



S E A C
Special Education Advisory Council

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December 3, 2020

**Special Education
Advisory Council**

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Kenneth Uemura, Chairperson
Hawaii State Board of Education
Finance and Infrastructure Committee
P. O. Box 2360
Honolulu, HI 96814

RE: III. C. Committee Action on recommendation concerning the
Department of Education's operating budget for 2021-2023 fiscal
biennium

Dear Chair Uemura and Members of the Committee,

The Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) welcomes this opportunity to support the Department's proposed operating budget for 2021-2023, particularly in the area of programs and services that address the needs of students with disabilities.

The current economic downturn resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in substantial budget shortfalls for the next biennium budget, threatening a greater negative impact to student achievement than the Great Recession of 2007-2009. It is therefore essential that the State exercises the utmost care in identifying reductions to the existing budget to protect the most disadvantaged students, including students with disabilities, from further, and perhaps, irreparable harm.

Chief Financial Officer Brian Hallett briefed SEAC members at our November 13th meeting on projected cuts to EDN 150 funding. AS Heidi Armstrong and Director Annie Kalama from the Office of Student Support Services (OSSS) have also met with SEAC's leadership team to outline their efforts to streamline to the bare bones their operations and programs not directly supporting students while maintaining their ability to comply with IDEA and Section 504 mandates. However, these reductions were not sufficient to meet the required budget restrictions necessitating a 9% reduction in the Special Education in Regular Schools staffing allocation---special education teachers and educational assistants to support students with IEPs in the general education classroom. This reduction amounts to nearly \$25 million.



SEAC argues that these special education teaching positions are essential, and therefore, cuts to these critically important personnel are strongly ill-advised. We know from research conducted after the Great Recession, that cutting qualified teaching positions will affect the student achievement of special education students disproportionately and exacerbate the disruption these students have already faced due to the pandemic (Shores, K., & Steinberg, M., 2017, [The Impact of the Great Recession on Student Achievement: Evidence from Population Data](#)).

The Legislature must seek out new revenue streams to maintain supports to students and classroom teachers or reprioritize available funds, so that they meet the needs of the students most impacted by school closures, distance learning and staff reductions. While some students with IEPs have been able to receive their specially designed instruction and related services on school campuses, many more students with disabilities have experienced academic stagnation at home because their individualized supports cannot be replicated through the internet.

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 Quinan
Chair


Ivalee Sinclair
Legislative Committee Chair



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

BOE testimony

1 message

Scott Moore <scott.moore@k12.hi.us>

Tue, Dec 1, 2020 at 7:54 PM

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

Testimony by: Scott Moore, Principal, Waialua Elementary

General Meeting

Agenda Item: Board action on Finance and Infrastructure Committee recommendations concerning the Department of Education's operating budget for 2021-2023 fiscal biennium

Comment

Good afternoon, Chairperson Payne and Members of the Board of Education.

I appreciate this opportunity to share my perspective as a principal. About 95% of my school budget goes to pay employees that provide educational services to students. Almost any substantial cut will result in reduced services to students and the loss of experienced and effective educators.

I am afraid that Hawaii public schools are in a downward spiral. We suffered a drastic drop in enrollment because of Covid and the state's disjointed response to it. Now we are going to have major cuts to school budgets, which will probably prompt more defections from public schools, lowering enrollment further. The students who remain behind with less support will be the most vulnerable students who need the support most.

Schools are not like projects or new programs that you can delay or just cancel. It took a great deal of hard work to improve Hawaii Public Schools and student achievement. It will take years to recover from major and possibly permanent budget cuts.

I know the state is in what seems like an impossible situation, but the damage that occurs at the school level and to the students being served is disproportionately severe if such budget cuts go through. Thank you for your consideration.

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Testimony by: Robert Davis, Complex Area Superintendent for Leilehua, Mililani and Waialua Complex, Hawaii Department of Education (HIDOE)

General Meeting

Agenda Item: Board action on Finance and Infrastructure Committee recommendations concerning the Department of Education's operating budget for 2021-2023 fiscal biennium

Comment

Good afternoon, Chairperson Payne and Members of the Board of Education.

I appreciate this opportunity to share my perspective as a former principal, current Complex Area Superintendent, community member, and parent of a public school student.

My testimony today asks for the Board's support to lessen the financial cuts to the Department of Education. This comment stems from the decision made by our government officials to take what was supposed to be a one-time \$100-million-dollar reduction away from the HIDOE. However, instead, we were informed that this tremendous cut in funding will be a permanent decrease to our HIDOE budget. On top of this tremendous cut in funding, we are being asked to make further cuts which will absolutely affect each and every school in the state.

It will be shared that 94% of the DOE budget rests directly with our schools; thus, trying to cut over \$250 million dollars will lead to programs at the school being reduced. Furthermore, it is inevitable that the result will be severe personnel cuts impacting student programming and people's livelihood. As an example, we have shared with our schools that their Special Education Per Pupil Allocation (SPPA) funds will be cut by 10%. This funding source is applied 100% for special education personnel. In my LMW area alone, that has added to a negative \$1,728,271 shortfall. If you divide that by \$66,000 for average cost for a special education teacher or \$40,000 for each EA you can see how detrimental this will be to the services being rendered by special education personnel for our most vulnerable students.

This is an actual scenario facing a larger school in my Complex Area resulting from the reduction of SPPA funds:

- To account for a cut of over \$400,000 to this school's SPPA funds, the school leadership has made the tough decision to cut over 10 EA positions. This decision was made because the school has over 240 special needs students and they need certified teachers in their special needs classes and certified teachers to write each IEP.
- Although we all know that EA's provide a very important role to our students with supervision, lowering the adult to student ratio in classes, and providing necessary intervention support, the school cannot risk not meeting mandated IEP requirements. Directly related to the reduction in our budget, the decision of prioritizing funding teachers instead of EA's was a forced result.

This actual example demonstrates that we will be forced to do what is required by law, what is deemed to be compliant, but threading the threshold of only being able to provide basic services for students. This is not acceptable because we have all been working hard to improve our educational system and provide exemplary services and programming for our students. We cannot settle for basic services for our students and families.

The view I shared today reflects each and every school's relentless and tireless effort to do what is best and what is right for students. I understand that our state is facing a financial hardship and I know we must make difficult financial decisions. I also recognize that the HIDOE is shouldering more than its share of the financial burden. How are we to educate and nurture our children to be prepared for a global society by reducing funding to education? We continue to hear people state that education should be a priority, but how do we demonstrate that it is a priority? It is not right to expect the Hawaii Department of Education to cut more than its fair share of the budget.

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 learning continues to be by design and not by chance.

Robert Davis

12/1/2020



Corey Rosenlee
President
Osa Tui, Jr.
Vice President
Logan Okita
Secretary-Treasurer
Wilbert Holck
Executive Director

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE STATE OF HAWAII BOARD OF EDUCATION

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2020

COREY ROSENLEE, PRESIDENT
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

AGENDA ITEM: V. Action Items C. Board Action on Finance and Infrastructure
Committee recommendations concerning Department of Education's operating
budget for 2021-2023 fiscal biennium

To Chair Payne and Members of the Board of Education:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association understands the very difficult financial circumstances the state and the department of education currently face. The HSTA also recognizes the Board of Education must begin a series of difficult decisions based on the governor's expectations that the Department of Education make severe cuts to their budget. The proposed cuts are more than numbers on a spreadsheet and will have severe ramifications on schools, teachers and our public school keiki. Transparency and forthrightness are needed during these difficult times so that the public, parents and policymakers understand the real-world implications of cutting the education budget.

The 10% proposed cut to the weighted student formula (WSF) and another proposed 9% reduction in special education give the impression of trimming the fat, downplaying the severe consequences these cuts will have on our schools. These cuts could mean more than 1,000 regular and special education teachers would lose their jobs. School librarians and programs such as the arts, music, Hawaiian Studies, Hawaiian Language Immersion, career and technical education (CTE), physical education, and others will be reduced or eliminated. Class sizes will increase and programs such as advanced placement, electives and gifted and talented classes could also be terminated.

Besides resulting in the loss of some SPED teachers, the proposed special education cuts would lead to the reduction of autism behavior analysts and school-based behavioral health services, meaning that students' IEPs requirements will not be met. That will put the state in legal jeopardy by not providing federally mandated special education services to the students who need them most.

These cuts would also affect many other important DOE personnel, including educational assistants, security guards, and cafeteria workers.

Knowing that some cuts are inevitable, there is an opportunity to apply best practices and research that lower costs and may improve student outcomes. For instance, the \$8 million cut in student transportation would allow the state to move back school starting times, which research has shown improve students' health, grades and attendance. The \$4 million reduction in utility costs by turning off air conditioning during non-student hours is a practice we should always follow as good stewards of the environment.

Still, there are other areas the DOE and BOE should look at cutting before eliminating classroom spending. One option is to modify ACT 155 to allow the state to sell underutilized land to fix this short-term spending gap. This action could bring in tens of millions of dollars. The DOE could also reduce the amount spent on standardized testing services and other curriculum-related contracts to outside companies, which represent tens of millions of dollars more every year. The state could also pause new state construction on schools, which would also represent tens of millions of dollars of short-term savings. HSTA is hoping to work with state lawmakers to look at other revenue measures and avoid cuts to education.

The academic and financial plans of schools are due at the end of the calendar year. HSTA is asking that the BOE and DOE aggregate those plans to specifically show how many teaching positions and other employee positions will be eliminated under various reduction scenarios. We also ask the DOE to further aggregate what types of programs at the school level will be eliminated and the specific ramifications of reducing or eliminating these programs. The Hawaii State Legislature deserves this information in order to determine budget priorities, and the public deserves to understand how budget cuts will affect our keiki.



December 3, 2020
Finance and Infrastructure Committee

Dear Chair Uemura and Members of the Committee

III. C. Committee Action on recommendation concerning the DOE's operating budget for 2021-2023 year.

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

COVID-19 is creating a devastating impact to our state budget. As a Coalition supporting quality public education in Hawai'i, we absolutely advocate for maintaining full funding for our education system. However, the pandemic has created an unprecedented situation for our state, and reductions in all state departments appear to be unavoidable.

If reductions must be made, we maintain our support for the reorganization framework's first guiding principle, to "protect our core mission of teaching and learning," which was presented at the November 19, 2020 Human Resource Committee meeting. 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**.

Our November 19, 2020 testimony also urged the BOE to ask for more **granular financial transparency, particularly for school-based budgeting**. The Department in its memo presented a comprehensive report of the financial situation and the proposed reductions at the state level. However, we still do not know what the reductions and impact will be at the school level. 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.*

Testimony by:

Brenda Vierra-Chun, Principal, Wheeler Middle School, Leilehua Complex, Hawaii
Department of Education (HIDOE)

General Meeting

Agenda Item:

Board action on Finance and Infrastructure Committee recommendations concerning the Department of Education's operating budget for 2021-2023 fiscal biennium

Comment

Good afternoon, Chairperson Payne and Members of the Board of Education. I appreciate this opportunity to share my perspective as a school principal. My testimony today asks for the Board's support to lessen the financial cuts to the Department of Education.

I have served as a principal for nearly 20 years. Fiscal management is an aspect of my job I look forward to as it provides me the opportunity to reflect, refocus, and prioritize resources to ensure our students' academic, social, and emotional success. Wheeler Middle School has a longstanding reputation for academic excellence and ensuring high levels of growth for its students. Wheeler Middle's success is not the result of luck or happenstance. Our school's sustained success and ability to consistently meet school improvement goals is a direct result of the intentional creation and execution of data driven systems of support. Academic coaches, student support advisors, and response to intervention teachers are critical to the success of these systems. Furthermore, the work completed by these individuals can be directly linked via quantitative measures to positive student and teacher outcomes. In short, these positions are not a luxury, they are essential and at the core of who we are and what we do.

Please allow me to share a scenario in an effort to contextualize the harsh reality my school is facing for the 2021-2022 school year. Beginning this school year, a combination of low student enrollment and substantial budget reductions resulted in the loss of ten positions. A loss of ten positions meant our students went without the support of a 7th grade math and science teacher, a 7th grade language arts and social studies teacher, two special education teachers, a response to intervention teacher, a student support advisor, two educational assistants, a security assistant, and a Parent Community Networking Coordinator. The sting of losing ten positions this school year

was further exacerbated with the crushing realization that I will need to cut an additional 8 positions for next school year in order to reconcile a \$600,000+ budget deficit. In short, Wheeler Middle will have lost 18 positions within two school years, an incomprehensible blow to our school community.

If public education is truly a priority as stated in Governor Ige's promise to "*empower our public schools and university, focus on 21st century skills and learning, and ensure schools provide a healthy and safe learning environment,*" then this is the time we need to witness feel-good rhetoric turned into action. The State of Hawaii can not continue to increase its demands on public educators while substantially decreasing resources at the school level. While I understand our state is facing tremendous financial hardship and we must make difficult financial decisions, to the greatest extent possible, our schools must be spared. Our students deserve to learn in classrooms that are not overcrowded, our students need to have their individual learning gaps addressed and supported, our students with special needs must have access to specialized instruction, and we know our students thrive in safe environments with adequate adult supervision. These conditions for student success are essential and should never be sacrificed due to budget constraints.

For the first time in my thirty years of service in the Hawaii Department of Education, I can not say with confidence that my school will be adequately equipped to ensure our students' safety and academic success. I humbly urge the Board of Education to continue to prioritize the basic operational needs of schools and to protect our students from further budget cuts.

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Board today.

Brenda Vierra-Chun
12/2/2020



david.miyashiro@hawaiikidscan.org
hawaiikidscan.org

David Miyashiro
Executive Director

December 3, 2020

Hawaii Board of Education
General Board Meeting
Catherine Payne, Chairperson
Kenneth Uemura, Vice Chairperson

Aloha Chairperson Payne, Vice Chairperson Uemura and Members,

HawaiiKidsCAN offer comments for Discussion Item C) Board Action on Finance and Infrastructure Committee recommendations concerning Department of Education's operating budget for 2021-2023 fiscal biennium

We would like to reaffirm our comments from the last Hawaii Board of Education meeting held on November 24. We are respectfully urging the Board to minimize long-term harm to keiki when deciding on which budget items to cut. We strongly advocate for smart budgeting that grounds all spending decisions in evidence-based practices that can minimize learning loss. We hope budget items to maintain capacity for families who need access to special support services.

We have collected voices from community members across the islands, such as parents sharing their stories on what it has been like for them and their keiki during distance learning. We have posted these stories from parents on our [Vimeo Website \(click here to view\)](#) and we encourage you to listen to what they have to say.

Parents who have shared their stories with us have said:

- Kids and families should be given options that encourage returning to the classroom safely so students can socialize and learn with their peers.
- Single parents are having a hard time balancing returning to work or supporting their keiki with distance learning.
- Remote learning should be a temporary solution until kids get back into the classroom; there should now be more options on how to allow keiki safely return to school.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify and share community stories,

David Miyashiro
Executive Director
HawaiiKidsCAN



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

Committee Action on the DOE's 2021-22 Budget

1 message

Disa Hauge <10008312@k12.hi.us>

Wed, Dec 2, 2020 at 12:59 PM

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

Cc: Lindsay Chambers <lindsay.chambers@k12.hi.us>

To: The Honorable Kenneth Uemura
Chairperson, Finance and Infrastructure Committee

From: Disa Hauge
Nanakuli-Waianae Interim Complex Area Superintendent

Subject: 12/3/2020 Committee Action on the DOE's 2021-22 Budget

Honorable Chair Uemura and committee members,

Aloha, my name is Disa Hauge. I am the Interim Complex Area Superintendent for Nanakuli-Wai'anae and have been the Principal at Wai'anae High for the past seven years. Before that, I taught science at Waianae High and eventually became the Principal at Ma'ili Elementary. As a lifelong resident of the Waianae Coast, I have seen many changes and understand deeply many of the issues facing my community. It is my belief that education is the route to economic stability in our community. Given the toll poverty takes on our kids and its negative impact on their ability to learn, it is imperative that we provide them with stable, secure, and rigorous schools. Our schools are an investment in our future. We work hard to support kids and families with schools that embed social-emotional learning supports and provide services that ameliorate trauma. Despite the unending toll the economy takes on our families, our schools have seen impressive gains. Seven years ago, Waianae High accounted for 25% of the suspensions in the State. Last year, it was 3%. In 2011, the graduation rate was 69%; in 2020 it was 83%.

Everyone does important, valuable work. We recognize that we have to contract and the challenge is to decide, at both the State and school levels, exactly who those cuts will impact both immediately and subsequently. I have been witness to the cuts that the State offices are planning to take and I am working with my schools to think through the deep cuts they are taking also. When 95% of your budget goes to staffing, a 10% cut requires staffing cuts. Complicating this scenario is the recent shift in the formula used to determine SPPA allotments to the schools (which have also taken a 10% cut). Many schools (mostly secondary), have absorbed in some fashion those huge SPPA cuts (NHIS lost \$1.1M, WHS lost \$700K) and are still finding ways to restructure to provide services as efficiently as possible to kids.

It's like a perfect storm. And storms leave damage in their wake that require support to repair. We cannot lose kids by failing to provide academic and social-emotional support to them. Their life trajectory is negatively impacted and the cost to the State for adult social services is just too great. The estimate for a drop out is \$300,000 over their lifetime. Multiply that by the 1,500 who don't graduate in our State each year and the cost for failing to educate kids impacts us all.

I request your approval of the budget submitted by DOE and your support throughout the legislative session in protecting our investment in our State's future, namely our kids in our schools, from further cuts.

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

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December 2, 2020

Hawaii Board of Education
Finance and Infrastructure Committee and Special Meeting
Catherine Payne, Chair
Kenneth Uemura, Vice Chair

Aloha Chair Payne, Vice Chair Uemura, and Members,

We, as an education community, need to fully fund programs that matter most to student success. Early College is such a program.

Early College, a dual credit program that provides high school students with the opportunity to participate in “sheltered” college classes free of charge and earn both high school and college credit for successful course completion, has grown exponentially since the first classes were offered in 2012 – from 12 Early College classes offered during school year (SY) 2012-13 to 460 classes during SY 2019-20. The number of public schools offering Early College classes has also grown from 4 schools during SY 2012-13 to 47 schools on every island during SY 2019-20. As a result, the number of high school students earning dual credit prior to their high school graduation has also significantly increased – from 6% of high school completers from the Class of 2013 to 22% of high school completers from the Class of 2019. Despite the challenges posed by COVID-19, approximately 2,100 high school students are participating in 172 Early College classes offered in an online format by all 10 University of Hawai'i campuses this semester.

The growth of the Early College program is important because national and local data has consistently shown a strong correlation between participation in dual credit programs – like Early College – and college enrollment, persistence, and completion, particularly for students who are underrepresented in higher education, including economically disadvantaged, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander students. These metrics are critical for our state's economic recovery as well as our state's goal of 55% of working age adults having a college degree by 2025. For the Class of 2019, Hawai'i high school graduates who received dual credit enrolled in college at a rate of 78% – compared to the college enrollment rate of 48% for high school graduates who did not participate in dual credit. In addition, economically disadvantaged, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander students who participate in dual credit programs, like Early College, enroll, persist, and graduate from college at higher rates than their peers who did not participate in dual credit, illustrating the potential of Early College to close opportunity and

Hawai'i P-20

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achievement gaps for students traditionally underrepresented in higher education. Given the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has on our economy and the ways in which it has exacerbated socioeconomic disparities, it's critically important for our state's population to have the post-secondary education and skills needed to adapt to an uncertain future and succeed in careers with family-sustaining wages.

Early College is a successful collaborative strategy between the Hawai'i DOE and University of Hawai'i System. It helps to close enrollment gaps for students underrepresented in higher education, aligns and strengthens the educational pipeline between secondary and postsecondary education, and increases the college, career, and community readiness of Hawai'i students.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephen Schatz".

Stephen Schatz
Executive Director

Hawai'i P-20

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

Testimony

1 message

hughey2000@aol.com <hughey2000@aol.com>
Reply-To: hughey2000@aol.com
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Wed, Dec 2, 2020 at 1:27 PM

Aloha Chair Payne and members of the Hawaii Board of Education,

TIME: 1:30 a.m., Thursday, December 3rd, 2020

TESTIMONY: Discussion item V. C.

SUBJECT: Testimony

POSITION: Oppose spending 60 million on for-profit testing

Teachers should not be losing their jobs in order to pay 60 million dollars for for-profit testing! Common sense is not very common. Please adjust the budget cuts.

Mahalo,

Justin Hughey

Special Education Teacher at King Kamehameha III Elementary

37 Poniu Circle

Wailuku, HI 96793

Email: hughey2000@aol.com