



November 19, 2020  
Human Resource Committee

Dear Chair Payne and Members of the Board of Education,

IV. A Presentation of Department of Education's reorganization plan to preserve classroom instruction: temporary or permanent closure, consolidations, reorganization, restructuring or merger of offices, programs, services and positions.

We would like to **comment** on this discussion item.

We appreciate the DOE presenting their process framework of how they will address budget shortfalls in the upcoming years. We strongly agree with the first guiding principle for the DOE's program review:

1. Protect our core mission of teaching and learning

We believe that basic foundational curriculum, instruction, assessment and differentiated instruction/response to intervention (RTI) must be prioritized during these financially difficult times. This translates to maintaining quality **instruction in the classroom**.

In addition, we urge the BOE to ask for more granular financial transparency regarding the system, but in particular, school-based budgeting. Stakeholders should know specifically how reductions will directly impact our students.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Cheri Nakamura  
HE'E Coalition Director

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.*

**The following letter is being submitted the Hawaii State Board of Education's Human Resources Committee meeting, offering comments on Discussion Item A. Presentation on Department of Education's reorganization plan to preserve classroom instruction: temporary or permanent closure, consolidations, reorganization, restructuring, or merger of offices, programs, services, and positions.**

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