the mandate for 100% distance learning until at least the beginning of the Second Quarter on 14 October. It’s also critically important that the DOE honor its commitment to allow teachers to continue to work from home as long as distance learning is in effect.
It is also imperative that the DOE announce a clear and scientifically sound set of metrics to guide the safe reopening of schools. Given the demonstrated failure of our Department of Health in performing its public responsibilities, this requires additional input from outside DOH, including non-DOH public health experts, doctors, and scientists to determine the best and most appropriate set of metrics.

In particular, I am calling for Hawaii to NOT use a single metric, such as Test Positivity Rate, to drive decisions. The TPR is a valid measurement of how adequate your testing program is going, but it is NOT a good direct measurement of the current state of disease outbreak or its trend. Good metrics to understand the current and projected disease state are the number of new cases per 100,000 people, number of active cases per 100,000, the estimate Rate of Transmission (or R$_t$), hospitalization rates, ICU headroom, and other metrics (including TPR). These measurements tell you what the current state and trend of disease is, and are the best metrics to guide decisions. TPR simply tells you how good those other measurements are.

We should be following the California model, which uses all those numbers in a basket of metrics to guide when it is safe for schools to reopen. For example, one metric used in California requires schools to stay closed if there are more than 100 new cases per 100,000 residents over the previous 14 days.

That is an example of a good metric to use.

In the Four Phase Plan proposed by our group, Hawaii for a Safe Return to School, we called for these metrics, or benchmarks, to be determined and agreed by a transparent, multistakeholder process involving public health experts and scientists to reach a consensus. Unfortunately, given the demonstrated failure of the Hawaii Department of Health to adequately perform its duties, it is essential that external experts be part of the process to devise these metrics and to reach a consensus that reflects and serves the needs and wishes of our community to protect the health of our citizens.

We have already seen numerous instances of school systems across the country opening up, seeing a major school-driven outbreak, and then being forced to shut down again. That is an awful mistake that we must avoid.

The only sensible way forward is to keep schools 100% distance learning until it is fully safe to do so, based on a set of external metrics that have been fully vetted and approved by experts both within and outside DOH.

Reopening schools in the midst of a disease surge – which will still be the case for at least several more weeks - is reckless, and so now is the time for BOE to give directions to DOE on the steps it must take, and the questions it must answer, before schools can reopen in-person classes.

Mahalo.
Testimony BOE

From: Alexis Munoz <alexis.munoz@me.com> on behalf of Alexis Munoz
Sent: Wednesday, August 19, 2020 12:17 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

- Student Achievement/General Business Meeting
- Acellus

I oppose using Acellus in our school environment due to the obvious concerns of the appropriateness and actual accreditation. There are many screenshots of questionable material and no transparency or answers being given except that it's maybe rival companies making this up. This program needs to be removed and the HIDOE needs to do more serious vetting of the programs they bring to our children! Furthermore, I also find it so disappointing that children who are doing online learning are not afforded the option to meet with their teacher and classmates on a weekly bases. I was instructed that only hybrid students get to meet regularly with their class. How are students supposed to form a connection with their school/teacher if they can’t even dedicate 1 hr a week to meet with kids? Other schools/other states are teaching LIVE 3-4 hrs per day. This is unacceptable!

Alexis Munoz

Sent from my iPhone
Hello,

I teach special education and it worries me that I have to enter a class in which I may get infected by covid. Please consider the health of your most vulnerable population and the hard to retain teachers that work so hard to teach them.
Aloha,

My name is Kari Handley, and I am a teacher of the Deaf & Hard of Hearing/ Special Education at Lehua Elementary School in the Leeward District on Oahu. I am submitting testimony on item V. **A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.**

When the Superintendent announced on August 7 the plans for all schools to open following a distance learning model starting on August 17, she also gave little information about the options for special education. Her directives were ambiguous and left it to individual schools to determine how to best meet their students needs, with very little guidance. We were told to wait for clarification, which has in some instances not come yet. Special Ed. teachers are now having to furiously meet with parents and families to determine if they can meet students' needs virtually for the next 4 weeks. This is THEE HARDEST DECISION I've encountered as a Special Ed. teacher. As an educator, I KNOW what's best for students is to be in school. All students- general ed or special ed. But what we are being asked is to choose between what's best for students and what is safe. No one will argue that health & safety is a priority, but having to choose between that and what's educationally best is IMPOSSIBLE. If the guidance were more clear, or better yet, if the DOE would simply determine that ALL students should be home and doing Distance Learning in the next few weeks, it would help tremendously.

As a teacher of the Deaf/ Hard of Hearing, wearing a mask all day is very challenging for students who are also wearing hearing aids and/ or cochlear implants. It inhibits the speaker and the listener. If they were at home, they wouldn't need to wear the masks.

We all know students learn best at school, especially younger students and those most vulnerable. However, they should be allowed back at schools when it is safe.

Thank you,

Kari Handley
Lehua Elementary School
Board of Education Members,

I am testifying on item V. A, Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.

I am a teacher at Queen Ka`ahumanu School. I believe the plan to reopened schools was dangerous, rushed, and not based in science. The health and safety of keiki and teachers was not at the forefront of the plan. The ever-changing plans, that we find out from the press, have created more chaos as we constantly change course to meet the needs of our students.

To ensure a safe school year, I testify that:

- Schools need clear metrics or written guidance from the Hawaii State Department of Health and Department of Education on closing schools due to high case counts and fully reopening school buildings when it is safe to do so.
- In order to minimize the number of individuals on campus during the pandemic, no students should be physically coming to school and teachers should be allowed to work from home if they choose.
- The DOE should ensure 100-percent distance learning for all students across the state, including those in special education, until at least the end of the first quarter.
- HIDOE must honor HSTA’s contract by allowing teachers to work from home (telework) for as long as distance learning remains in effect.

I am trained, technologically literate, passionate, and well-equipped to teach from home. Teachers and families are in a better position now to handle distance learning. We can use all that we've learned from the last quarter of SY 19-20 and the new trainings on distance learning to support our students at home. Teachers, staff members, and students should not have to get sick and/or die first before you create substantial change.

Thank you for your time,

Angela Sagisi

Sent from my iPhone
Aloha Hawaii BOE,

My name is Sarah "Mili" Milianta-Laffin and I teach STEM Lab at Ilima Intermediate. This is my 15th year teaching. On Monday, our campus opened with roughly 1/3 of students and nearly all teachers present on campus. When I posted a photo to social media of me in my classroom, I started getting messages from friends, other teachers, and former students & families.

Most of the messages asked why I was teaching in person when the news said all students were "going virtual" for the next 4 weeks. After listening to the last BOE meeting, I thought I'd be teaching virtually also. But having "local control" my principal who I greatly respect elected to offer in-person onboarding for students this week, so over 60 teachers like me have spent this week on campus with students.

I have maintained quarantine since we started teaching virtually in quarter 3 of last year, only going out weekly for groceries. Yet, in the last 3 weeks, I've been around dozens of teachers, and now students. I'm terrified of getting sick, not for my own health, but because as a teacher charged with the care of students, it's my job to protect them, and I can't protect them 100% from COVID19. I would never forgive myself if I participated in the transmission of this virus that could hurt our students, or other faculty members and their families. The mental burden of that fear alone makes it difficult to focus on teaching, and I know I'm not alone in feeling like this.

Moving forward, if you believe in and support teachers like me, please do the following:

- Require 100% distance learning for all students, including our special education students, for all of Quarter 1.
- Require the DOH & HIDOE to provide clear metrics on when school campuses are safe for students to return. (Please make sure they are not using models from hot spot states like DOH did talking about FL in yesterday's press conference.)
• Respect HSTA's contract by allowing teachers to work from home as long as distance learning is in effect.

Mahalo for Reading my Testimony,

--

Sarah "Mili" Milianta-Laffin  
Ilima Intermediate STEM Lab Teacher  
Electives Department Head & STEM Department Head  
Faculty Sponsor: Gender Sexuality Alliance & Activist Club

Follow our STEM Lab adventures on Twitter & Instagram @STEMwithMili  Support our class on DonorsChoose.org

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Sarah "Mili" Milianta-Laffin  
Ilima Intermediate STEM Lab Teacher  
Electives Department Head & STEM Department Head  
Faculty Sponsor: Gender Sexuality Alliance & Activist Club

Follow our STEM Lab adventures on Twitter & Instagram @STEMwithMili  Support our class on DonorsChoose.org

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## AREAS OF CONCERN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. Safety and Health Concerns</th>
<th>COMMON SENSE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We still have not yet received the DOH document that the DOE negotiated to help schools prepare for reopening.</td>
<td><strong>Action:</strong> DOH needs to provide now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is still no guidance on documentation from DOH for public health nurses or for our school health aides.</td>
<td><strong>Action:</strong> DOH needs to provide WRITTEN guidance for public health nurses and health aides.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To prepare for the worst, we need information on contact tracing process forms, questions, and protocols.</td>
<td><strong>Action:</strong> DOH needs to provide information on contact tracing process forms, questions, and protocols.</td>
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<td>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.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inability to have timely and adequate contact tracing for positive cases.</td>
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<tr>
<td>What are the communication protocols?</td>
<td><strong>Action:</strong> DOH and DOE need to develop the communication protocols</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. The DOH has not been contacting principals consistently, timely, or at all about potential cases affecting their school.</td>
<td><strong>Action:</strong> DOH and DOE need a communication vessel to provide potential cases affecting their schools.</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<th>2. Personal Protective Equipment (“PPE”) and Supplies Concerns</th>
<th>COMMON SENSE:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schools are not fully equipped with 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. Additionally, the Department’s estimates and guidance on quantity does not align with principals’</td>
<td><strong>Action:</strong> DOH and DOE need to identify and stock appropriate PPE for each type of employee available on every campus. <strong>Action:</strong> DOE needs to align estimates and quantity provided by principals’ assessment of needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment of what is needed on campus. To date, adjustments and answers to questions along these lines have not been provided by state leadership.</td>
<td>Action: DOE needs to have a process to assure procurement of PPEs for the whole year.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Schools are also concerned with their abilities to maintain PPE supplies during the school year.</td>
<td>Action: DOE needs to have a process to assure procurement of PPEs for the whole year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Funding was provided to purchase cleaning and PPE supplies; however, due to supply and demand issues, schools are left wanting.</td>
<td>Action: DOE needs to develop a purchase contract to purchase cleaning, PPE and other supplies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Little guidance provided on approved disinfectants and cleaning supplies beyond the CDC website reference, leaving room for possible misinterpretation.</td>
<td>Action: DOE needs to follow guidance from OSHA regarding approved disinfectants and cleaning supplies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Preparation for On-campus Instruction Concerns</td>
<td>COMMON SENSE:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Classroom ventilation has not been clearly addressed by DOH or DOE. We have classrooms with newly added air conditioners and classrooms in new schools with central air. Some principals are telling teachers not to turn them on because the circulating air spreads the virus. Classrooms and libraries with central air may not even have windows that can be opened.</td>
<td>Action: DOE needs to address the ventilation issue BEFORE student are on campus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. No air-conditioned classrooms. Rooms are over 100 degrees; that is why air conditioning was installed in the first place.</td>
<td>Action: DOE needs to consult with experts regarding this issue and not make up their own rules.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Preparation for Distance Learning Concerns Training Concerns</td>
<td>COMMON SENSE:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION</td>
<td>Action: DOE needs to read lines 114-116 definition of Distance Learning and stick with one term. Don’t use Distance Learning and Virtual Learning separately.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board Resolution directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the global COVID-19 pandemic; urging school communities to give hope, act with kindness, and work toward togetherness; and authorizing Board Members to represent the Board of Education in mid-term</td>
<td>Action: Teachers will deliver instruction virtually or online through web-based or internet-based mediums or delivers instruction through other remote mediums.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**b. Distance Learning**, where the teacher delivers instruction virtually or online through web-based or internet-based mediums or delivers instruction through other remote mediums.

**COMMON SENSE:**

Teachers have not been provided with the training necessary to effectively deliver instruction online. We are expected to train them over the nine days of half-day instruction, which is not an effective way of preparing them, nor will we have their full attention given their need to prepare for the next day of instruction. The State DOE has provided three online professional development ("PD") trainings, two sessions each for the entire state. This is absolutely inadequate and is another reason for their inadequate readiness. Inadequate time has been provided to train classified support staff to assist in online delivery of instruction. 

**Action:** DOE needs to organize the required training. Example #1.

I.e.
1. Distance Learning Modules 1-7 MANDATORY
   Complete by:
2.
3.
4.

**This appeared to be retaliatory due to testifying to the BOE.**

**c.** No training or funding has been offered for classified support staff to assist in online delivery of instruction.

**Action:** DOE needs to provide training and funding for classified support staff to assist with online delivery of instruction.

**d.** Substitute teachers have not been provided with the training necessary to effectively deliver instruction online.

**Action:** DOE needs to provide substitute teachers the training necessary to deliver instruction online. Substitutes were sent a letter to complete Distance Learning Modules 1-7.

**One veteran teacher who has background in virtual instruction commented that she was on her third day with the seven-hour training.**

**Action:** DOE refrain from indicating that the Distance Learning Modules 1-7 would ONLY TAKE 7 HOURS. FALSE

**g.** It does not seem realistic that the one day for substitutes to be trained (seven-hour distance learning video) will be adequate for any who might be stepping into long-term positions.

**Action:** DOE reassess training needs for substitutes.
### 3. Programs and Platforms Concerns

**ACELLUS**

**COMMON SENSE:**

Action: DOE needs to REMEMBER the resolution Lines 114 - 116

b. Distance Learning, where the teacher delivers instruction virtually or online through web-based or internet-based mediums or delivers instruction through other remote mediums.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>d.</th>
<th>Schools do not have information on possible distance learning curriculum options to make an informed decision. Neither is there time for schools to review and vet the different options to make an informed and collaborative school decision. The schools also do not have the necessary funds to fund an online curriculum program, as it was not included in the Academic and Financial Plan developed at the end of the previous year.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Action: DOE needs to explain WHY Acellus was purchased for distance learning when it is a platform for on your own learning and monitored by the family.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Action: DOE needs to honestly describe to the BOE how Acellus was originally purchased for Distance Learning.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Action: DOE needs to explain the process of determining this platform and vetting process.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Action: DOE needs to explain why the BOE was not informed of this platform and other that were purchased for Distance Learning.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement: This purchase is fraud, waste and abuse.</td>
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| f. | There is a lot of frustration with the teachers. Every few days they have to reinvent the delivery of curriculum, and the modules have not been that helpful. The Google Classrooms that were just delivered to the schools are DOE-centric. The teachers don’t have control, so some of the schools are ignoring it and going with the Google Classrooms they have already set up. Otherwise, it’s more passwords, etc. that their students will need to know. |
| Action: DOE needs to explain why Google Classrooms delivered to schools are DOE-centric. |
| Action: DOE needs to explain why teachers spent hours learning how to do this themselves and developing lesson plans if they were going to use DOE-Centric Google Classrooms |

### 4. Preparation Concerns

**COMMON SENSE:**

| f. | Schools lack the time to train students and families on how to access hotspots and Chromebooks, which will provide them access to distance learning content for all schools with a blended or hybrid model. Additionally, training is needed to access distance learning platforms and |
| Action: DOE needs to develop a process or provide more time for training of students and families. |
| Action: DOE needs to collaborate on any distance learning platform selection. |

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5. Virtual-only Option Concerns

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<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Action</th>
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<tr>
<td>g. More parents are opting for 100% distance learning, so there is a greater need to reexamine and modify our class rosters, allow for better guidance to our teachers with digital tools to support synchronous/asynchronous face-to-face and distance learning, and provide for the necessary planning time that our teachers greatly need to design effective lesson plans and delivery. We believe that good lesson planning is essential to the process of teaching and learning.</td>
<td><strong>Action:</strong> DOE will remove Acellus as a platform for distance learning. <strong>Statement:</strong> There is a lot of concern over the selection of Acellus and shadiness of the founder.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Action:</strong> DOE acknowledge that the use of the data collected after the 4th quarter is not statistically significant. <strong>Action:</strong> BOE needs to understand that the reason this happened is due to the lack of communication from the DOE explaining how distance learning works. <strong>Action:</strong> DOE is using Acellus to punish and force families into hybrid/face to face. <strong>Action:</strong> DOE needs to remember they hired teachers who know how to develop lesson plans.</td>
<td><strong>Action:</strong> DOE needs to be transparent, internally and externally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Common Sense:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. 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.</td>
<td><strong>Action:</strong> DOE take responsibility for fumbling the ball and understand the spread of the virus lately is the reason for this. <strong>Action:</strong> DOE has to continue with distance learning - TEACHERS IN CLASSROOMS AND STUDENTS AT HOME UNTIL DATA SHOWS IT IS SAFE.</td>
</tr>
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**b.** 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.  

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<tr>
<th><strong>Action:</strong></th>
<th>DOE again needs to read the Resolution lines defining distance learning,</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Action:</strong></td>
<td>DOE needs to stop using the term virtual, it only confuses the truth. Parent are currently properly supporting their children with how instruction, that is being delivered by the Resolution defined distance learning, is occurring now.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Action:</strong></td>
<td>If the DOE expected parents to take on the full duties of a teacher, that is called HOMESCHOOLING. Acknowledge your mistake!</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**2. Grab-and-go Meals Concerns**

| **i.** | Will they have to come in cars with parents? What about parents who are working? These procedures need to be improved from the summer feeding program. |
| **Action:** | DOE needs to acknowledge that all components of the BACK TO SCHOOL PLAN were not considered. |
| **Action:** | DOE needs to publicly apologize for the distress it caused families on the first day of school having to drive to different schools to pick up lunches for several children. |

**E. Student Transportation Concerns**

| **e.** | We have been told by state officials that our bell schedules needed to fit what the bus company could provide. With the limited space and adults to supervise socially distanced children, we are no longer able to have students dropped off 30-45 minutes before school begins. There has been no confirmation from the bus companies about conforming to individual schools’ bell schedules. If they cannot conform to the schools’ schedules, this will create a safety and health issue for supervision and social distancing. |
| **Action:** | DOE needs to acknowledge that all components of the BACK TO SCHOOL PLAN were not considered. |
| **Action:** | DOE needs to publicly apologize for the distress it caused families on the first day of school having to figure out transportation to and from schools |

| **i.** | For the week of August 17-20, it is uncertain if the bus will accommodate schools’ individualized schedules, such as bringing the kids on campus for only two hours to space out and limiting the number of students on campus at one time based on the rationale for switching over to a distance learning model. |
| **Action:** | DOE needs to acknowledge that all components of the BACK TO SCHOOL PLAN were not considered. |
| **Action:** | DOE needs to publicly apologize for the distress it caused families on the first day of school having to figure out transportation to and from schools. |
2. **Other Student Transportation Concerns**

As there are not enough buses to accommodate ridership with social distancing guidelines, will buses be reallocated to provide equitable access to those with greater distances between home and school (e.g., increasing the miles from school calculation based on expected ridership)?

**Action:** DOE needs to acknowledge that all components of the BACK TO SCHOOL PLAN were not considered.

**Action:** DOE needs to publicly apologize for the distress it caused families on the first day of school having to figure out transportation to and from schools.

---

**F. Discrepancies between Multiple Documents**

**COMMON SENSE:**

1. **Clarification on discrepancies between multiple DOE documents (Principals Handbook, Reopening Plan, MOU with HSTA, etc.)**

**Action:** DOE needs to fix all of this.

**Action:** DOE acknowledges their inability to provide policies and procedures that are clearly outlined and communicated prior to reopening.

**Action:** DOE publicly apologize to stakeholders for creating panic and confusion to all.

a. The Principal’s Handbook V.2 section on “Contingency Planning - Cases of COVID-19” on page 25 states "When a student or employee either tests positive for COVID-19 or has been identified as a close contact or household member to someone who has tested positive, please refer to the Health and Safety Handbook for further guidance on next steps and cleaning protocols." When clicking on the link, administrators must enter their intranet passwords and then are asked a question in big letters saying, “Let us know why you need access to this information”. It is clear in the Board of Education (“BOE”) resolutions regarding the reopening of schools that these policies and procedures must be clearly outlined and communicated prior to reopening.

**Action:** DOE acknowledges their inability to provide policies and procedures that are clearly outlined and communicated prior to reopening.

**Action:** DOE publicly apologize to stakeholders for creating panic and confusion to all.

c. Every school had to create their own parent and faculty handbook without any vetting process.

**Action:** DOE acknowledges their inability to provide policies and procedures that are clearly outlined and communicated prior to reopening.

**Action:** DOE publicly apologize to stakeholders for creating panic and confusion to all.
### COVID-19 Policy and Procedures Manuals

In addition to the Principals’ Handbook (which was put on the public-facing website as a draft before principals had an opportunity to review and make comments), there are several other manuals from different offices that do not appear to have been coordinated. There is overlapping information. It was suggested that these should have been consolidated into a single publication for easier reference at the schools. It was said that it did not appear there was any coordinated effort among the offices to communicate to the field in a unified voice.

**Action:** DOE acknowledges their inability to provide policies and procedures that are clearly outlined and communicated prior to reopening.

**Action:** DOE publicly apologize to stakeholders for creating panic and confusion to all.

Statement: The original plan posted for school reopening the first day it was announced was a SINGLE document. Instead the DOE removed it from the website the next day and replaced it with several chapters split up.

### Communication Concerns

<table>
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<tr>
<th>COMMON SENSE:</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>7.</strong> Uneasiness of bringing issues to light for fear of retaliation.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Action:</strong> DOE needs to halt and desist retaliatory actions whether overt or covert.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>d.</strong> Communication has not been consistent. We often hear of new directions, guidance, and procedures from HSTA or the news media first.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Action:</strong> DOE needs to communicate internally prior to the press or HSTA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>h.</strong> The pieces simply do not fit together as we will try to show in the following examples.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Action:</strong> DOE needs to acknowledge that the plan was hastily put together due to the need to meet required deadlines to the BOE and public.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>10.</strong> The timeliness of information that we have received from leadership has made it very difficult to make the best informed decisions, being inclusive with our school and community, on how to plan for the safe and effective opening of the school year.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Action:</strong> DOE needs to collaborate with constituents. MANDATORY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>11.</strong> Poor and haphazard communication: Rather than information coming out via DOE Memos, information is coming piecemeal through the media, press release/press conferences, emails, draft handbooks, and CAS. The DOE COVID-19 page hasn’t been updated in a while.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Action:</strong> DOE needs to acknowledge that their communication system is BROKEN and faulty. <strong>Action:</strong> DOE needs to update the DOE COVID19 page and annotate by dating the changes and using the color red to indicate the change.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
14. The requirement that principals document compliance with viewing all the training videos by all the different staff role groups is viewed as extremely arduous and requiring a great deal of time away from supporting the commencement of learning for students. Several used the word “punishment” linked to their request for more training time.

**Action:** DOE needs to trust their principals and teachers and not treat them as though they are incapable of following directions.

**Statement:** Principals do not need to be an inspector of their staff.

16. Inconsistency of timing. This includes the inadequacy of time allotted for proper execution once decisions have been made and the short timeframe for decisions like going full distance for only the first four weeks rather than the first semester or whole year, which would give both staff and families more time to plan and figure things out.

**Action:** DOE needs to stop and rethink what has been done.

19. An announcement will be made on September 8 if distance learning will continue for the remaining three weeks of the first quarter before the October break. That gives schools four days’ notice to transition back to their original school model after September 11. Superintendent Kishimoto reported on the news that she is encouraging (school) “leaders” to come up with their plans for the rest of the quarter, but principals have not heard any information that is up to an individual school to decide on implementing the distance learning approach for the entire quarter.

**Action:** DOE needs to let individual schools know that implementation of distance learning needs to be the same across the islands.

**Action:** DOE needs to clearly communicate consistency to the Complex Assistant Superintendents.

**Action:** DOE needs to acknowledge that they do not have a handle on how each school is addressing reopening and that the reopening is inconsistent.

**Action:** DOE needs to honestly report whether technology needs are being met.

20. Principals are experiencing an increase in parents requesting home schooling. This will adversely impact their school budget. For example, a loss of 50 general education students would equate to a funding loss of $250,000.

**Action:** DOE needs to acknowledge that their unclear plan for distance learning and not defining it according to the Resolution caused families to jump ship.

**Action:** DOE needs to acknowledge their role in the loss of funding due to this miscommunication.
Aloha,

Thank you for reading my testimony. I am writing in regards to agenda item V.A. Update on implementation of Board Resolution adopted on June 18, 2020, directing the Department of Education to prepare for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, focusing on concerns regarding: health and safety, distance learning, personnel, food service, student transportation, reconciling multiple guidance documents and collective bargaining agreements, and communication.

I am going to be blunt and honest. I will also be brief as I know this submittal is late. I barely have time to use the restroom these days, let alone type an email. I am teaching eight 3rd Grade vulnerable students in school every day, while trying to also teach 6 online students who are at home. Schedules keep changing here and it feels incredibly chaotic. It is very hard to keep third graders 6 feet away from each other no matter how much we practice. I stress about it all day, but then when I see them at recess they are not 6 ft apart. At least, students are in pods out there.

I am not blaming administration, I am not blaming faculty, and I am trying my best not to blame myself. There just wasn't enough time to set the school up safely, and now we are scrambling. Please give us more time. That is all I ask. I was witness to how much these kids need and want to be back here. It has been a joy to see their smiles, but can't we make our plans reliable and communicated clearly to all? I think we could if given more time. The most common phrase around my school when asked a question is, "I don't know." That can't be safe for our keiki and community.

Thank you,
Zori Kornienko
Aloha,

My name is Maile Young. I am a school counselor at an elementary school on Hawaii Island. I have been employed with the hidoe for 17 years. I am a highly qualified teacher and have been rated highly effective for the past 5 years. I am a BU5 member of HSTA.

I have a 2 and a half year old son. There are little to no licensed day care providers that are available to watch my son. He got into a preschool on August 3. But when he started, my husband and I noticed that the teachers were not wearing masks, the students were not wearing masks, the parents were not required to wear masks, and up to 40 kids were mixing with each other daily in the afternoons. If k-12 schools are distance learning due to safety reasons, then that is more of a reason to not send my child to preschool. Why should young children be put into a situation where they are at risk of exposure.

When community spread started on August 12...partially evidenced by a private school student who attended their first day of school with a positive covid 19 diagnosis...we decided to pull our son from preschool and take care of him at home. Community spread was confirmed by the Hawaii county Civil defense in Monday August 17.

My husband is a nurse at a nursing home. They are extremely short staffed. He had to request that his hours be cut so that I would only have to ask for one day off of work a week.

I met with my school principal yesterday to ask if I could telework. She said according to HIDOE I could not telework for reasons of lack of childcare. I had to go the EFMLEA route. This still means I have to use my sick leave and I cannot work.

I want to work. I can do many if not all of my duties from home. That is what I successfully did while watching my son when school was closed in the 4th quarter of last year.

Part of my job is to support children with disabilities via coordinating their 504 plans. All of that work could be done at home. Now I have one less day a week that I could be supporting students. Not only those with disabilities, but those I could be zooming with or providing virtual social emotional support services to.

The hidoe is also finacially penalizing me for trying to keep my young child safe and trying to prevent community spread of covid19.
In addition, because I am not permitted to telework, our students and staff have one less day per week of access to their school counselor in a time where students and staff need social emotional support.

HIDOE employees who do not have adequate child care or choose to keep their child home due to safety concerns, who can do their job duties from home should be given the opportunity to telework. If evidence shows that they are not fulfilling their duties successfully from home, then other options should be explored. The Department of Education should be encouraging families to stay safe and together, while allowing parents to work so they can support their families.

Mahalo for reading my testimony.
Emily Plicka
Faculty at BYU Hawaii
Parent of elementary student, Castle-Kahuku Complex

I am writing in testimony raising concern and advocating for Hawaii State BOE to drop public schools statewide use of the online learning platform “Acellus” created by Roger Billings and his self-created, unaccredited university “The International Academy of Science”.

Some brief points of why this program is not good for our keiki:

1) It’s origins are of ill repute. The parent organization of Acellus is an unaccredited “university” created by Roger Billings. Billings has lied about his own education. He does NOT hold a degree from MIT, he has an undergraduate degree from BYU (Provo) and a self-awarded “doctorate of research” degree from his self-created unaccredited organization.

2) it is not tied to any solid pedagogy or educational theory of repute. It’s teachers mainly do not have degrees in education-related fields, and many of its teachers have also been awarded “degrees” from Roger Billings’ self-created unaccredited organization “The International Academy of Science”

3) It’s lessons contain outdated sexist, racist, and religious ideology.

4) Finally, a personal note, and the reason that this program is not safe for our keiki, but a story that is hard to tell. I have a friend who lives in our community who has shared with me about childhood. During went to live with who is a follower of Roger Billings in his religion called “The Church of Jesus Christ in Zion”. During these visits was sexually abused by Roger Billings. has shared this with me in snips and pieces through the years. So imagine my shock and sadness when upon receiving the email from our local school that notified us of plans to use Acellus, and following the link to the Acellus homepage to find a photograph of the very same man who sexually abused in childhood, the man who created the program that would be using through the public school. When notified me that this was childhood sexual abuser, I was not only alarmed, but memories of stories came flooding back to me and I worried for our keiki. has been unable to press charges against him in adult years. is afraid to come out publicly because he has made threats and harassment and it is truly frightening. So what are we to do? We went to work, a circle of friends and community members who know the good reputation of this, and researched everything we could find on Roger Billings, his past, his (phony) credentials, the curriculum of the program, etc and what we found was a lot of information and other educators with similar concerns and nothing concrete to truly refute them.

I am pleading with you to take this seriously and look at the evidence. I have attached a document with research and bibliography to aid you in our findings.
Sincerely,
Emily Plicka
Hauula, HI
808-366-6425
Which image in your opinion best depicts Harriet Tubman's escape from slavery to freedom in Philadelphia? A or B

A

B

Apparently the answer would be A. according to Acellus' 3rd grade lesson.
Here are some screen shots and short clips from grade 8 American History. This is from step 57.

There was more issues with step 69. That the teacher stated that slaves were only beaten if they were bad, taking to many breaks, and were late to work.

My daughter just came to me know and said that step 73 British and French Clash. Stated that the French Indian war was because the Native Americans were terrorizing the British. Do not let your school use them for history.
Ronald Reagan caused his country _______________.

A. to turn bitter after hard times
B. to do nothing for the country
C. to get excited about things even in hard times

Haven’t learned this yet.
William Bradford was the leader of the ________.
So far, everyone #COVID19 killed was going to die anyway. When we go back to work, some of us may perish sooner than normal but at least those that live will be alive. We no longer can cower in fear and shame.

#BackToWork #MAGA
#AcellusScienceLive

The world is about to see what it is that makes America great.
Acellus Academy should not be endorsed or utilized within Hawai‘i Schools

As members of the Hawai‘i educational community, we have been greatly concerned as we have seen Acellus Academy widely advertised as an instructional tool for our keiki. We want to ensure that leadership within schools and the district are aware of the harm that the creator of Acellus Academy, Roger Billings, has caused. There are several reasons why this program should not be used for students in Hawai‘i (or anywhere). Below is a summary of claims and sources listed within a bibliography.

1. Acellus Academy was created at the International Academy of Science located in Missouri, USA. This is an unaccredited institution that has no legitimacy in academic spaces, in teacher education spaces, or really anywhere but inside it's own space. The founder and president of the university awarded himself the first PhD that the school gave out. The “teachers” that created the curriculum and designed Acellus Academy are all students and alumni of IAS.

2. The creator of Acellus Academy, Roger Billings, has a history of suspect and failed business deals, secrecy, lying, and exaggerating about the products he creates. He lost a lawsuit where he claimed a major software company stole a patent from him. He has been documented stating that he was mentored by prominent folks in the engineering and computer science fields and then those same folks have denied even knowing who he is when questioned. There is also evidence to suggest that he actively curates his online persona by deleting and monitoring any content on his wikipedia page, and other sites, so that no criticisms of him, or any of his organizations are readily found online. This calls into question the legitimacy of any of the claims made by Acellus Academy on their website or other self-published informational sources.

3. The creator of Acellus Academy, Roger Billings, is the religious leader of a polygamist cult called The Church of Jesus Christ in Zion. He believes himself to be the prophet and patriarch of the church. While he denies engaging in polygamous marriages himself, that seems to be a mere technicality since he and his followers have been cited explaining their belief in “spiritual wives” and “spiritual marriages”. There are accusations online that he has had several of these “spiritual wives” and fathered dozens of children. He has personally harmed members of our own community.

4. Some of the video content given in Acellus Academy is not of quality. For example, the Director of Social Emotional Learning for Acellus Academy refers to herself as Fire Angel and advertises a PhD from Roger Billings’ illegitimate university, the International Academy of Science. Her website fireangel.com claims she is an electrical engineer, yet she has no credentials or listed training.

Proposed Actions

Programs such as the Acellus academy are needed right now as we try to navigate public school education during a pandemic. We know that schools have been provided with different options for how to accommodate the students that choose the 100% distance learning option. We believe there are two ways to ensure our keiki have both a safe and educational experience:

1. Schools should not choose Acellus as their distance learning plan, and should stop using it if it has already been implemented.

2. This information must be made available at the complex area and state level to those that are making decisions regarding curriculum choices.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Summary</th>
<th>Source</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Dr. Hydrogen&quot;</td>
<td>Profile of his problematic career, from highschool science prodigy to failed business man to founding a religious offshoot of the LDS church that espouses polygamy and an unconventional and unaccredited university where they designed homeschool curriculum</td>
<td>The Pitch Kansas Cty Based Publication</td>
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<tr>
<td>WGNA Roger Billings’ own self-generated accreditation body</td>
<td>Acellus has started their own accreditation body this year, 2020. Conflict of interest. It claims to require WASC first before qualifying for its own “WGNA”. But, by doing this, it masquerades as if all schools that meet its requirements are assumed to have been WASC accredited. However, because it was created by Roger Billings, the creator of Acellus, they may give honorary accreditation to their own Acellus program without requiring proof of WASC from their own program? Possibly. Just as they created their own unaccredited university “The International Academy of Science” and then awarded the first PhD to himself, Roger Billings, and his family and friends who are part of his Acellus group.</td>
<td>WGNA website</td>
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<tr>
<td>Registration of Domain for WGNA accreditation</td>
<td>Registration of the domain which links back to Roger Billings GoldKey group and Acellus, registered July 1, 2020, conflict of interest with accrediting his own Acellus program with his own accreditation body to make it appear as though accredited through WASC by default. The Acellus web site is vague on pedagogical and assessment metrics. The K-12 curriculum is reportedly accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. But there is some concern among parents as the WASC entry says the Acellus K-12 school is accredited but that the online K-12 Acellus is affiliated with the accredited K-12 school. But I can’t see any evidence that a physical Acellus K-12 exists.</td>
<td>HosterStats.com domain registration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Letter to Upper Arlington, OH schools and Board of Education</strong></td>
<td>Questions the legitimacy of Acellus and its non-secular, religious bent. Written by parents and faculty to Upper Arlington schools and BOE, letter outlines and makes a strong case against using Acellus, exposing the shady nature of its roots, its racism, its non-researched curriculum, its lack of legitimacy, and its non-affiliation with any reputable educational foundation.</td>
<td>Detailed Letter with concise links to primary sources.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Screenshots of questionable Acellus curriculum material and associated media</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Publicity follows Billings' brother</strong></td>
<td>Gives background on his belief in polygamy and his history of patent disputes where it was proved he tried to claim credit for other’s ideas.</td>
<td>Deseret News Utah Based Publication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientist sues Novell, believes in polygamy</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Cloud of controversy follows 'Dr. Hydrogen'</strong></td>
<td>Another profile of his problematic career and life in light of him trying to buy a large portion of land in MO for a hydrogen fuel plant</td>
<td>Lawrence Journal World Kansas Based Publication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Businessman regarded as expert, yet derided as kook</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Church of Jesus Christ in Zion</strong></td>
<td>Description of the church he is the founder of, including belief in polygamy and it’s association with Acellus. Also shows its affiliation with scientology.</td>
<td>Academic Kids Encyclopedia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Talk:Roger E. Billings</strong></td>
<td>Page on wikipedia with many comments explaining how his wikipedia page has been routinely whitewashed to erase anything “controversial” and removed of any links from him to the church he founded etc.</td>
<td>Wikipedia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>List of denominations in the Latter Day Saint movement</strong></td>
<td>List of churches that are derivatives of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (also known as LDS or Mormon church). Roger Billings is listed as the founder of the Church of Jesus Christ in Zion which is under the list of derivatives that broke with the main church due to their belief in continuing to practice polygamy</td>
<td>Wikiwand</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Church of Jesus Christ in Zion</strong></td>
<td>Informational page about the Church of Jesus Christ in Zion for which Roger Billings is listed as the founder.</td>
<td>Latter Day Saint Movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Novell wins 12-year-long patent infringement charge</strong></td>
<td>Summary of his case against the tech company Novell which was dropped eventually because he had no evidence</td>
<td>Religion News Blog</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Church of Jesus Christ in Zion Website</strong></td>
<td>This seems to be the official church website. The videos seem to have been taken down.</td>
<td>Website of the Church Roger Billings is the founder of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Polygamy Practicing Religions</strong></td>
<td>Entry under a list of polygamy practicing religions in the encyclopedia. Mentions Roger Billings as the founder and describes the practice of “spiritual wives” rather than multiple actual marriages.</td>
<td>Melton’s Encyclopedia of American Religions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>“Has anyone Heard of the International Academy of Science?”</strong></td>
<td>A reddit thread where a potential student asks some good questions about the university and details the deal they gave him to come to the school. Also a former employee gives some details about working for their “online curriculum program” and described it as a cult-like atmosphere.</td>
<td>Reddit Kansas City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fire Angel</strong></td>
<td>The website for the director of social emotional well being for Acellus Academy. Go to her biography and you will see she got a Doctorate of Research from IAS. Additional video of Fire Angel circulating on Facebook message boards included in email attachments.</td>
<td>Fire Angel’s own website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Driving to International Academy of Science</strong></td>
<td>Video of the drive to IAS</td>
<td>Youtube</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction to International Academy of Science</strong></td>
<td>Video of potential new student tour with Jay Potter</td>
<td>Youtube</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rog Billings Cult</strong></td>
<td>Aaron Billings account of Roger Billings cult</td>
<td>Archived blog entry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Works Cited


Billings, Aaron. “Rog Billings Cult.” Breath for Oxygen,

“Church of Jesus Christ in Zion.” Church of Jesus Christ in Zion - Academic Kids,

“Church of Jesus Christ in Zion.” Latter Day Saint Movement / Church of Jesus Christ in Zion,
ldsmovement.pbworks.com/w/page/15644262/Church of Jesus Christ in Zion.

“Cloud of Controversy Follows 'Dr. Hydrogen'.” LJWorld.com,

FireAngel, fireangel.com/.


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Pham, DuongAnh. “Going to the Underground.” Youtube, 12 Nov 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p-q07yE5aXc&t=3s.

----. “Introduction to International Academy of Science.” Youtube.com, 12 Nov 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GNShz0LnvUU.


Screenshots of Acellus curriculum and associated media scrubbed from internet.

Spring/Summer 2020.

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1FeXDZyc1yMmq-Y9kkWIZChbX-e3xcWI


https://www.wgna.org/
Has anyone watched the 2nd grade LA formal/informal speaking video? So racist!! I had to pick my jaw off the floor.

What did it say?

There's the white teacher and a black teacher (who I've never seen) role-playing formal/informal ways of talking. First the white teacher is using formal language, and the black teacher informal which sounded like very stereotyped language from a colored person (I honestly don't know how to describe it), then they swap and the white teacher sounds like she just got off the set of Heelless... 😞
This was brought up by someone in the group earlier regarding a specific lesson about slavery. I have to agree the choice of words and tone lack serious empathy, and much of the information is an inaccurate depiction of slavery. Or maybe it was accurate from a White man’s perspective at the time, but definitely not of a Black person's. In opposition of this lesson material this lesson really should have emphasized to its children viewers that “nothing” including “economic need” justifies slavery. (The Apollo powerpoint literally said slavery was “important to economics” yay! And I don’t appreciate the slide that minimized the horrendous experience of slaves... “they were introduced to Christianity and really found solace in faith and that life would be better on the other side. And that they also learned many new skills. And in some limited cases slaves could buy their freedom or were given than freedom depending upon the property owner.” (Video is from Middle School American History, Slavery in Colonial America, Step 57).

I cringed during these lessons for my 9th grade. They were given by a PPC, and I just couldn't see how she could be so nonchalant.

what do you do? Do you correct or reach out for another lesson to counter? This is unsettling.
Dr. Pajet Monet

AcceBus Course Instructor

Dr. Pajet Monet has earned her Doctor of Research Degree from the Institute of Science and Technology. She has over a decade of experience teaching at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. In addition, Dr. Monet has authored extensive research related to health and well-being.

Dr. Eileen Dayton

AcceBus Course Instructor

Dr. Eileen Dayton received her Bachelor of Arts Degree in Elementary Education from the University of Minnesota and her Doctor of Research Degree from the Institute of Science and Technology. She has over a decade of experience teaching at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. In addition, Dr. Dayton is an accomplished musician.

Dr. Jody Sauer

AcceBus Course Instructor

Dr. Jody Sauer earned her Associate of Science Degree in Early Childhood Education at the University of Minnesota. She has over a decade of experience teaching in early childhood settings, including preschool, kindergarten, and special education classrooms. In addition, Dr. Sauer has been recognized by the International Academy of Science for her contributions to the AcceBus Courses, including developing preschool, kindergarten, and special education curricula.