

November 16, 2020

Hawaii Board of Education

RE: Testimony REQUESTING INCREASED COMMUNICATION AND TRANSPARENCY

Dear Board,

As a parent of 7th grade and 11th grade public school students on Oahu, I am writing to support and encourage the Board to allow students to return to in-person face-to-face learning on Hawaii public school campuses as soon as reasonably possible.

The lack of urgency, communication and transparency in decision-making is concerning. As stakeholders in our children's futures, we have heard very little about what planning is taking place, if funds are being requested and allocated to support a return to school, and how complex and local decisions are being made despite new guidance from the Department of Health. Distance learning is an ambitious idea but is severely lacking for many students. Most teachers are not adequately trained or qualified to deliver content remotely, particularly at the middle and high school levels where students are frustrated and burning out trying to teach themselves advanced concepts. Watching videos and doing worksheets for 6+ hours a day should not be considered a fair and equitable education.

At the very minimum, please encourage complexes to provide a weekly update with tangible metrics and requirements that are needed to return to in-person learning so that parents can make better informed decisions about what educational options are best for their families.

Kind regards,

**Concerned Parent of 7th and 11th
grade students in the Kailua-Kalaheo Complex**



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

Testimony

1 message

amayapapaya <amayapapayaeckel@gmail.com>
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Nov 16, 2020 at 4:16 PM

Maj. Jeremy Eckel and Mrs. Amaya Eckel would like to submit testimony.

This is in regards to the full Board Meeting scheduled on Thursday, 19 NOVEMBER 2020.

Agenda: Reopening of Windward schools (Kalaheo High School and Aikahi Elementary Schools, specifically).

We are in support, and strongly encourage reopening of the Windward schools where our children attend (Kalaheo Highschool and Aikahi Elementary) for face to face instruction. We are opposed to keeping schools closed, and opposed to the continuation of distance learning as a long term solution for adequate education.

We believe that it is possible to create a safe environment for face-to-face learning, and also believe that LONG TERM DISTANCE LEARNING would be a DETRIMENT to my children's academic success.

Thank You for your attention to this matter.

Major Jeremy Eckel and Mrs. Amaya Eckel
DOE parents of students at 2 DOE schools.

Please acknowledge receipt of this email.



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

Testimony

1 message

Shiyana Thenabadu <shiyanat@gmail.com>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Nov 16, 2020 at 7:22 PM

Name: Shiyana Thenabadu
Position/Title: Parent of a public school student
Agenda Item: Reopening face to face instruction in January- Support

Dear BOE Members,

I'm writing to urge you to reopen in-person instruction for all our public school students in January. This can be done safely with the hybrid model coupled with strictly enforced mask wearing and limited classroom capacity to abide by physical distancing guidelines. Keep the students in small cohorts to manage outbreaks. Those who don't want to return to in-person classes can continue with the home school curriculum.

Our students need to be with their peers and they need to be able to get immediate help from teachers when they need it. Distance learning is fine as a stop-gap measure but social interaction, teamwork, robust classroom discussions and hands-on learning is best done in a face-to-face setting.

I understand that priority for in-person instruction was given to elementary and middle school students. That's fine but now it's time to bring our high school students back as well. We all know that peer relationships and friendships are very important for healthy teen development. We cannot and should not keep our high schoolers isolated any longer.

Please reopen classrooms and plan to bring back all students to school in January. The only exception to this should be if we are in lockdown. Other than that, all schools should be ready for in-person (hybrid model) instruction in the Spring semester.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Shiyana Thenabadu

Sent from my iPhone



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

Testimony Nov 19

1 message

Cindy Darnell <cindydarnell@gmail.com>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Nov 16, 2020 at 9:23 PM

Cindy Darnell
Parent of students at Kalaheo High School and Kailua Intermediate School
General Business Meeting
Public Testimony
Subject: Reopening Schools

I am strongly in favor of reopening schools. While student and teachers are doing their best in the online learning environment, it has its shortfalls and is not the optimal learning environment. After almost 3 quarters of online learning, the children deserve to receive in person education. I urge all schools to allow students to return to a blended learning model in January. Our children's education is suffering and I believe many students are suffering. Children are being adversely impacted mentally and socially by not being at school and are not getting the best education that they deserve. Schools can be reopened safely if we all work together. We can learn from private schools, schools on the mainland to allow student on campus while maintaining safety for students, teachers and staff.
Thank you.



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

November 19 BOE testimony Agenda item #2 and #4

1 message

Cheryl B <burgharc@gmail.com>

Tue, Nov 17, 2020 at 9:25 AM

To: Testimony BOE <Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha Chair and members,

This may seem like a simple challenge but I believe it is the hardest of all; but until we actually meet it, we can not proceed. Yesterday, I read a message from Jose Vilson, of Educator in regards to the selection for the next Secretary of Education: "We need a person who — no matter what their background — can be responsive to the needs and concerns of the folks who need public schools as their option. We need a champion for what schools do well, but a critic and builder for what our schools have fallen far short of its' aspirations. We need a person who will listen to those needs without defensiveness and will push back when it stands against a principle we wish to build. Ultimately, we need a person who can embody the complicated renditions of what our public schools are now and what we wish for them to do."

I offer this as a challenge and direction for this BOE and our community as we look at the current distant learning situation, choices made by upper DOE administration for resources and spending and the general welfare of our communities.

My question to all of you: *If we see one child, at one school, in one community and we can see that they are not receiving the resources, environment and safety that they need... that one child tells us that we are failing all children, all schools and all communities. There are as Jose Vilson says, students who need public schools and it is way past time that we meet their needs.*

NO MORE resources from off island, not only grow but keep our own educators, eliminate the fluff at the top and begin to look from the child up for making decisions about what is best. We have some principals and educators who are doing just that, let's support them. We have schools that need to put their coaches and extras back in the classroom. Truly fix our buildings and make them safe for all. Lastly, communication in its current form is horrible from the DOE to the community as well as to the employees. Top down, "we sent an email "is just not the way to go to get strong understanding of all that is happening. Correct information should be sent out regarding Acellus from ALL schools, not just those with pono administration.

Our house truly appreciates the steps that the BOE is taking, especially towards resources, like Acellus; but we are far, far away from truly creating an equitable place of learning for all. The community is here and willing to help. We are unique Hawai'i, islands in the Pacific. #togetherwerise

C.Burghardt
retired educator



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

Testimony, Steve Switzer (parent), Reopening Schools/ School performance results, Support Reopening Schools

1 message

Stephen Switzer <switz46@hotmail.com>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Nov 17, 2020 at 9:11 PM

To the Hawaii State Board of Education,

I'm writing this to express my opinion about starting in-person learning or blended learning where students can attend school on campus. I also wanted to share observations of my children after completing nearly three full quarters of distance learning that started in March of 2020. I have two children attending schools in the Kailua-Kalaheo Complex. My son is a high school senior at Kalaheo High School, and my daughter is a fifth grader at Kaelepulu Elementary School.

To begin, I sincerely want to thank the administrators, teachers, and counselors that have worked tirelessly to educate both of our students. Many of their teachers have expressed their desire to return to their schools and classrooms, and they've all been empathetic, flexible, and compassionate during these difficult times. Both of our children are managing the distance learning the best they can, but they are both eager to return to the classroom. Socially and mentally they are fatigued and exhausted, and have expressed frustration that their ability to learn via distance learning is much more challenging. Their emotional strain and anxiety can't be quantified. They're both willing to follow safety protocols in order to make in-person school possible.

According to the Hawaii Metrics for School Reopening, the Kailua-Kalaheo Complex Area should be transitioning to In Person learning for Elementary school students, and Blended learning for Secondary students, but we are faced with another quarter of distance learning. In my opinion, Hawaii's case numbers and mortality rates do not support keeping kids at home any longer. What can't be measured is the toll it's taking on mental and physical health, education, and social development that could have damaging consequences for many children that are being forced to do another quarter of distance learning. A more thorough examination of mental care facilities and the increased need for counseling for our youth, is an indication that we're trending in a dangerous direction for our children. The mental effects of continued distanced learning can't be quantified yet, but I've seen first-hand what effects it has had on my own children.

I believe in keeping everyone as safe as we possibly can. I firmly believe that safety means protecting ourselves not just from the virus itself, but from the unintended consequences of the extended shutdown. The Hawaii State Teacher's Association is questioning the metrics of the DOE, and doesn't want to put public school teachers and educators in jeopardy. Every day that's lost in debate is a day where children are being kept out of school. Why have students at private schools returned to school while our public schools remained closed? Why are children in our public schools not allowed to return to campus when the state's metrics say we can do so? We've learned that the mortality rate for children is very low. The most recent statistics I read was .00028%. For the teachers that don't want to return to the classroom, find ways to let them teach via distance learning, take a leave of absence, or exercise safety measures with proper personal protection equipment (PPE) so they can perform their jobs safely. For those parents who don't feel comfortable returning their children to campus, accommodate their needs by offering full time distance learning.

For our family, I hope that you will consider that we would like to have the choice to send our children back to school so they can socialize with their teachers and peers. They need a sense of normalcy during this crisis in order achieve a proper education and social development. We want the choice for our kids to return to campus, even if it is in a blended curriculum. For us the benefits far outweigh the current risks. With the state reopening in varying tiers, our children feel like their pleas to return to school are being dismissed and that they are forgotten and ignored by the state of Hawaii. We

have to act now! Our students are getting left behind and the status quo is not a strategy! Thank you for your time and for taking our opinion into consideration. Please call any time if you would like to speak to me personally.

SINCERELY,

STEPHEN SWITZER

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

November 18, 2020

State of Hawai'i Board of Education: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Testimony re: **19-Nov-2020 GBM Agenda Item VII.H -- Superintendent's Priorities**

Aloha Board of Education Members,

How many times have you heard this?

Research demonstrates that strong relationships between schools, families, and community members can positively affect student achievement and outcomes.¹

Or this?

It takes a village to raise a child.

Considering the importance authentic family & community engagement in building a world class education system, it is curious why this is never a priority for the Superintendent. The DOE is in dire need of training for all employees concerning what authentic family & community engagement is, what it looks like, and what it doesn't look like. All stakeholders need the DOE to do better. We need systems of accountability that measure authentic family and community engagement and ensure that Complex Areas and local schools are meeting reasonable professional standards for collaboration, cooperation, openness, transparency, and access to local schools for parents, and parent assistants, and community volunteers.

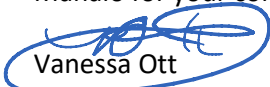
Let's be clear, Public/Private Partnerships are **not** authentic community engagement. Once an organization or a company becomes involved the relationship is not about involving parents and community members. The people involved are often active only as long as they're paid to do it. That fact applies equally to DOE employees as well as the company or organization with which the DOE makes some type of arrangement.

Authentic Parent & Community Engagement happens at the community and school level. Parents and community *volunteers* are involved because they have a stake in the outcomes that goes beyond money. When you see authentic engagement, you see parents and community members encouraged to be involved in our keiki's daily education. These individuals are welcome to visit the school (after passing background checks). Parents who can't speak English are allowed to have their own community assistant help them communicate. Community members' skills and assets are put to good use. Teachers and home educators collaborate and communicate. I'm not seeing this. Quite the opposite. It's rather hostile, in fact.

What I *have* seen is an expensive PCNC program that's a bumbling joke, most likely because there is no system of accountability for any defined outcomes. There is no system of intelligently measuring the success of authentic Parent & Community Engagement at each school or at the State level. For example, the School Community Council system hasn't been updated in over a decade, and all the complaints about how they *aren't* working never seem to see the light of day.

SOMEDAY, I hope that AUTHENTIC FAMILY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT becomes a DOE priority.

Mahalo for your consideration,


Vanessa Ott

¹ *Top Benefits of Family and Community Engagement* - November 8, 2018. Hanover Research www.hanoverresearch.com/insights-blog/top-benefits-of-family-and-community-engagement/



November 19, 2020
General Business Meeting

Dear Chair Payne and Members of the Board of Education,

VI. B. Presentation on school performance results for the 2019-2020 School Year

We would like to **comment** on this discussion item. While we appreciate the DOE for maintaining the practice of reporting results for the 2019-2020 year, as the materials show, a lot of data is missing because there was no administering of state assessments due to COVID-19.

Particularly because we do not have data from the last school year, we recommend that the **BOE focus on the data that we currently have to gauge how the school system is doing**. At the October 15, 2020 General Business Meeting, the BOE established metrics to monitor and evaluate the Department of Education's comprehensive plan for reopening schools for the 2020-2021 School Year. We strongly support the approved metrics:

- Elementary, middle and high school quarter grades from a gap view
- High-risk attendance gap
- Elementary and middle universal screeners and high school on track from a gap view

VII. H. Board Action on Superintendent's evaluation for the 2020-2021 School Year

We are **not in support** of the Superintendent's proposed priorities for the 2020-2021 year. Accelerating digital transformation, promoting innovative strategies to improve literacy, and modernizing systems for seamless operations are three initiatives that have merit, but they do not adequately measure the conditions of the whole education system, for which the Superintendent is responsible.

We refer back to our testimony on July 23, 2020, in which we recommended support for the BOE proposed metrics which use the 14 indicators of the 2017-2020 Strategic Plan as a starting point. These metrics are data driven, objective and have a historical basis. The BOE also recommended using the 2030 Promise Plan 2023-2024 targets as a goal, and that annual targets could be calculated by taking the difference between the 2023-2024 targets and the 2018-2019 base and dividing by 3 to establish the target for each interim year (see table attached). For the 2020-2021 year, the Superintendent would follow the targets in the 2020-2021 column of the table. **We think that it is reasonable to have an "effective" rating require at least 50% of the indicators to be on target.**

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Cheri Nakamura
HE'E Coalition Director

	Student Indicators of Success	2015-2016 (Base)	2018-2019	Difference (2016-2019)	Difference (2019 base vs 2023- 2024 Target)	2020- 2021 Target	2021- 2022 Target	2022- 2023 Target	2023- 2024 Target
1	Chronic Absenteeism	15%	15%	No change	6%	2%	2%	2%	9%
2	School Climate (% Positive)	TBA	74%	Need more data	4%	1%	1%	1%	78%
3	Inclusion Rate	37%	44%	7%	9%	3%	3%	3%	53%
4	3rd Grade Literacy	70%	74%	4%	11%	4%	4%	4%	86%
5	9th Grade On-Track	91%	91%	0%	3%	1%	1%	1%	94%
6	Academic Achievement								
	ELA	51%	54%	3%	19%	6%	6%	6%	73%
	Math	42%	43%	1%	23%	8%	8%	8%	66%
	Schience	43%	44%	1%	14%	5%	5%	5%	58%
7	Acheivement Gap								
	ELA	33pts	34pts	-1 point	12pts	4pts	4pts	4pts	22pts
	Math	29pts	29pts	No change	9pots	3pts	3pts	3pts	20pts
8	High School Graduation	82%	84%	2%	5%	2%	2%	2%	89%
9	CTE Concentrator	38%	56%	18%	12%	4%	4%	4%	68%
10	College-Going Graduates	56%	55%	-1%	3%	1%	1%	1%	58%
11	Teacher Positions Filled	93%	93%%	No change	3%	1%	1%	1%	96%
12	Teacher Retention	52%	55%	3%	8%	3%	3%	3%	63%
13	R&M Backlog (millions)	\$279mm	\$983mm	-\$740M	\$325M	\$108M	\$108M	\$108M	\$658M
14	Family Engagement	TBA	74%	Need more data	6%	2%	2%	2%	80%

HE'E Coalition Members and Participants

Academy 21

After-School All-Stars Hawai'i

Alliance for Place Based Learning

American Civil Liberties Union

Atherton YMCA

*Castle Complex Community Council

*Castle-Kahuku Principal and CAS

*Education Institute of Hawai'i

*Faith Action for Community Equity

Fresh Leadership LLC

Girl Scouts Hawai'i

Harold K.L. Castle Foundation

*HawaiiKidsCAN

*Hawai'i Afterschool Alliance

*Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and
Economic Justice

*Hawai'i Association of School Psychologists

Hawai'i Athletic League of Scholars

*Hawai'i Children's Action Network

Hawai'i Education Association

Hawai'i Nutrition and Physical Activity Coalition

* Hawai'i State PTSA

Hawai'i State Student Council

Hawai'i State Teachers Association

Hawai'i P-20

Hawai'i 3Rs

Head Start Collaboration Office

It's All About Kids

*INPEACE

Joint Venture Education Forum

Junior Achievement of Hawaii

Kamehameha Schools

Kanu Hawai'i

*Kaua'i Ho'okele Council

Keiki to Career Kaua'i

Kupu A'e

*Leaders for the Next Generation

Learning First

McREL's Pacific Center for Changing the Odds

Native Hawaiian Education Council

Our Public School

*Pacific Resources for Education and Learning

*Parents and Children Together

*Parents for Public Schools Hawai'i

Punahou School PUEO Program

Special Education Provider Alliance

*Teach for America

The Learning Coalition

US PACOM

University of Hawai'i College of Education

YMCA of Honolulu

Voting Members () Voting member
organizations vote on action items while
individual and non-voting participants may
collaborate on all efforts within the coalition.*



S E A C
Special Education Advisory Council
1010 Richards Street Honolulu, HI 96813
Phone: 586-8126 Fax: 586-8129
email: spin@doh.hawaii.gov
November 19, 2020

**Special Education
Advisory Council**

Ms. Martha Guinan, *Chair*
Ms. Susan Wood, *Vice Chair*

Ms. Andrea Alexander
Ms. Sara Alimoot
Ms. Brendelyn Ancheta
Ms. Virginia Beringer
Ms. Mary Brogan
Ms. Deborah Cheeseman
Ms. Annette Cooper
Mr. Mark Disher
Dr. Kurt Humphrey
Ms. Tina King
Ms. Bernadette Lane
Ms. Sarah Man
Ms. Dale Matsuura
Ms. Cheryl Matthews
Ms. Kaili Murbach
Ms. Kiele Pennington
Ms. Carrie Pisciotto
Ms. Kau'i Rezendes
Ms. Rosie Rowe
Dr. David Royer
Ms. Ivalee Sinclair
Mr. James Street
Mr. Francis Taele
Mr. Steven Vannatta
Ms. Lisa Vegas
Ms. Paula Whitaker
Ms. Jasmine Williams

Ms. Annie Kalama, *liaison to
the Superintendent*
Dr. Bob Campbell, *liaison to
the military community*

Amanda Kaahanui, Staff
Susan Rocco, Staff

Catherine Payne, Chairperson
Hawaii State Board of Education

P. O. Box 2360

Honolulu, HI 96814

RE: VI. A. Presentation on school performance results for the 2019-20
School Year

Dear Chair Payne and Members of the Board,

The Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) looks forward each year to learn of progress made toward key student success indicators. While there is data to celebrate in this report, there is much more that remains a mystery as it pertains to students with IEPs.

SEAC is particularly pleased that the inclusion rate--the percentage of students with disabilities who are receiving most, if not all, of their support in the general education classroom--has steadily risen to the current rate of 44%. Much more impressive is the average inclusion rate of nearly 70% achieved by the 50 Hui Pu schools who fully embraced the principles of inclusion through a partnership with Stetson and Associates and the Exceptional Support Branch. That partnership is key as we move toward building the capacity of the remainder of our schools to provide comparable opportunities to students with IEPs and 504 Plans.

The rest of the data in the report, with the exception of the WIDA assessment results for English Learners, has not yet been broken down by student subgroup as required in the Strategic Plan Dynamic Report. SEAC anticipates that the disaggregation will come later. Last year we had to wait until January 2020 to learn special education-specific information--a month or more after aggregated data had been released and discussed. We see this as a missed opportunity to respond to actionable data.

The 2020 Strive HI Statewide Snapshot included in today's discussion highlights rates of chronic absenteeism, college-going, graduation, and completion of a CTE program by 12th grade. Strive HI results for



SY 18-19 show students with disabilities performing less favorably than every other high needs subgroup in each of these indicators. The table below shows SY 18-19 data for students with disabilities compared to students without disabilities.

Indicator	Students without Disabilities	Students with Disabilities
% Chronically absent	14%	23%
% Graduation on time	87%	64%
% College-Going	57%	30%
% Completion of CTE Study	58%	41%

Given the significant vulnerability of students with disabilities to poor academic outcomes we ask that the Board and the Department resume this conversation about SY 19-20 performance results once disaggregated data for subgroups is available.

Mahalo for this opportunity to express our views. SEAC stands 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



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

Testimony BOE 11/19

1 message

J <hnmoselle@gmail.com>

Mon, Nov 16, 2020 at 8:45 AM

To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Testimony on Agenda Item VII: H
Comment

Board Members, Chair Payne and Vice-Chair Uemura,

In consideration of the action item related to the Superintendent's evaluation, and the matching of their established priorities to the priorities of stakeholders and the Board, please consider the entirety of the Acellus debacle and its impact on schools, students and the broader community. While it is evident that former Deputy Ass. Sup. Bender has been removed in order to point to some remedy in the office of curriculum and instructional design, **the responsibility for the violation of students' rights certainly lies at the top.** It no doubt would have been unnecessary to send this testimony, had the Superintendent swiftly (in early August) acknowledged stakeholder concerns as valid, investigated them, and apologized for the lack of vetting, while providing schools another option. Look at the schools who demonstrated leadership by prioritizing students- they dropped Acellus almost immediately upon discovering stakeholder concerns and seeing the evidence. **They believed parents and teachers, looked at the evidence presented and made a swift and decisive call. In August. That is what effective leadership looks like.**

Yet here we are in mid-November, seeing the 140-page review on Acellus (which we had to demand to see, publicly), validating what parents and teachers reported in those early days of August. **If the DOE would have listened to us then, we could have had a solution in place for second-quarter.** If the DOE would have listened to us then, they could have requested or demanded refunding almost immediately. They wouldn't have had to waste tax-payer dollars on a "Controversial Content Form" or an extensive review of what we had made plain in testimony and in the media- **we vetted this curriculum for them.**

Instead we were called, "rumors online", "screenshots from broad internet searches", and a "negative social media campaign put on by a competitor", while the DOE bickered back-and-forth with the vendor, trying to salvage what is clearly a sub-par software program not developed by educators or curriculum specialists. So now, with lack of swift support from DOE in terms of replacement curricula or funding, schools are transitioning away from Acellus as quickly as possible, on their own. **Where is the money DOE official Kalani said the DOE was working with their loss department to recoup?** Please ask the DOE to answer this question. If a program violates students' rights, would a refund not be warranted? Or are our schools SOL? **All these reviews, and committees, and meetings and we still don't have an answer to that simple question.** Some of the educators discussed below, with no additional funding, are building their own locally-developed curricula. I guess they aren't going to wait til 2029 for the DOE to figure this one out. **The Superintendent said they did not sit on their hands at all. I respectfully disagree.**

The principals at Ka'imiloa EI, Kea'au and Pearl Harbor EI have been transparent with parents and have made an effort to transition off of Acellus as quickly as they can. Do you know that Principal Blaber at Kea'au EI **supported her staff and teachers in creating their own Asynchronous, In-House Learning site?** They were transitioned fully off of Acellus by Nov 6th, according to the school. Do you know that Principal Blaber took full responsibility, publicly on social media, for the use of Acellus in Kea'au EI? That is what excellent leadership looks like. **However, it is evident that the responsibility for the use of Acellus in public education belongs to the DOE leadership, not Principal Blaber. We still await any admission of personal responsibility from DOE leadership or the Acellus vendor for exposing our children to this content.** We are left wanting.

All schools need to send out a letter to parents in plain language, from their principal or CAS, that clearly states Acellus is being discontinued and why, including that it contains religious content, discriminates against students and lacks rigor. Parents have a right to know this information! These are our children! Parents should also be informed about the DOE's full Acellus Review being released so they can see it for themselves and make an informed choice on whether they will continue to expose their child to it, no matter what the schools transition plan looks like.

It has been determined that Acellus violates students' rights, therefore parents have a right to cease use immediately. Period. However, this is NOT a demand that every parent does so, or even that schools do so, but a demand for schools to give us all the information. Many schools are saying NOTHING. School administrators don't need to have it all figured out to send out a clear letter that is HONEST with parents about what was discovered in the review of Acellus. **This is a**

case where an impotent response from school leadership is not only grossly negligent, it is potentially harmful to Hawai'i students.

You are all probably sick of hearing about Acellus. We are sick of writing about it! Tell school administrators and the DOE to do the above and comply with the BOE directive already, so we can all go about our lives knowing that Hawaii students' rights will not be infringed on, they are SAFE, and that they will be moved to a quality program worthy of them. Until the DOE takes responsibility for this SNAFU, until school administrators tell parents what the DOE review found and that their rights may have been or could continue to be infringed upon, and until every Hawaii student has been transitioned off of Acellus, we will continue to write. And call. And testify. And email. And talk to the press. Because this matters. **Content in public education, that sends the message, even covertly, to children that they are less-than because of their skin color, ethnicity, religion, ability or gender is unacceptable!**

Below are the reports of non-compliance with the BOE directive from anonymous parents and educators, unfortunately they are not all-inclusive and the list is growing:

-Mililani Ike: parent reports not being allowed out of Acellus; educator confirms its continued-use, despite their protest.

-Wheeler El: Principal Kakazu's letter is an opaque mischaracterization of the BOE's decision, presenting the continued use of Acellus as a "benefit" to students, with no mention of the lack of rigor, discrimination, or religious content discovered.

-Kalama Int School: sent out a survey to parents, which includes a question asking if they would like to continue with Acellus. To date, this school has not told parents that the BOE voted to discontinue Acellus, or that their children may have been or could continue to be, exposed to religious and discriminatory content that violates their rights.

-Ma'e Ma'e El: parent reports not being allowed out of Acellus.

-Waihe'e School: educator reports this school is using Acellus, exclusively, for DL.

There are a number of other schools which I have refrained from pointing out here, because there is either conflicting information, or not enough information to indicate that they are in non-compliance.

I leave you with a letter sent by an anonymous parent. This is illustrative of what many teachers and parents have faced when speaking out about the use of Acellus from the beginning, and even now as schools have been directed to transition away from it.

"I'm a parent who has been vocal at my school about the Acellus program and trying to get more resources for the kids. I appreciate all you have done in terms of being the voice for many parents who are afraid to speak out. I found out the hard way, the retaliation from admin is so real. I've been bullied into submission by our principal and admin and am afraid to say anymore. I am afraid my kids will be treated unfairly when they return to school as I have already been put on the blacklist basically for voicing out my concerns, not just with Acellus but with the safety of the students overall.

Our school gave us the choice to return to face to face on 9/21 before the BOE meeting that determined that Acellus should be phased out and to allow parents to opt out at anytime. I called to try and move back to the virtual teacher led class room and was told no, we can opt back in January. It's so disappointing because I know the teacher led virtual classrooms are so much better.

I'm frustrated that there is no flexibility, but I'm more frustrated that they know the curriculum is not rigorous enough but we still have to continue to use it.

Thank you,
Parent who has given up...."

Respectfully,

Heather Moselle



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

Testimony

1 message

Zan Timtim <zanzibar722@gmail.com>

Wed, Nov 18, 2020 at 11:35 AM

To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Here it is: Testimony on Agenda Item VII: H
Comment

Board Members, Chair Payne and Vice-Chair Uemura,

I CONSIDERED WRITING MY OWN TESTIMONY, BUT HEATHER MOSELLE SUMS EVERYTHING UP PERFECTLY!
ACCELLUS NEEDS TO GO NOW IN ALL SCHOOLS!

In consideration of the action item related to the Superintendent's evaluation, and the matching of their established priorities to the priorities of stakeholders and the Board, please consider the entirety of the Acellus debacle and its impact on schools, students and the broader community. While it is evident that former Deputy Asst. Sup. Bender has been removed in order to point to some remedy in the office of curriculum and instructional design, the responsibility for the violation of students' rights certainly lies at the top. It no doubt would have been unnecessary to send this testimony, had the Superintendent swiftly (in early August) acknowledged stakeholder concerns as valid, investigated them, and apologized for the lack of vetting, while providing schools another option. Look at the schools who demonstrated leadership by prioritizing students- they dropped Acellus almost immediately upon discovering stakeholder concerns and seeing the evidence. They believed parents and teachers, looked at the evidence presented and made a swift and decisive call. In August. That is what effective leadership looks like.

Yet here we are in mid-November, seeing the 140-page review on Acellus (which we had to demand to see, publicly), validating what parents and teachers reported in those early days of August. If the DOE would have listened to us then, we could have had a solution in place for second-quarter. If the DOE would have listened to us then, they could have requested or demanded refunding almost immediately. They wouldn't have had to waste tax-payer dollars on a "Controversial Content Form" or an extensive review of what we had made-plain in testimony and in the media- we vetted this curriculum for them.

Instead we were called, "rumors online", "screenshots from broad internet searches", and a "negative social media campaign put on by a competitor", while the DOE bickered back-and-forth with the vendor, trying to salvage what is clearly a sub-par software program not developed by educators or curriculum specialists. So now, with lack of swift support from DOE in terms of replacement curricula or funding, schools are transitioning away from Acellus as quickly as possible, on their own. Where is the money DOE official Kalani said the DOE was working with their loss department to recoup? Please ask the DOE to answer this question. If a program violates students' rights, would a refund not be warranted? Or are our schools SOL? All these reviews, and committees, and meetings and we still don't have an answer to that simple question. Some of the educators discussed below, with no additional funding, are building their own locally-developed curricula. I guess they aren't going to wait til 2029 for the DOE to figure this one out. The Superintendent said they did not sit on their hands at all. I respectfully disagree.

The principals at Ka'imiloa EI, Kea'au and Pearl Harbor EI have been transparent with parents and have made an effort to transition off of Acellus as quickly as they can. Do you know that Principal Blaber at Kea'au EI supported her staff and teachers in creating their own Asynchronous, In-House Learning site? They were transitioned fully off of Acellus by Nov 6th, according to the school. Do you know that Principal Blaber took full responsibility, publicly on social media, for the use of Acellus in Kea'au EI? That is what excellent leadership looks like. However, it is evident that the responsibility for the use of Acellus in public education belongs to the DOE leadership, not Principal Blaber. We still await any admission of personal responsibility from DOE leadership or the Acellus vendor for exposing our children to this content. We are left wanting.

All schools need to send out a letter to parents in plain language, from their principal or CAS, that clearly states Acellus is being discontinued and why, including that it contains religious content, discriminates against students and lacks rigor. Parents have a right to know this information! These are our children! Parents should also be informed about the DOE's full Acellus Review being released so they can see it for themselves and make an informed choice on whether they will continue to expose their child to it, no matter what the schools transition plan looks like.

It has been determined that Acellus violates students' rights, therefore parents have a right to cease use immediately. Period. However, this is NOT a demand that every parent does so, or even that schools do so, but a demand for schools to give us all the information. Many schools are saying NOTHING. School administrators don't need to have it all figured out to send out a clear letter that is HONEST with parents about what was discovered in the review of Acellus. This is a case where an impotent response from school leadership is not only grossly negligent, it is potentially harmful to Hawai'i students.

You are all probably sick of hearing about Acellus. We are sick of writing about it! Tell school administrators and the DOE to do the above and comply with the BOE directive already, so we can all go about our lives knowing that Hawaii students' rights will not be infringed on, they are SAFE, and that they will be moved to a quality program worthy of them. Until the DOE takes responsibility for this SNAFU, until school administrators tell parents what the DOE review found and that their rights may have been or could continue to be infringed upon, and until every Hawaii student has been transitioned off of Acellus, we will continue to write. And call. And testify. And email. And talk to the press. Because this matters. Content in public education, that sends the message, even covertly, to children that they are less-than because of their skin color, ethnicity, religion, ability or gender is unacceptable!

Below are the reports of non-compliance with the BOE directive from anonymous parents and educators, unfortunately they are not all-inclusive and the list is growing:

-Mililani Ike: parent reports not being allowed out of Acellus; educator confirms its continued-use, despite their protest.

-Wheeler El: Principal Kakazu's letter is an opaque mischaracterization of the BOE's decision, presenting the continued use of Acellus as a "benefit" to students, with no mention of the lack of rigor, discrimination, or religious content discovered.

-Kalama Int School: sent out a survey to parents, which includes a question asking if they would like to continue with Acellus. To date, this school has not told parents that the BOE voted to discontinue Acellus, or that their children may have been or could continue to be, exposed to religious and discriminatory content that violates their rights.

-Ma'e Ma'e El: parent reports not being allowed out of Acellus.

-Waihe'e School: educator reports this school is using Acellus, exclusively, for DL.

- Waipahu Intermediate: Still has not sent out any notice regarding transitioning off of Acellus.

There are a number of other schools which I have refrained from pointing out here, because there is either conflicting information, or not enough information to indicate that they are in non-compliance.

I leave you with a letter sent by an anonymous parent. This is illustrative of what many teachers and parents have faced when speaking out about the use of Acellus from the beginning, and even now as schools have been directed to transition away from it.

"I'm a parent who has been vocal at my school about the Acellus program and trying to get more resources for the kids. I appreciate all you have done in terms of being the voice for many parents who are afraid to speak out. I found out the hard way, the retaliation from admin is so real. I've been bullied into submission by our principal and admin and am afraid to say anymore. I am afraid my kids will be treated unfairly when they return to school as I have already been put on the blacklist basically for voicing out my concerns, not just with Acellus but with the safety of the students overall.

Our school gave us the choice to return to face to face on 9/21 before the BOE meeting that determined that Acellus should be phased out and to allow parents to opt out at anytime. I called to try and move back to the virtual teacher led class room and was told no, we can opt back in January. It's so disappointing because I know the teacher led virtual classrooms are so much better.

I'm frustrated that there is no flexibility, but I'm more frustrated that they know the curriculum is not rigorous enough but we still have to continue to use it.

*Thank you,
Parent who has given up...."*

Respectfully,
Zan Timtim



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

Testimony

1 message

Jessica Kosut <jessica_sekhon@hotmail.com>
To: "Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Wed, Nov 18, 2020 at 12:23 PM

Re: Discussion Items: Reopening Schools: Support

Dear Board,

I am writing to you in regards to the reopening of Hawaii Department of Education schools. As a physician, I understand the concern that teachers, administrators and parents have about returning to school. But it can be done safely and without rampant cases. Data, both in the US and abroad, have shown that schools are not sites of super spreaders. There was also a large school reported outbreak in Utah, but it was traced to an informal social gathering in homes and not in the classrooms.

A recent study from Yale University could potentially shed some light on transmission in schools and daycares. It tracked 57,000 childcare workers, located in all 50 states, Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico, for the first three months of the pandemic in the United States. About half continued caring for very young children, such as the children of essential workers, while the other half stayed home. The study found no difference in the rate of coronavirus infections between the two groups, after accounting for demographic factors.

But reopening has to be done cautiously. PPE needs to be in place with potentially both masks and face shields being utilized. Temperature checks need to be done each morning and a contact tracing app or other method of contact tracing will also need to be employed. Outdoor spaces are the best spaces to utilize for learning and is something that we have the benefit of having in Hawaii. Classrooms with open doors will also provide improved ventilation. Handwashing stations and hand sanitizer will need to be readily available. Students will need to be kept home with any symptoms and cleared by a physician before their return. The DOE can reach out to parents, as I know so many of us would like to help- to help out with everything from donations of PPE and hand sanitizer to building sink stations and setting up outdoor learning spaces. And we need to put these processes in place now if we hope to return to school in January.

With positive cases, contact tracing will need to be done in conjunction with the DOH and the students in contact will need to quarantine. But even with quarantine needs, students will still have some time at school, which is tremendously valuable.

The ill effect of school closure is tremendous. We are seeing increased mental health problems, hunger, obesity due to inactivity, increased risk of child abuse, and that is not even including the loss of education. A recent study in the Journal of the American Medical Association, entitled "Estimation of US Children's Educational Attainment and Years of Life Lost Associated With Primary School Closures During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 Pandemic,"

Dmitri Christakis and colleagues estimated that the median loss of education of 54 days is associated with 0.2-0.3 years lower final educational attainment.

By using estimates of the association between lower educational attainment and decreased life expectancy, the researchers estimated that school closures will result in 1.5-5.5 million years of life lost.

We must continue to make access to school and education equitable for all children in Hawaii and we need to not waste additional time.

Sincerely,
Jessica Kosut, MD
Pediatrician



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

Testimony- Rebecca Chang parent at Kalaheo HS Supporting the Reopening of Schools

1 message

Rebecca Biggins <rbiggins415@yahoo.com>

Wed, Nov 18, 2020 at 12:30 PM

Reply-To: Rebecca Biggins <rbiggins415@yahoo.com>

To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

I am writing as an extremely concerned public school parent. I have two boys, grades 9 and 11, who attend Kalaheo HS. Covid is not going away, it's been nine months. We need to learn to safely live with it, not hide from it. Action needs to be taken, schools need to reopen. The gap between public and private schools is becoming larger by the day. Private schools are back in session, students are thriving and playing sports. They are happy and healthy. Public school students are struggling with remote learning, little socialization and no sports. Teen depression, suicide, eating disorders and abuse are on the rise in our state. How is this possibly the healthiest option for our children?

The State of Hawaii and Department of Health have posted Metrics for Reopening. According to the metrics, elementary school students should be back face to face while secondary schools should be following a blended learning schedule. Why isn't this happening? What are we waiting for? Who is making the final decision? Action needs to be taken. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends getting students back in the classroom ASAP. JAMA published an article on potential long term effects on school closures on kids, a shorter life expectancy is #1. We have been in limbo for far too long. This is unacceptable.

The administration, teachers and staff at Kalaheo HS have done a great job throughout this pandemic. Remote learning can't be "fixed". It's simply far from ideal and should only be used as a temporary last resort. It's impossible to receive any one on one help from a teacher during class. It's very difficult to have discussions much less do labs or experiments. Children are suffering. Families are suffering. Students are regressing. GPA's are dropping. Drop out rates are surely increasing.

We need to work together: administrators, educators, students and parents need to be involved in the process. Parents and students are willing to help. The excuses need to stop and action needs to be taken. Thousands of students across our state have successfully been attending face to face school for months. It can be done. Parents need a timeline so choices can be made concerning our children's education for next semester.

My heart is hurting for all students who are unable to attend school face to face. For many, school is their safe haven, a place to thrive. The emotional toll and stress (both mentally and physically) that is being placed on students day after day, month after month is unacceptable. Our students don't get a redo. This is their one chance to get it right. The DOE/BOE is failing them. The HSTA is failing them. I do not want to fail my children.



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

testimony for BOE meeting 11/19

1 message

Jill Jacobs <jillybean05@gmail.com>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Nov 18, 2020 at 12:40 PM

Dear Chair Payne and Board Members

My name is Jill Jacobs. I teach third grade at Kealakehe Elementary School in Kona. I am writing today in regard to the possibility of students returning to face to face learning second semester. As a teacher I have concerns with this plan. First the number of cases in the zip in which my school is located has continued to stay high. If you look just at the 96740 zip (if my math is correct) our 14 day average has been much higher than the 15.5 daily average that is the standard from DOH. We can not bring students back to campus when our numbers are on the average of 30 or more when you calculate the number of cases to be if there were 1,000,000 people in Kona.

Second we will have to return to a blended learning model of learning if the students return to face to face. This means that students will be losing a great deal of instructional time. Currently all of my students are coming into my virtual lesson. They are working and I only had one student who received a Well Below on the report card and that student was performing to his ability levels based on his IEP. Students would go from having 5 days of lesson a week to only getting two days of lesson a week in blended learning.

Third is I beg that you please do not allow any schools to require teachers to be teaching in a hybrid model (teaching students in person on campus and having to live teach students online at the same time). Teachers are already stressed to their breaking points and trying to monitor students both in person and online at the same time is extremely stressful. Every teacher in the teacher Facebook groups I am part of who is teaching in this model is so stressed they are ready to quit.

Thank you
Jill Jacobs



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

Hawaii State Board of Education 130 virtual meeting Nov, 19

1 message

rockeegsa@aol.com <rockeegsa@aol.com>

Wed, Nov 18, 2020 at 12:59 PM

Reply-To: rockeegsa@aol.com

To: "Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to express my opinion about having students return to school at the Kailua-Kalaheo Complex by January 2021. I also wanted to express my concern with the distance learning models used since March 2020 due to the Covid2 pandemic. I have two teenagers who attend Kalaheo High School, one is a junior and the other is in 9th grade. My Junior High School Student is using the blended model due to taking several AP classes, and the other is using the Acellus online program. Both have expressed frustrations, missing the face-to-face communication with their teachers and peers and not being able to fully express their needs for assistance with their class work.

I'd like to first thank all the staff at the school for working hard to help students adjust to the blended or online models. Many teachers have accommodated my kids during this time but prolonged online learning is definitely not a substitute to in-person learning.

According to the president of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), the Hawaii public schools are using the Acellus Learning Accelerator online program, which is not accredited. This "temporary" option given to the students is not acceptable. Will my 9th grader be academically behind compared to his peers who use a different curriculum?

The Journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics states that accumulating evidence and collective experience argue that children, particularly school aged children, are far less important drivers of SARS-Cov-2 transmission than adults. Therefore, serious consideration should be paid toward strategies that allow schools to remain open, even during periods of COVID-19 spread.

Whether it be a blended or fully in-person model, I believe we can minimize the adverse effects to their social, academic and developmental needs by returning the students to school in January. Private and other public schools have been able to make accommodations and I'm confident it can be done at Kalaheo High School, too.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,
Racquel Alfsen

The following letter is being submitted the Hawaii State Board of Education's General Business Meeting, offering comments on the Finance and Infrastructure Committee Report on: (1) Committee Action on recommendation concerning the Hawaii State Public Library System's proposed budget for 2021-2023 fiscal biennium; (2) Committee Action on Department of Education's repair and maintenance priority list in accordance with Board Policy 301-10, Equitable Allocation of Facilities Resources (FIC Strategic Priority 2); and (3) Committee Action on Department of Education's priority criteria for executing Capital Improvement Program projects, in accordance with Board Policy 301-10, Equitable Allocation of Facilities Resources (FIC Strategic Priority 2)

November 19, 2020

Governor David Ige
Hawai'i State Board of Education Chairperson Catherine Payne
Hawai'i State Department of Education Superintendent Dr. Christina Kishimoto

Aloha Governor Ige, Chairperson Payne, and Superintendent Kishimoto,

We know this is an exceptionally challenging time for our state, as the continuing pandemic has caused great harm to Hawai'i's broader economy, health, and happiness. Families have particularly felt this pain, and the abrupt shift to distance learning has created a host of new challenges for both working and unemployed parents.

As a collection of community members, we urge you to minimize the burden on families and the long-term harm to keiki. While we know sacrifices are necessary due to budget constraints, we strongly advocate for smart budgeting that uses a scalpel vs a machete.

Grounding spending decision in evidence-based practices

Given nothing less than the futures of our keiki are at stake, blanket furloughs and draconian cuts would be catastrophic. Other local systems leaders like the University of Hawai'i Board of Regents are thoughtfully presenting their priorities as a system, and then reducing expenses and increasing revenues to align planning.

We were disappointed by Superintendent Kishimoto's [memo](#) to the BOE's Human Resources Committee, as we feel the framework presented does not adequately ground the program review process in evidence-based practices, a clear and specific focus, and a prioritization of our students. In particular, we have the following questions about the four guiding principles below offered in the memo:

HIDOE Principle 1: Protect our core mission of teaching and learning

- While this is a noble sentiment, it is broad to the point of being useless. Instead, recognizing the strong likelihood for irreversible learning loss, HIDOE must minimize

cuts or furloughs to staff and programs to protect basic foundational curriculum, instruction, assessment and differentiated instruction/response to intervention (RTI); early grades literacy; middle school mathematics; and intensive tutoring, in either official language pathway.

- HIDOE should also ensure student readiness to enter an uncertain job market by protecting investments in early college programs and career and technical education.
- Since the role of school leaders broadened in the face of new challenges, continue investments in leadership development.
- HIDOE should also reduce all non-classroom staffing and expenses not tied to strategic priorities, including executive leadership salaries.
- HIDOE should consider moving all non-classroom district teachers back into the classroom, converting 12 month employees to 10 months.

HIDOE Principle 2: Equity of access is key to our core mission

- Equity is more important than ever, with the achievement gap likely to grow significantly this year. That is why we believe it is highly important for HIDOE to define how spending decisions will be made to prioritize equity. This includes prioritizing in-person and individualized supports for struggling and vulnerable students, while using distance learning to increase class sizes for non-prioritized subjects or enable enrollment across schools.

HIDOE Principle 3: Modernize our systems and practices to improve efficiencies

- Again, while modernization and efficiency are important elements, these considerations should be more clearly grounded in the broader goals of the system to deliver results for kids during these challenging and uncertain times.

HIDOE Principle 4: Be adaptable but strategic within changing circumstances

- HIDOE should articulate how they are operationalizing this principle, including considerations such as delaying capital investments, scheduled maintenance, and compensation increases. Budgets should reflect urgent priorities such as PPE and physical reconfiguration for maximum classroom safety.

Prepare federal support to families

Public school parents are increasingly frustrated that their children are not able to return safely to campus, especially as many private schools have returned to in-person learning, and the reopening of tourism, malls, gyms, and movie theaters. With additional federal support anticipated from the new Biden Administration, we urge you to be proactive about providing more direct support to families.

- Safely reopening schools: Families deserve the assurance that every step will be taken to bring their kids back to school as quickly and as safely as possible. The HIDOE must transparently report what additional resources are needed to ensure the maximum number of students are able to safely return to schools. It should be noted if funds can be shifted from less urgent budgetary items, as well as where federal support can fill gaps.
- Direct support to families: If schools aren't able to return the majority of students safely to campus by the start of the spring semester, then families should expect additional

direct financial support to offset the strains of distance learning, including expenses such as technology, childcare, and supplemental learning materials. We hope all potential resources are put on the table, including the Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund.

While this document is not intended to be an exhaustive set of recommendations, we would be grateful for your serious consideration of these principles. We all want to see Hawai'i get back on its feet, and we know that the actions you take today will have an impact for years to come.

Mahalo for your leadership,

Signed in support:

David Miyashiro
Alex Harris
Naiya Lim
Kiana Ejercito
Tina Huynh-Nguyen
Elena Farden
Noriko O'Shea
Lana Lubecke
Ann Keeler
Ka'inoa Kea
Phoenix Maimiti Valentine
Aisha Heredia
Terry George
Donna R Walker
Lillian Coltin
Tiffany Huynh
Shirley M. Yamauchi
Ac'Lynne Uesugi
Kent Uyehara
Lauren Watanabe
Cade Watanabe
Liz Sager
Dyson Chee
Jason Shon
Hawai'i Children's Action Network



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

Testimony

1 message

Adrienne Robillard <adrienne.robillard@gmail.com>
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Nov 18, 2020 at 1:25 PM

Testimony on Agenda Item VII: H
Comment

Dear Board Members, Chair Payne and Vice-Chair Uemura,

In consideration of the action item related to the Superintendent's evaluation, and the matching of the established priorities to the priorities of stakeholders and the Board, please consider the entirety of the Acellus debacle and its impact on schools, students and the broader community. The responsibility for the violation of students' rights certainly lies at the top. It would not be necessary to send this testimony, had the Superintendent swiftly (in early August) acknowledged stakeholder concerns as valid, investigated them, and apologized for the lack of vetting, while providing schools another viable option for distance learning other than Acellus. Look at the schools who demonstrated leadership by prioritizing students-they dropped Acellus almost immediately upon discovering stakeholder concerns and seeing the evidence. They believed parents and teachers, looked at the evidence presented and made a swift and decisive call. In August. That is what effective leadership looks like.

Yet here we are in mid-November, seeing the 140-page review on Acellus, validating what parents and teachers reported in those early days of August. If the DOE was proactive, we would have had a solution in place for the second quarter and requested or demanded refunding almost immediately. They wouldn't have had to waste tax-payer dollars on a "Controversial Content Form" or an extensive review of what we had made plain in testimony and in the media-concerned parents and educators vetted this curriculum for them.

Please urge school administrators and the DOE to comply with the BOE directive now, so we can all go about our lives knowing that Hawaii students' rights will not be infringed on, they are SAFE, and that they will be moved to a quality program. Khan Academy, for example, is free and provides quality, vetted content across subjects that many teachers are already using.

The future of every single one of these students matters. Content in public education, that sends the message, even covertly, to children that they are less-than because of their skin color, ethnicity, religion, ability or gender is unacceptable. I urge you to take action now. A mind is a terrible thing to waste.

Respectfully,
Adrienne Robillard