



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

Testimony - Finance & Acellus

1 message

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To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

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Aloha!

Testifying on Finance and Infrastructure Committee Meeting Action Item IV A

I am Testifying AGAINST spending stimulus funding on private tutoring. Please fold stimulus funding into retaining teacher positions to avoid mass teacher layoffs. I have family members and friends that are teachers that are fearful of losing their jobs after so many years of service. My son is a teacher in Oregon and was planning on moving back to teach, but is now uncertain of his ability to get a teaching job here. These educators as well as others paint a picture of demoralization among teachers, fear due to the lack of job security and declining mental health. If we want our educators to bring their best selves to the classroom, we must ensure they feel secure in their positions. If we want them to create a local based, distance learning curriculum to help our students effectively learn amid this pandemic, we must support their schools with funding.

I am also, **Testifying for GBM Agenda Item IV B., Acellus Update:**

Dear Board Members and Chairperson(s),

While I am happy to see that the October 2020 letter from the Superintendent was sent to ensure that parents and constituents have access to the information, I am extremely disappointed that the letter has been the extent of the Superintendent's communication with families on the Acellus issue since then. It is also disheartening to know that Acellus is still being used. Here is a quote directly from that letter:

*"Based on its analysis, the review team recommended the program should be discontinued as a primary curriculum resource due to **its inconsistency in quality and rigor**. The HIDOE recognizes the curriculum does contain content that reviewers found acceptable and aligned to standards, and will be working with schools that use Acellus to identify and leverage such content, as appropriate."*

Where in this letter are the rights' violations identified by the DOE reviewers in the full Acellus equity review disclosed to parents? No discussion of what reviewers called "nothing short of alarming" and that they "identified discriminatory content that rises to the level of being severe, pervasive and persistent". Parents and educators deserve to know what this discriminatory content is. It should not be hidden. These are our children and parents have a right to this information!

The DOE leadership should notify parents who's children are using Acellus that their students' rights may have been (or may continue to be) violated. At least, summarize the nature of those violations identified in the 140-page review (i.e., on the basis of religion, gender, race and ethnicity.). The letter sent out in no way conveys the severity of the situation. After much pressure from teachers and parents, the review was QUIETLY released on the DOE website in November. Parents were NOT notified of it's release and where to review it. Hewa!

Please understand that this issue will continue to be a problem as long as Acellus is still utilized in our schools. Right now as you are reading this students all across the Hawaiian islands are using this program.

With more than 80% of the DOE's own reviewers saying they would not recommend. This is just unacceptable quality and our keiki deserve much better.

My daughter attends Waipahu Intermediate and I was FORTUNATE to be able to immediately transfer out of the full distance learning option of Acellus at the beginning of the year. It is so sad to know that they are still using the Accellus learning Accelerator. I am extremely disappointed in the administration there that they have chosen to continue its use.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I especially appreciate the other parents and teachers that are testifying and fighting so hard to get this program removed and a much better program instituted for our keiki. Both the students and the teachers deserve so much better.

Mahalo!
Zan Timtim
Mother