



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

Testimony BOE Meeting 2/18/2021

1 message

Kileigh Sanchez <kileighsanchez@gmail.com>

Tue, Feb 16, 2021 at 9:16 AM

To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha Board,

I am writing to add in my testimony in regards to the Feb. 18th General Business Meeting scheduled for this Thursday. I am a 7th and 8th grade teacher at Wai'anae Intermediate and I have been teaching on the Leeward Coast for 7 years.

This is the exact email the teachers of Wai'anae Intermediate received last week from our principal, John Wataoka, in the middle of the school day:

"Last night we received word that the differential bonus for all Highly Qualified and Special Education teachers bonuses will be discontinued for next school year. Although these bonuses have demonstrated significantly positive results in both teacher retention for Hard to Staff communities and Special education, the state's current economic situation has unfortunately impacted the DOE's ability to continue funding these worthwhile bonuses. When our economic situation improves, we hope that these bonuses will be reinstated. Thank you for those that worked so hard to obtain these bonuses and for making a positive impact on our schools."

Our school is lucky to have an amazing principal who truly cares about the teachers and staff on our campus. I am grateful that he recognizes how great of an impact the differentials have made thus far and taking away the differentials will be a huge slash in pay for teachers who receive them. The biggest issue with the loss of differentials is that our keiki who have benefitted from their implementation will suffer. I don't think that it's fair to say that all of us will be affected in the exact same way, however. Teachers and the students of the Leeward Coast get the short end of the stick, once again.

For example, my principal making six figures will not be affected by losing the \$8,000 bonus the Wai'anae Intermediate teachers currently receive. Not only have we caught wind of this unilateral decision of taking away the differentials for hard-to-staff and SPED teachers by simply hearing it secondhand from our principal without any sort of input, discussion or vote, but we are also hearing that our contract will likely include no extra pay for the 21 hours, no increase in health care costs paid by the DOE (which means we incur all increasing costs of healthcare which could be devastating due to the current healthcare crisis our world is facing), zero step increases or pay raises at all over four years despite rising costs of living, and to top it all off, a 9% pay cut for doing the same amount of work. For someone like me who has taught for seven years with a Masters degree in secondary ed who has also completed every single PD course possible to reach the highest pay level step, I will be losing \$8,000 in differentials, likely \$1,000-\$2,000 or so for the 21 hours, a possible few hundred a month for healthcare in increases which could amount to another increase of \$1500-\$2500 a year in healthcare costs even if it's just \$150 or so extra per month, PLUS zero pay raises for four years, and finally, to cap it all off, I will also likely lose the 9% pay cut (not a furlough which means I work less for less money, but keep working the same amount and take home less pay. In reality, teachers are working 10 times as hard these days due to the fact that we are all required to teach online and in person at the exact same time, which is INSANE. That's a whole other conversation that nobody wants to actually have). This equates to approximately a \$17,000 or so pay decrease for myself alone PER YEAR for the next four years, starting next year. Including all of the previously mentioned cuts/freezes, that equates to a 21.5% pay cut just for myself next year. Over four total years, that is equal to \$68,000, AT LEAST. Essentially taking away this amount of money is like asking me to work for 4 years and only paying me for three of them while expecting me to work one year for free.

I don't see any of our higher level officials or anyone making over \$100,000 a year taking such substantial pay cuts. All highly qualified teachers on the Leeward Coast and SPED teachers will not just be losing 9%, but MUCH, MUCH MORE of their pay if all of these previously mentioned cuts are included in our next contract. Not only is it unfair that we as teachers are facing such extreme pay cuts, but the entire Leeward Coast and all other hard-to-staff locations in Hawai'i will be disproportionately affected. Why does this keep happening? Our underserved communities are already just that. Under. Served. Ignored, not taken care of. I don't want to hear that the Supt., EOs, or admin are willing to take a 9% pay cut when that will essentially have no effect on their ability to pay their mortgages/rent, car payments, daycare costs, etc. as compared to teachers. If I made \$250,000 a year with a car allowance, a 9% pay cut would be nothing to me, but what is so infuriating is that we have some amazing teachers in our school who are working to become fully certified and highly qualified and they are literally making \$25,000 as emergency hires. Mayan Tamang is one such teacher who works with me as a graphic arts teacher. He has a family of 6 that he supports and our superintendent's pay cut would equate to losing Mayan's entire salary but I don't expect to see her living on the street after the pay cuts. What reality will Mayan's

family be facing? So that's what it feels like when the Superintendent tells us that she's willing to jump in the boat in solidarity as if she actually cares about what she so flippantly decides without even announcing it to anyone that is affected or trying to figure out a real solution. We are literally hearing through the grapevine that these decisions that will be catastrophic are being made, and we as teachers who will be forced to leave the classroom HAVE ZERO SAY. I DO NOT SUPPORT USING MILLIONS OF THE DOE BUDGET FOR PRIVATE TUTORS WHEN OUR TEACHERS ARE BEING EITHER LET GO OR BEING STOLEN FROM WITH THE PURPOSE OF THE TAKING CARE OF THE STATE.

Please don't allow them to walk all over us. Please fight for us. For if teachers do not get the respect they deserve, our keiki are the ones who will truly suffer. You already know this but it seems to get swept under the rug whenever money is mentioned. You are forcing people who have higher ed degrees to leave the classroom by showing them just how unimportant and undervalued they are. It really concerns me that this is how little our state cares about our children and our future at a time like this. Just like you said in your discussion with the Superintendent, Chair Payne... this is an INVESTMENT. We HAVE to care. We have to fight for our teachers and our kids and even though it doesn't seem like there is a payoff right now, the effects of these financial cuts will be absolutely catastrophic to the Leeward community. I am greatly saddened by the lack of care shown to us as teachers and in turn our students who will be the most greatly hit by such decisions. Please do the right thing and figure out a way to fight for teachers who are limited in their ability to impact major decisions like this that will alter the course of our state's students and teachers for many, many years to come.

An overworked synchronous learning teacher,
Kileigh Sanchez

--

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

Classroom Phone: (808) 305-2738

Confidentiality Notice: This e-mail message, including attachments, is for the sole use of the intended recipient(s) and may contain confidential and/or privileged information. Any review, use, disclosure, or distribution by unintended recipients is prohibited. If you are not the intended recipient, please contact the sender by reply e-mail and destroy all copies of the original message.



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

Testimony

1 message

Bj Medeiros <bj.medeiros@k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Feb 16, 2021 at 9:36 AM

My name is BJ Medeiros and I am a HDOE teacher at Lokelani Intermediate School on Maui. I have been teaching on Maui for 23 years. I am writing this email as my personal testimony regarding the "BOE General Business Meeting action item V.B". I want you to know that I have dedicated my life to educating our keiki in Hawaii. For the past 23 years, I have worked through the struggles of pay lags, furloughs, strikes, pay cuts and compression. I have reached a point now in my life where I honestly feel like changing professions because we are not appreciated or compensated by our state for all of our hard work and commitment to our keiki. I don't want to leave this profession but I can't afford anymore pay cuts. I have to provide for my family and being that my wife is unemployed it's even that much harder to make ends meet.. We deserve better and our keiki deserve better. Please support all teachers and all of our keiki because they are our future. You are making the decision for me whether or not I can continue to afford to be a teacher in Hawaii.

Thankyou and Mahalo for you time,

BJ Medeiros
Lokelani Intermediate School
Maui, Hawaii

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



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

Testimony

1 message

Jade Santos <santosjade06@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Feb 16, 2021 at 9:41 AM

I am writing this email for the BOE General Business Meeting **Action Item V, B**: Board Action on the Department of Education's plan for use of federal funds in the new COVID-19 relief package and annual federal spending bill.

Teachers are highly educated/licensed people who went to school to learn how to use strategies to effectively help their students advance! Why would we not keep those people and get tutors who have none of this background? We need to keep our teachers!!



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

Testimony

1 message

Brenda Palumbo <brenda.palumbo@k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Feb 16, 2021 at 10:04 AM

Dear BOE:

The proposed budget cuts are frightening!

I am very worried that my ELL students will not get the servicing they require if budgets are slashed. We have 1 FT ELL teacher and were just able to hire a PTT (who started last week) to service 52 ELL students in middle and high school. I am sure the federal stimulus money received by the State has to be stretched paper thin but it should be used in accordance with the intention it was given.
Please work with the DOE and use the stimulus money to prevent school layoffs and pay cuts.

Mahalo,
Brenda Palumbo
LHES/ELL 6-12
brenda.palumbo@k12.hi.us
Ph 808 565-7900 x247

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



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

Testimony (Kaua'i High School)

1 message

Jonathan Drayton <jonathanhdayton@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Feb 16, 2021 at 10:15 AM

Thank you to those reading this testimony.

It is troubling to hear that the BOE is considering budget cuts to Hawaii's educators. We are already greatly under-staffed here at Kaua'i High School. We have a growing average of 25+ students per class. Many of those classes are composed of at least 10-20% inclusion students (504, IEP, ELL, Low SES).. These students need services and educator's attention (a limited commodity with a growing number of students and diminishing resources).

The reason I stress the fact that our educators (common core and electives) are already overrun with meeting the demands to provide for our keiki, is to highlight that our school's SPED services have already been pushed beyond effectiveness. Many classes are packed with high-needs students beyond their legal limits and it is questionable if their accommodations are truly being met.

It is hard to understand the rationale that considers pulling funding from a struggling service our keiki desperately need. Budget cuts would be like adding weight to a sinking ship. Many of our SPED services at Kaua'i High have been kept afloat by the hope, prayers, and self-sacrifice of many educators who are willing to work *way beyond* what is required in their contracts. These requirements paired with the conditions of being under-resourced are unreasonable. How long can you expect a vehicle to drive without fuel in it's tank? Educator's and SPED services are already taxed well overdue their limits and budget cuts will only destroy morale and the quality of education in the state of Hawaii. I understand that money is tight within our state. I also understand that we need to re-invent ways to grow our economy. I know that we must work together to envision a thriving Hawaii. We all know that our children are our future. We must not sacrifice our future for short-term financial gains. We must provide the services that our Keiki need so they will grow strong to one day care for the state of Hawaii and us (we will one day soon need them like they need us now).

I DO NOT support budget cuts for the Hawaii Department of Education (especially eliminating SPED funding or the funding of differentials that keep valuable educators in the classroom).

Jonathan Drayton
Kauai High School
ELA Educator



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

BOE Testimony 2/18

1 message

HM <hnmoselle@gmail.com>

Tue, Feb 16, 2021 at 10:19 AM

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

Dear Board of Education members, and Chairperson Payne,

Thank you for considering my testimony.

Testifying on GBM Agenda Item V. B.:

Oppose the use of federal funding for purchasing outside tutoring services; please redirect this funding to saving educator and school staff positions. Education Committee Chair Justin Woodson said it best, **“We want to protect teachers’ employment. Because if we protect teachers’ employment, we are protecting our keiki’s future.”**

I appreciate your service to the community and our students.

Respectfully,

Heather Moselle
Public School Parent



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

Testimony

1 message

Ryan <ryoshiza@hotmail.com>

Tue, Feb 16, 2021 at 10:36 AM

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

Aloha Hawaii Board of Education Members,

I am testifying on the BOE General Business Meeting Action Item V, B: Board Action on Department of Education's plan for use of federal funds in the new COVID-19 relief package and annual federal spending bill.

It is disappointing to see HIDOE and the superintendent's proposal to use Federal Stimulus money on anything other than restoring funding to schools to retain as many qualified teachers as possible. While using private tutors may be helpful for some students in the short-term, what will become of all students when there are fewer qualified teachers in classrooms next year? HSTA has already reported current teacher shortages of 1000 vacancies in schools. How will laying off 700-800 additional teacher positions improve instruction for all students? It doesn't make sense.

Teachers and educational support staff are essential for students to be successful as they attempt to recover the learning loss that resulted from the pandemic. Reducing the number of qualified teachers also reduces students' chances for recovering what's been lost. What the superintendent and the HIDOE fail to recognize is that qualified teachers and staff are their greatest assets. Why would one choose to mortgage our children's future for a short-term gain? My job as school librarian is being cut and I worry for the students and teachers I serve. Who will provide the support and instruction they need to navigate this new information landscape? Will our most disadvantaged students still have access to library computers and books? Who will teach students to be digital citizens and confident users of information?

At a time when the State should be circling the wagons to protect students' educational future, why are we willing to reduce the number of HIDOE's most precious resources? Teachers.

Thank you,
Ryan

Ryan Yoshizawa, Librarian
Waipahu High School
[94-1211 Farrington Hwy.](#)
Waipahu, Hawaii 96797
(808) 307-9543



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

Testimony

1 message

Elizabeth Bowen <elizabeth.bowen@k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Feb 16, 2021 at 10:58 AM

Hello -

I am testifying on **BOE General Business Meeting action item V. B**: Board Action on Department of Education's plan for use of federal funds in the new COVID-19 relief package and annual federal spending bill.

As you are aware, HSTA is asking the BOE to amend the HDOE's budget proposal to follow the intent of **two bills being heard at the Legislature** which would require the HDOE to follow federal law and use the stimulus funding to prevent school layoffs and pay cuts.

I am in the process of completing my 3rd year teaching here in Hawaii. I was so excited to be looking forward to a contract, but now I am deeply disappointed to hear of potential layoffs and pay cuts. I was hired 3 years ago, along with **12 other new teachers to Maui!** All of us are facing the end of our teaching career here in Maui, after having put in so much time and effort on behalf of our keiki, not to mention the expense of having to move from the Mainland. This is such a slap in the face to all of these teachers who have moved to Hawaii to help and support our teacher shortage here. If the BOE moves forward with layoffs, our keiki will suffer without the many qualified teachers who will be laid off. Also, it makes no sense since Hawaii already faces the difficulty of hiring teachers in the first place.

Additionally, we do not need to "hire" tutors to work over the summer, when we already have more than enough qualified teachers who could be willing to tutor, should the offer be extended to them! It is outrageous to think that the BOE would hire outsiders to educate our children.

Pay cuts for over 4 years would decimate our teaching population. Hawaii's cost of living is sky high. If your public servants cannot afford their rent because the BOE has determined that pay cuts are the only solution, then you will see a wave of teacher departures!

I beseech you to consider the long term ramifications of not following federal law and using the stimulus funding to prevent school layoffs and pay cuts.

Thank you for your consideration!

--

Kind regards,

Elizabeth Bowen

ELL Teacher

Princess Nahienaena Elementary
808-662-4020 x429

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



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

Testimony for BOE General Business Meeting Action Item V. B: Board Action on Department of Education's plan for use of federal funds

1 message

Kira Lee <808kirlee@gmail.com>

Tue, Feb 16, 2021 at 11:22 AM

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

Aloha kakou,

I am submitting testimony on the **BOE General Business Meeting action item V. B: Board Action on Department of Education's plan for use of federal funds in the new COVID-19 relief package and annual federal spending bill.** My family is AGAINST BOTH PROPOSALS, including the proposals to spend \$48.5 million on tutors and academic coaches instead of retaining professional teachers. Instead of hiring tutors with the federal stimulus funds, restore funding to our highly educated, committed, and already underpaid professional teachers!

I urge you to end all layoffs and pay-cuts and restore school-level budgets, salaries, and positions. You are about to lose committed, experienced teachers, including my husband, a 13-year teaching veteran. He loves teaching and has continued to educate himself at night in a doctorate of education program so that he can continue to grow and give to his students, but there is only so much we can take as an 'ohana. Since we have no public early childcare system, I was a stay-at-home mother to our young kids until this very morning, when I got both keiki into their new school. I am also a furloughed clinical social worker. The pandemic delayed my return to full-time paid work and caused me to stay at home while we attempted to force our 4-year-old to learn through Zoom. We have been waiting since October for Unemployment funds and are in line for CCCH for tuition. Since we survive on one income, any cuts to my husband's pay would come directly out of our food budget and would eventually force us to move away from my birth Island of O'ahu.

You need to use these federal funds to retain our qualified teachers like my husband or my 'ohana and the community will lose out on a solid, highly-experienced and highly-educated teaching community. Many of these teachers, like my husband, also take on extra (often unpaid) loads, running SPED programs, enrichment programs, and co-curriculars that make school communities thrive and get kids excited to come to school and learn using all their different forms of intelligence. It is our public right to have a quality public education system, especially because many of us do not have the financial privilege to pluck our kids out of public school and funnel them into the private system. Even if my 'ohana is not directly affected by a job loss, we will be affected by the school level shifts that will put further strain on all teachers, like larger class sizes, lowered morale, loss of SPED teachers and EAs that are badly needed, and the cutting of classes like PE, AP, Art, STEM, and AVID. I want to especially advocate for our Kula Kaiapuni, Hawaiian Immersion, teaching professionals, who are DOUBLY qualified with teaching experience and education as well as Hawaiian ike, often brilliantly creating their own curriculum for our students. These teachers are often the first cut, but they are working overtime to educate the most underserved students who learn better with culturally-responsive and grounded lessons.

As I pause in my job search to write this, I hear my husband teaching his 8th-graders online from our single bedroom because his school has mandated him to work from home after last week's on-campus positive Co-vid exposure. He continues to teach with passion and commitment and joy. Please help support all professional teachers and school support staff so they can continue to do their jobs.

Mahalo nui for reading my testimony,
Kira Lee



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

Testimony

1 message

Gregory Kamisato <gkamisato@whis.k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Feb 16, 2021 at 11:55 AM

Hawaii State Board of Education Members,

My name is Gregory Kamisato and I am a teacher at Waialua High School. I am submitting written testimony on the BOE General Business Meeting Action Item V, B: the Board Action on the Department of Education's plan for use of federal funds in the new COVID-19 relief package and annual federal spending bill.

Attached is my written testimony.

**BOE Testimony.docx**

15K

February 16, 2021

House Education Committee Members,

With the governor's proposed DOE budget cuts, schools are tasked with the unenviable job of cutting school funds and, sadly, teaching positions. The work that is in front of us is difficult, painful, and for those people who may have to find another job elsewhere, very personal. To mitigate the losses, the Language Arts Department proposed using data, information, and logic based on the use of school priorities to cut the budget versus what is fair or equal to everyone.

The following philosophy is in line with the current DOE philosophy of keeping front-line teachers in the classroom and minimizing the impact on the students. Shared with you is the Language Arts proposal to save every teacher directly instructing Waialua High and Intermediate students. The administration proposal is to keep things equal - meaning every department will have the same number of classroom teachers - especially the core.

According to the administration, LA is the largest department on campus with six teachers, one per grade level. Science, Social Studies, and Math have five (5) each. To be fair (according to admin), the four core departments need to be equal and have five teachers. Cutting one LA position may seem like the logical solution, but let's take a closer look at the numbers. Students only need three years of math and science to graduate, and yes, some students take an extra year of both. Both departments serve roughly 75+% of the school. Students need to take four years of social studies to graduate, but Social Studies has an additional teaching position provided by the district for peer education. The reality is that Social Studies has six teachers, not five. LA was cut to five teachers, not enough for one per grade level. To admin, this is fair, except when you look at the numbers.

With six teachers, LA had one teacher per grade level. English affects the entire school - every student needs to take the course to graduate, AND it cannot be doubled up or skipped. When the admin proposed eliminating one LA position, the two 7th and 8th grade teachers would remain because of the teaming they do in middle school - and that is okay with the department. However, there are now only three teachers to teach four (4) grade levels when you get to high school. Next year, I will be teaching the entire 11th grade plus half of the 9th grade. My colleague next door will teach the entire 10th grade plus half of the 9th grade. The last teacher has all the seniors, including AP Literature and AP Language (also on the chopping block). She made accommodations within the schedule to teach both - one during a study hall class.

Not only does this not make sense, but the current class counts do not address the possible number of students that may come back from Acellus next year. Yes, they do have a relatively accurate number now, but the class counts will go up if more students return for face-to-face learning. For example, in 9th grade, there are 79 students enrolled and 31 students in one honors class. If enrollment goes up by 11 first-year students, we will be having 30+ kids per class. Also, losing a high school teacher takes away the teaming we have developed in the LA for 9-10 and 11-12. The teachers work together to talk about curriculum and students. To move a teacher out ruins the teamwork we have built within the department in the last few years. We also lost two electives (newswriting and video production) which had a decent amount of sign up and three teachers in the LA department willing to tri-teach the class.

In speaking with the administration, even if there is additional school funding, they will not give back the one LA position. They claim there are other priorities (most of which are indirect instructional positions). The Language Arts Department doesn't understand this. What is more important than a teacher giving direct instruction in a critical subject area? Please support the bill to end all layoffs and restore funding and positions to schools.

Sincerely,

Gregory N. Kamisato
Chairperson
Language Arts Department
Waialua High School



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

Save our Special Education Teachers

1 message

Barbara Cooper <mauicoopers@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Feb 16, 2021 at 12:02 PM

[BOE Differential 21/22](#) Letter

 **BOE Differential 21/22**

--

Mahalo,
Barbara Cooper
Special Education Teacher
Lokelani Intermediate School (Maui)

February 16, 2021

Aloha Members of Hawai'i BOE.

I am among the 4000 teachers in HIDOE that looks to lose the shortage differential if the BOE does what it wants, not what it needs. Throughout my 20+ years teaching, I have worked in multiple states, always in the area of Special Education. I have seen my workload outside of teaching the keiki increase substantially as parents have become more litigious and school districts require more documentation. It takes a special person to be a special education teacher. A person who knows that they will take home what happens in the classroom, in the school and in the IEP meetings, and continue to teach our kids with all we have.

In many of our classroom settings, resource, co-taught in general education or self-contained, and now in person, hybrid, blended and virtual, we teach to multiple levels, and some multiple subjects, simultaneously. All of this takes time, extra time above our general responsibilities to our schools. We are knowledgeable on grade level standards as well as the grades below to help close the gap. We gather information from other teachers as to the progress of our students across settings, search or create individualized goals and objectives, use non intuitive programs to write and maintain IEPs, run IEP meetings and complete the time sensitive PWNs and other paperwork. We collaborate with our co-teachers for in class instruction and the teachers of our students we don't directly teach. We communicate with parents and administration to best service our special education population. Do not forget quarterly Special Education progress report cards. All of this is above our regular responsibilities of teaching/co-teaching curriculum with attendance, grades, recess duty and field trips and attending grade level, department - content and SPED, and district meetings. Special education teachers use their lunch time to write IEPs as the 45 minutes of daily prep does not cover classroom and special education prep. Often, SPED teachers arrive early and leave late to accomplish such tasks as to not take away from our passion, teaching our keiki.

It is not easy to be a special education teacher but we do it because we love it. The differential validates that our above and beyond makes a difference and is needed. Without this differential, teachers might not teach to their true potential as we are stretched too thin and might need to make a choice in teaching practices or teaching at all. Special education teachers, as the well as the other teachers receiving the differential deserve it. We do something others are not trained to do.

"The differentials have already made a huge difference in recruiting and retaining teachers in these shortage areas," said Hawaii State Teachers Association President Corey Rosenlee. "Why would you cut a program that works? It defies logic."

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Barbara Cooper".

Barbara Cooper, EDS
Special Education Teacher and Care Coordinator
Special Education Department Head
Lokelani Intermediate School in Kihei (Maui)



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

Testimony

1 message

Lokelani Han <dlokelani.han@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Feb 16, 2021 at 12:07 PM

Davelyn Lokelani Han
Kumu, Kualapu'u Elementary School
Special Meeting
Testifying in support of Action Item A

 **BoE Testimony.Han .docx**
172K

Aloha,

My name is Davelyn Lokelani Han. I have been a teacher for over 14 years at Kula Kaiapuni o Kualapu u Elementary on Moloka i, but I have been an educator for over 20 years. I want to say please continue the differentials. The Hawaiian Language differential makes a difference.

I started at Pūnana Leo o Moloka i - and the Aha Pūnana Leo does an excellent job of providing curriculum for pre school aged children. Language acquisition is imbedded in daily activities and the students learn through both play and hands on skill based lessons. But I needed to find a job with a pay that could support my family so at the age of 38, I went back to college to earn a degree.

I started at Kualapu u less than a month after my 4th child was born. I was 41 years old. I did not have a traditional classroom - they stuck me in a room designed as a "Teachers' lounge/workroom" - which worked out fine except for the fact that the copier machines and teacher restrooms were in our class! There were lots of interruptions. I would go to work at 5am - right after my baby's morning feeding - and stay well into the evening, sometimes as late as 8:00pm. This happened more often than not so much so that my husband would have to bring my baby daughter up to my classroom after school so that I could feed her. It was challenging, to say the least but there was so much to do! Our school, like many did not have a Hawaiian Language Curriculum. So Kaiapuni teachers were, and still are, required to take the English curriculum that the school purchases and translate for our Kaiapuni students. It is not an easy task and takes way more time and effort than any English language teacher will ever know or has to put out. The Hawaiian language differential makes a difference.

There are hundreds of resource and reading books for English language learners in our libraries - and maybe one shelf of Hawaiian language books - mostly those used at Pūnana Leo, for our Hawaiian language learners. And nowadays, there are hundreds of websites that English language teachers can access to help supplement student learning. For Kaiapuni - near zilch. Our Kaiapuni teachers are left to "develop" their own supplemental activities - ma ka ōlelo Hawai i - to provide these activities to our students. It takes resources, it is time consuming and difficult but we do it because we love our keiki - and we want them to have an equal playing field to be successful. The Hawaiian Language differential makes a difference.

Every year since I have been at Kualapuu, we have had to beat the bushes to find a Kaiapuni teacher. Every single year! It was difficult to entice people to move to Moloka i, to live in a Starbucks free community - where there are only 2 take out places open at night. The work is hard, the island community is hard core - but the differential made a difference. The Hawaiian Language differential makes a difference.

With the differential, I feel that my work is being recognized and my efforts are being compensated. I feel that we can attract and keep highly qualified language speakers who can provide our students with the expertise in both language and culture that they need to be successful kānaka in this world. The Hawaiian Language differential makes a difference.

I would like to add - that I could have easily added the Hard to fill differential to my narrative and it would still ring true. They both make a huge difference for rural communities like Moloka i - where the cost of living is exponentially higher, and the social amenities are less. The differentials make a difference.



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

Testimony-budget

1 message

Nan Johnson <nandrew2@aol.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Feb 16, 2021 at 12:24 PM

I have been a resident of Hawaii for 27 years. I raised my son here, buried my mother here and truly believed it would be my forever home. The callousness and lack of foresight of Governor Ige and Superintendent Kishimoto however, have left me stunned. I chose to work in the DOE because I wanted to work for and with my community. My background is in counseling and I even worked while in graduate school, as one of these "tutors" the BOE is so willing to toss 49 million at. Do you realize they earn more than teachers already? When I worked as a tutor while getting my 2nd master's degree, I earned 35-40 dollars an hour? That is significantly more than I now earn. I do what I currently do for the love of my kids and because of my incredible respect for my fellow educators. Everyone has their price though and a total cut of almost \$10000 to my annual income, including the proposed loss of the differential, firmly places me below the poverty level and it will be time to quit and go back into the private sector. Teachers in general are highly educated yet earn significantly less already than their counterparts with the same level degrees. When the government starts penalizing the "helpers" in a time of crisis, it is time for a new government and for everyone to take stock.

How are the proposed budget cuts playing out? Our school has been an interesting case study. We have a generally supportive administration, but in the 1st semester, very few staff were granted telework. Ironically, if we had let teachers work from home there would have been a significant reduction in operation costs, but that was not deemed an acceptable solution. Instead, our school is cutting multiple positions that leave our keiki unsupported and next year's teachers over-extended. I know teachers who are at a loss as to what to do next after being told that their position was being phased out. The main cuts are in counseling, SPED and electives. Aren't these the areas our kids need most right now? COVID has strained our mental health in ways we don't yet realize and here we are cutting SEL-rich positions. Now, we are faced with not just losing our jobs, but losing, in my case, more than 1/6th of my income. There are other ways to cut fat. Again, don't go after the "helpers".

I think the most frustrating thing about the current proposal is the incredible disrespect it shows for teachers and students alike. It states very clearly that teachers are expendable and accepted collateral damage during this time of COVID. Do you not see that this influences public perception of teachers and in a way also states that our public school kids are expendable? How are you going to improve the students' learning experience without teachers? Are you really going to hire quality tutors? When I acted as a tutor, it wasn't DOE kids I worked with. It was academically entitled students; private school kids whose parents had disposable income and wanted the best for their kids. I think that is what I find the most frustrating in this situation... Governor Ige is not just spitting on teachers, but the kids who must attend public school. When you tell the world your teachers don't matter and make no mistake, that is what Governor Ige and Kishimoto are saying, what you are really saying is that the general public doesn't matter. Trust your teachers, support your teachers and remember they are the most important part of your team.

Fred Rogers once said, "when I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, 'Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.' " If Governor Ige and Superintendent Kishimoto get their way, the "helpers" will be penalized and our students will have less and less "helpers" to look to. If the Governor's plan passes, many teachers will have no option, but to go back to the private sector and many will leave the island. Aren't our keiki and teacher worth another thought? Please reconsider and do not go forward with your current plan. Instead, please use the funds to support our schools and teachers and end the proposed lay-offs and pay cuts.

Nancy Johnson, MA LMHC
Waikoloa School, Big Island Hawaii



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

Testimony Against Teacher's Cuts

1 message

Adonna Ellard <adonna.bishitashon@k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Feb 16, 2021 at 12:31 PM

I am testifying on the BOE General Business Meeting Action Item V.B: Board action on department of Education's plan for use of federal funds

To the board of education: This is my Special ED teacher's salary here in Hawaii let's assume it is 60,000 dollars which could be less depending on their class and step for other teachers. If you cut hard to staff that is minus \$5,000, cut special ed bonus minus \$10,000, cut 21 hours psy id minus 1,000, Possible two month furloughs minus \$5,700 that equals to \$38,300. How do you expect me to live with that wage? How do you expect other teachers to live with that wage? I am a local born and raised in Maui, Hawaii, and I understand why a lot of my classmates, and now a lot of students don't want to be a teacher. I had a kid say that county garbage men get paid more than teachers. I am offended. Please take into account that we live in Maui, we live in Lahaina which has a pretty high cost of living, the average rent here is almost \$2500. That is insane. How am I supposed to pay for my mortgage, how am I supposed to continue what I love to do, my passion, if I don't have the means to keep doing what I love and pay for my bills. I urge you all yet again, PLEASE don't count our pay, I am begging you, we are already losing teachers, PLEASE don't cut positions, no teacher deserves to be displaced and lose their job, and please don't cut our differentials they are helping teachers who work in remote areas. The data does not lie. If these cuts do happen, I am not sure what to do, when my wage will no longer be liveable.

Thank you,

Adonna Ellard

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



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

Tutors vs. Teachers

1 message

Troy Freitas <troy.freitas@k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Feb 16, 2021 at 2:11 PM

How can this be a good idea? I have tutored, butl me tutoring is not a substitute for a teacher. I have taught math for over 10 years and have been asked to tutor others. I realize that most tutors are needed due to the fact that students do not seek the help of their teachers and parents try to use a tutor to motivate their child which is just spending unnecessarily money. The money to be used for tutors is a waste and may even cause qualified teachers to seek other employment. Don't waste money on tutors.

Sincerely,
Troy Freitas

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



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

Testimony

1 message

Michelle Kaku <harumi864@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Feb 16, 2021 at 2:22 PM

To Whom It May Concern:

I am testifying in behalf of BOE General Business Meeting Action Item V,B. If schools should use the stimulus funds to hire tutors instead of keep highly qualified teachers and support staff, it will impact our students tremendously. For example, by hiring tutors who are not highly qualified in content areas, students will suffer academically. One reason is because they will not have high quality education and will not be taught the skills that they will need to acquire to make them successful. Finally, I know some of my co-workers who are potentially going to lose their positions because of the budget cuts. They are highly qualified Special Education teachers and if they should lose their positions, class sizes will increase along with the amount of students on their caseloads.

I am hoping the BOE takes into consideration of keeping highly qualified Special Education/General Education teachers, and support staff instead of replacing them with tutors.

Aloha,
Michelle



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

Testimony

1 message

John Goto <john.goto@k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Feb 16, 2021 at 2:40 PM

No furloughs or pay cuts. How can the state just keep cutting the same state workers and not all across the board. My sister, cousin all work for the state but have not felt the furlough or pay cut that we as educators have felt twice. It is not about where their money comes from, but we are all considered state employees, then we all carry the burden of the same pay cut across the board. No matter years, position or department, we should feel the same cut and not just the same ones. How does it matter if you are from the sheriff's office, budget and finance, education and yet not all hit with the same cuts. Do the right thing and make it across the board or not at all.

John Goto
educator

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



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

Testimony

1 message

Troy Aurio <troy_aurio@momilanies.k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Feb 16, 2021 at 2:44 PM

To Whom It May Concern,

I am testifying on the BOE General Business Meeting **Action Item V, B:** Board Action on Department of Education's plan for use of federal funds in the new COVID-19 relief package and annual federal spending bill.

Hiring tutors for our children over qualified teachers is not the way to go. We understand that money is a problem right now but are you willing to jeopardize the education of our children and the livelihood of so many families to save money? I am a teacher at Momilani Elementary School and since the pandemic started, have had to take on so many more roles that violate my contract that is in place right now without complaining or refusing to help. I am also now an after school traffic controller, a lunch room monitor, and I no longer have any breaks as I need to supervise students during recess and lunch. This is not only happening with the teachers themselves but all staff members. They are doing multiple jobs that are not in their job description for no extra pay. Cutting positions at schools that are already short staffed to take care of their day to day responsibilities will hurt the welfare, safety, and learning of the students. Furthermore, the qualified staff who are already pushed to the brink can and will burn out. How do I know this, I am one of those people. I've already started to look at other options rather than education because honestly, I don't know how much more I can take. I've been a teacher for 14 years and loved it during its ups and downs. Right now is the worst it's ever been. My family struggles to make ends meet and the job is 3 times as difficult. Cutting positions will make it worse. I promise you that there are tons of my colleagues that feel that same way. We need your help!

Please take this into account when it comes time for you to make the decisions that will affect us all. You have the power to help alleviate the problem and be part of the solution.

Sincerely,
Troy Aurio
4th Grade Teacher
Momilani Elementary School



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

Testimony

1 message

Kaylee Castillo <castillo.kaylee@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Feb 16, 2021 at 2:53 PM

I am Kaylee Castillo, a first year teacher at Konawaena Middle School. I cannot begin to describe how budget cuts will negatively impact not only my life, but the lives of the students as well. I pursued teaching because I wanted to make a difference in these students' lives. I wanted to give them something to believe in, and no matter what happens I will always strive to be there for them in any way that I can. However, by cutting the budget and putting a further strain on us as teachers makes being there for students just that much harder. This job is already stressful at times, and I knew that when I decided to be a teacher. However, putting additional financial stress on us while we are expected to be our very best selves for the students is an extremely high expectation for me. Especially as a new teacher who is just coming out of school with an enormous amount of student loans that are not yet able to be forgiven; the thought of even more pay cuts is daunting knowing that I would have to find an additional job on top of taking on the stress that already comes with being a new teacher. I love teaching and having an impact on students but I would really consider taking a break from this profession just so I can keep my head above the water financially.

Kaylee K. Castillo

"Education is not the preparation for life, education is life itself." - John Dewey



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

Testimony

1 message

Julie Tanigawa <julietanigawa@waikikischool.org>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Feb 16, 2021 at 3:17 PM

To: The Board of Education

I am writing to testify on BOE General Business Meeting action item V.B: Board Action on Department of Education's plan for use of federal funds in the new COVID-19 relief package and annual federal spending bill.

I am urging the BOE to direct the superintendent to rescind her memo ending teacher shortage differentials. I am also asking the BOE to prioritize using stimulus money to stabilize classroom and staff funding instead of creating new tutor programs. We already have qualified, devoted, accomplished teachers in this field. Spending federal funds hiring private tutors does not make any sense. Losing more positions will continue to affect our students and how we teach.

I am against these proposals and ask that you put the needs of our teachers and keiki first. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Julie



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

Testimony

1 message

Shannon Beeler <shannon.beeler@k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Feb 16, 2021 at 3:19 PM

This email is in response to the BOE General Business Meeting Action Item V, B. We understand as teachers and many of us as parents also that our students have struggled this year during the pandemic. We have worked many long hours beyond the classroom to supplement our teaching plans, using technology, recording lessons, making innovative lesson plans and games online... trying to reach our students and prioritize what should be taught when we have fewer hours to spend with our students in the "virtual" classroom. We worked through the pandemic when others were paid to stay at home and not work. We have worked through lockdowns and worked many more hours than were required of us. Do NOT cut our pay to pay tutors to help our students -- that is our job and our money that is being used to pay the tutors. Please do not use the federal funds in the new Covid 19 Relief package and the annual federal spending bill to pay tutors while shortchanging our teachers who know the standards that the students need to be taught. Please use this money to pay our teachers so that we can be compensated for our work that we will have to do even next year to help bridge the deficits that our students have from this year.

Sincerely,
Shannon Beeler, Mililani High School

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



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

TESTIMONY

1 message

Brandon Cha <brandoncha3@gmail.com>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Feb 16, 2021 at 3:23 PM

Honorable Board of Education members,

I am testifying on two items for your Thursday meeting.

Action Item A: Board Action on Superintendent Christina Kishimoto's discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language programs.

- -and- -

Action Item V, B: Board Action on Department of Education's plan for use of federal funds in the new COVID-19 relief package and annual federal spending bill.

Regarding the differentials, I urge you to KEEP them in place. I started my career as a licensed teacher teaching out of my licensure area, in SPED Inclusion and SPED Resource classes. I am now assigned to a general education class that I am licensed to teach, but I can tell you that those years in SPED were a large learning curve to adapt to the special circumstances and needs of my students. I know that despite my best efforts, as any other teacher in my position would have put forth, there is no substitute for specialized experience, and I know my students and my school would have benefitted from the difference that a qualified, SPED-licensed teacher could have brought to the classroom. Such expertise and experience takes years to accumulate for a non-SPED licensed teacher like myself, and frankly our students don't have time to wait while non-SPED teachers get brought up to speed. The differentials made a noticeable impact on how SPED positions are filled, and I'm sure you have the numbers to prove this. All students should have the QUALIFIED personnel and support to help them succeed and achieve their highest potential.

Regarding the action on Federal stimulus funds usage, I encourage you to NOT hire tutors, and to instead use that money to save having to cut teacher positions. Tutors, while great at their job, do only a fraction of the job that teachers can. While teachers can instruct and guide students academically and help bridge the achievement gap, teachers can ALSO provide a firstline of defense for noticing changes in students mental health and well-being. Teachers can ALSO attend and facilitate IEP/504 meetings, supervise yard duty, facilitate extracurricular activities, and in general, help the well-being of an entire school ecosystem. Tutors can not replicate these roles, and so really, it is in essence a better "bang for your buck" to maintain teacher positions when at all possible. There is no goal that a tutor would accomplish that can not also be facilitated by a well-paid and adequately staff school faculty roster.

Thank you very much for your time, I look forward to seeing you all make the right decision for our keiki.

- Brandon Cha



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

GBM Agenda Item V. B. and BOE Special Meeting Action Item A

1 message

Kelly E Duell, MA, NBCT <mautechgirl@gmail.com>

Tue, Feb 16, 2021 at 3:30 PM

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

Dear Board of Education members and Chairperson Payne,

Testifying on GBM Agenda Item V. B.:

Oppose the use of federal funding for purchasing outside tutoring services; please redirect this funding to saving educator and school staff positions.

Education Committee Chair Justin Woodson said it best, "We want to protect teachers' employment. Because if we protect teachers' employment, we are protecting our keiki's future."

BOE Special Meeting Action Item A Board Action on Superintendent Christina Kishimoto's discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language programs.

I am currently receiving a differential for a hard to fill position. My position had 17 teachers over 18 years prior to me taking the position. This differential allows me to commute 50-60 minutes one way to my school, which has 90-95% of our students coming from some type of trauma. It allows me to spend additional time designing lessons to meet our population's needs. It has allowed me to remain in the position, creating stability and consistency for the students. It has also allowed me to build a standard-based program with high expectations for both the students and myself.

If this differential is eliminated, it will negatively impact me and my students. I will need to transfer to the school in my community rather than commute two hours daily to a high needs school. Possibly will need to leave the profession to find employment which is equivalent to my education and experience. If I stay, I will need to increase my second job's hours, so I can make enough money to live and provide for my family. Increasing hours will result in less time spent planning outside contractual hours, thus impacting the students.

If I leave, my students will suffer, as there will be a revolving door of inexperienced and unlicensed adults attempting to teach the content. I have seen first hand, these folks, who are unqualified, in positions, and it is horrifying what happens in the classes, usually little to no actual instruction and no learning.

We are already paid low wages, eliminating the differentials will be devastating to me and my family on every level. I am just now back to my salary from 2008-2009, we cannot afford another cut in salary. We will not be spending money to support local business, thus not stimulating the economy. In addition, the tax revenue the State takes from teachers' salaries will decrease, thus making a larger gap in the budget.

I appreciate your service to the community and our students.

Respectfully,
Kelly E. Duell, MA, NBCT
Kealakehe Elementary School



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

Testimony

1 message

Rosenlee, Corey <CRosenlee@hsta.org>

Tue, Feb 16, 2021 at 3:30 PM

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

Corey Rosenlee

HSTA President

2 testimonies included

Testimony for special meeting

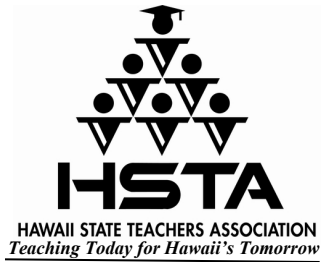
Testimony on **V. B. Board Action on Department of Education's plan for use of federal funds in the new COVID-19 relief package and annual federal spending bill**

2 attachments**BOE HSTA stimulus funding testimony 2.18.21 (2).docx**

89K

**BOE Special Mtg 2.18.21 HSTA Testimony- II.A. Board Action on Sup Kishimoto discontinuance of shortage differentials.docx**

86K



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, FEBURARY 18, 2020

V. B. Board Action on Department of Education's plan for use of federal funds in the new COVID-19 relief package and annual federal spending bill

COREY ROSENLEE, PRESIDENT

Aloha Chair Payne and board members,

HSTA strongly recommends that the Board of Education **amend the proposal to restore all SY21-22 weighted student formula (WSF), special education per-pupil allocation (SPPA) cuts (\$109 million) and create a reserve fund to meet Section 315 of CRRS Appropriations Act (\$64 million) before authorizing additional spending.**

HSTA believes that the ESSER II funds need to be viewed as a stop-gap measure in advance of President Biden's proposal for and Congress' anticipated approval of the \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan sometime in March. HSTA's research and sources indicate Biden's American Rescue Plan could bring close to \$450 million in federal aid to Hawaii's public schools. The Biden stimulus plan requires 20% of funding be used on learning loss, while current stimulus (CRRS) funding has greater flexibility.

Time is of the essence. HSTA worked with the Hawaii Department of Education to delay the school year 2021-22 teacher assignment and transfer period until March 8. More than 1,000 DOE employees have been told that their positions have been eliminated at their schools, and have been threatened with 9.23% pay cuts at the bargaining table. By amending the proposal today to focus on restoring WSF and SPPA funds and creating a reserve fund, the BOE would send a message about the importance of school-level services, schools will be able to restore positions planned for elimination, and avoid more valued school employees leaving Hawaii under the threat of huge pay cuts and layoffs.

Further, an amendment to the DOE's proposal will bring the planned use of federal stimulus funds in line with what is prescribed in state House Bill 613 and Senate Bill 270 to use the CARES Act and CRRS Appropriations Act, "to offset any budget reductions



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

that have been identified or proposed by the department of education and the governor that would result in the reduction of personnel who are subject to a collective bargaining agreement executed pursuant to chapter 89, Hawaii 20 Revised Statutes, and who are employed at the school level, including any budget reduction that results in a layoff, furlough, or pay reduction.”

Section 315 of the federal stimulus bill (HR133) said that recipients of the education relief funds, “shall, to the greatest extent practicable, continue to pay its employees and contractors during the period of any disruptions or closures related to coronavirus.”

Issuing directions about use of federal stimulus money to local education agencies, Connecticut’s governor stated, LEAs “[s]hall continue to employ or restore to employment if already laid off, and pay school staff who are directly employed by the local or regional board of education, including but not limited to teachers, paraprofessionals and other support staff, cafeteria staff, clerical staff and custodial workers, to the greatest extent practicable.”

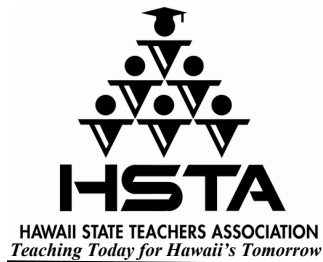
[A Connecticut education law blog](#) written by attorneys said of that order, “The intent behind the Order is clear; school districts should seek to maintain their employees as best they can.”

The Wisconsin Department of Public Education instructed its LEAs to attest that the “LEA has been paying, and will continue to pay, employees and contractors in the same manner as before any disruptions or closures related to the coronavirus.”

HSTA fully recognizes there are many educational needs throughout the DOE during this crisis. Before authorizing additional spending, the DOE needs to leverage federal resources (FEMA reimbursement for PPE gear) and the BOE needs to hold the governor accountable to hold the DOE to the same budget requirements as other state departments (unemployment insurance, workers compensation) (chart #1). HSTA also believes that all previous stimulus funding needs to be accounted for. HSTA’s research shows that \$250 million (see chart #2) is potentially available and should be used to deal with current expenses. Finally, HSTA has included our priorities and how the stimulus funding should be spent (chart #3).

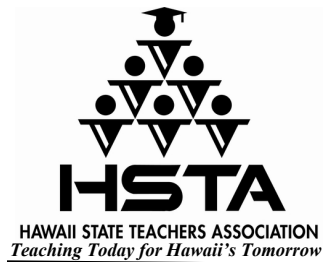
The top priority of the BOE should be to restore all school-level cuts which should happen as soon as possible to avoid potential long-term losses of teachers and other valued school employees and to protect the long-term negative impacts to our keiki.

Chart #1



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

Kishimoto's Stimulus Proposal (\$183 million)		HSTA Response and Questions
Unmet Needs	\$47.5 million	What has been the Legislature and the governor's response to meeting these needs? Is the DOE having to meet responsibilities other departments are not having to meet, especially in regards to unemployment insurance and workers' compensation? The federal stimulus bill includes \$350 billion for state and local governments, which should be used to cover these costs.
FY21 Differentials	\$32.5 million	HSTA supports
Charter Schools	\$9 million	HSTA supports
Reduction from Base +2.5% Cut (\$132 Million Need)	\$14 million	HSTA believes restoring school-level cuts (\$132 million) and avoiding layoffs should be the first priority. This can be accomplished by using \$23 million from the governor's restoration of funds and federal stimulus funding (\$109 million).
Tutoring and Academic Coaching	\$49 million	President Biden's \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan requires 20% of funding be used to address learning loss, while CRRS stimulus funding does not.
Summer School	\$10 million	President Biden's \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan requires 20% of funding be used to address learning loss, while CRRS stimulus funding does not.
Computer Devices	\$7.5 million	Can this not come from the CARES grant funding? HSTA believes the BOE must prioritize restoring SY21-22 WSF, SPPA to eliminate layoffs and the threat of pay cuts before authorizing additional spending.
COVID Health and Safety	\$15 million	Has the DOE requested from FEMA reimbursement for past purchased PPE gear?



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

Chart #2

DOE Funding Sources	
Stimulus Funding (CRRS)	\$183 Million
Governor's Restoration of DOE Funds (Governor restored \$123 million, but \$100 million was not budgeted for cuts)	\$23 Million
Unused Cares and Cares Grant Funding	\$30 Million
Governor's GEER Funding*	\$14 Million
Total	\$250 million

*The BOE should get a precise accounting of how the governor is spending his CARES education funds.

Chart #3

HSTA Stimulus Priorities	
FY21 Differentials	\$32.5 million
Charter Schools	\$9 million
Restore Base	\$132 million
Reserve Fund to Meet Sec. 315 of CRRS Appropriations Act	\$64 million
Total	\$237.5 million



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

DOE Budget cuts

1 message

Rich N <richardnn1@yahoo.com>

Tue, Feb 16, 2021 at 3:36 PM

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

Dear BOE

If this email every gets to someone, please consider the following:

1. Freeze non-teacher positions as the individual retires.
2. For small elementary schools, temporarily eliminate non-tenured VP positions
3. We have lots of resource teachers (non-classroom teachers) at the district and state levels. Temporarily cut and send resource teachers back into the classroom and hire responsible clerks if necessary.
4. Go back to 1 CAS per district
5. Temporarily freeze and cut all "deputy positions"
6. Reduce all 12 month employees and provide recall pay as needed.

Thank You

Richard Nakatsu, Ed.D.



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

Testimony

1 message

Michelle Heavyside <michellemybell3333@yahoo.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Feb 16, 2021 at 4:13 PM

I am a special education teacher as well as a parent of a child with special needs. I believe that cutting funding for special education children and their teachers is ridiculous. From the teacher's point of view I am working so much harder than I ever have. I've had to educate myself and mold myself into a teacher who can teach distance-learning. I did that. I work many extra hours to make sure all my students needs are met and that all my paperwork is complete and done with proficiency. I put so much energy into teaching I barely have time to do anything else. I also have a daughter who has autism, her teachers and her team work so very hard to make sure that she is academically and emotionally sound. We ALL work really hard. Teachers are still underpaid and yet the BOE, wants to cut what we have already. As it is my family barely survives financially. The proposed budget cut could break us. To take away funding from teachers and students is not beneficial for anyone. Everyone loses and I can guarantee that if cuts are made many special education teachers are going to find a different type of employment. With this many budget cuts being proposed I believe we will lose a lot of teachers, and support staff. Students and parents will also lose out. Teachers provide a lot of tutorial and to even think about putting money into tutorial rather than teachers is ridiculous. I believe the Board of Education should do the right thing by not cutting special education or teachers salaries. The students will be the losers in the end that is so very sad. I urge the Board of Education to not go through with the proposed budget cuts to teachers and schools.

Sincerely,
Michelle Murphy
Special Education Teacher

Sent from my iPhone



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

Testimony

1 message

Lori Towata <lori.towata@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Feb 16, 2021 at 4:13 PM

To the Board of Education,

My name is Lori Towata and I am a third-grade teacher at an urban public elementary school in Honolulu. This written testimony is being made on Action Item V, B: Board Action on Department of Education's plan for use of federal funds in the new COVID-19 relief package and annual federal spending bill.

My elementary school faces a shrinking school enrollment and we are well on our way to being designated a small school with a population under 280. Based on attrition and the changing demographics of the community from young families with children to mostly working professionals without, any pay cuts faced by my school will result in the cuts to our Response to Intervention, Physical Education, and General Education Classroom teachers. We are still currently not certain how we will accommodate student instruction without getting creative with multi-grade classrooms or larger class sizes.

Unfortunately, our youngest and most innovative teachers (general education and special education) are still under Probationary status and are not guaranteed a position considering prospective cuts. Any cuts may result in the staff reduction of tenured teachers as well. Teachers are my school's greatest asset.

The DOE's plan to rely upon tutors and not dedicated classroom teachers with dedicated federal stimulus money seems like a callous move to outsource efforts away from the professionals who know the curriculum, learning progression, and students, best. Offering the assistance to schools now is the right investment to make in the educational system. We are the trained professionals that offer the right help and support to our students.

Please show your support of teachers by ensuring that the Federal stimulus funds are directed to maintaining and keeping our trained, qualified professionals.

Thank you,

2/16/2021

Dell Marketing LP Mail - Testimony

Lori Towata



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

TESTIMONY

1 message

Seppelfrick Diana <dseppelfrick@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Feb 16, 2021 at 4:28 PM

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am testifying on BOE General Business Meeting action item V. B: Board Action on Department of Education's plan for use of federal funds in the new COVID-19 relief package and annual federal spending bill.

Our school, and my students will be affected by potential budget and position cuts, along with the HDOE's proposal to use a large share of the latest federal stimulus funds on tutors instead of restoring funding for schools so they can retain teachers.

Here are potential situations that have happened or will happen if this strategy continues:

*Students who would normally be taught by a highly qualified teacher may not get that teacher due to the teacher leaving because of the proposal or being taught by someone who is not highly qualified.

*At my school, I know someone who was told that she wouldn't be returning because of the budget cuts. The administrators let her know early, but if the cuts weren't made, she would still have a career at our public school.

*Because of the budget cuts, class sizes will be larger and the students will not have the attention that they deserve with a smaller class size conducive for learning.

To avoid the abyss of nonqualified teachers, we must work to keep the qualified teachers in our public schools. We shouldn't have a goal of pursuing tutors to teach our students during the summer or having non-qualified teachers teaching our students when there is an alternative to save our qualified educators with the allocation of the federal funds being used appropriately. With qualified educators who all have their Bachelor's degrees and many who have their Masters and PhDs teaching our students, we are setting a standard that we believe in our students to get the best education they deserve so they can succeed in our society.

Sincerely,
Diana Lynne Curammeng Seppelfrick
Waianae High School, Teacher



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

Testimony

1 message

collparl2000@yahoo.com <collparl2000@yahoo.com>

Tue, Feb 16, 2021 at 5:19 PM

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

I am testifying on the [BOE General Business Meeting Action Item V, B](#): Board Action on Department of Education's plan for use of federal funds in the new COVID-19 relief package and annual federal spending bill.

It is important to use these funds to retain our qualified teachers as we want our students to receive a quality education. These budget cuts will affect the new teachers and SPED teachers at our school. These teachers have spent time, effort and money to receive their teaching and specialty qualifications and they need to remain in the profession for the benefit of our students' future learning.

I am also concerned that our elementary class sizes will increase. I presently teach kindergarten and the class size matters for a successful outcome. Some of these concerns affect student engagement, quality instruction, providing timely individual feedback, and promoting social and emotional support.

I am a co-teacher in an inclusion classroom so I am concerned that our school will not be able to meet the IEP goals for our students. Already we have many IEP's to adhere to and meetings to attend on behalf of these students and it is not realistic to think that we can meet their goals with less SPED teachers.

Sincerely,

Colleen Parlee

Wheeler Elementary School



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

Testimony

2 messages

Allison Kohlhepp <pandayoga@outlook.com>

Tue, Feb 16, 2021 at 5:43 PM

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

Testimony on **BOE General Business Meeting action item V. B:** Board Action on Department of Education's plan for use of federal funds in the new COVID-19 relief package and annual federal spending bill.

Please we do not want to short change our future. Do we really want to cut teacher salaries –how can we measure the negative impact on our society. Education needs to be a priority - it is our “insurance” for a future that has hope. Teachers are the special people who have already dedicated themselves especially during these unusual times. There is stimulus funding to avoid such a dire choice, our students are already suffering, cutting teacher positions and salaries will negatively impact our families. We should not be increasing class size when we are seeing COVID 19 regression, so many children who are NOT reading. At our school, we are seeing record number of upper elementary students who are non-readers. The work to address this means more funding for additional programs, more teachers..not LESS. Qualified candidates will not stay in their position if they can't support themselves and/or their families with such low wages. Keep in mind, teachers in Hawaii are the LOWEST paid teachers in the entire country when considering the cost of living.

I have worked as a teacher in Hawaii for over 20 years and it has always been a depressing fact that my colleges who work in California and Illinois make considerably more, have better benefits, better working conditions. My family, most who live out of State, always tell me I should move home so I can afford to buy my own home, retire when I'm 65, and so on. This is such a sad and true commentary that Hawaii does not take care of its OWN, why does this State continue to NOT pay a living wage to its teachers. Please do not continue to make the SAME mistakes, do the RIGHT thing, put the FUNDING where it belongs in our FUTURE -all of our futures, Invest in the education of our children.

Sincerely,

Allison Kohlhepp

Currently: Special Education Teacher at Hanalei Elementary School, Kauai

Allison Kohlhepp <pandayoga@outlook.com>

Tue, Feb 16, 2021 at 5:50 PM

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

From: Allison Kohlhepp**Sent:** Tuesday, February 16, 2021 5:43 PM**To:** testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>**Subject:** Testimony

Testimony on **BOE General Business Meeting action item V. B:** Board Action on Department of Education's plan for use of federal funds in the new COVID-19 relief package and annual federal spending bill.

Please we do not want to short change our future. Do we really want to cut teacher salaries –how can we measure the negative impact on our society. Education needs to be a priority - it is our “insurance” for a future that has hope. Teachers are the special people who have already dedicated themselves especially during these unusual times. There is stimulus funding to avoid such a dire choice, our students are already suffering, cutting teacher positions and salaries will negatively impact our families. We should not be increasing class size when we are seeing COVID 19 regression, so many children who are NOT reading. At our school, we are seeing record number of upper elementary students who are non-readers. The work to address this means more funding for additional programs, more teachers..not LESS. Qualified candidates will not stay in their position if they can't support themselves and/or their families with such low wages. Keep in mind, teachers in Hawaii are the LOWEST paid teachers in the entire country when considering the cost of living.

I have worked as a teacher in Hawaii for over 20 years and it has always been a depressing fact that my colleagues who work in California and Illinois make considerably more, have better benefits, better working conditions. My family, most who live out of State, always tell me I should move home so I can afford to buy my own home, retire when I'm 65, and so on. This is such a sad and true commentary that Hawaii does not take care of its OWN, why does this State continue to NOT pay a living wage to its teachers. Please do not continue to make the SAME mistakes, do the RIGHT thing, put the FUNDING where it belongs in our FUTURE -all of our futures, Invest in the education of our children.

[Quoted text hidden]



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

Testimony

1 message

Tom Iwanicki <iwanicki.t@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Feb 16, 2021 at 5:52 PM

My name is Tom Iwanicki and I am submitting written testimony regarding: BOE General Business Meeting action item V. B: Board Action on Department of Education's plan for use of federal funds in the new COVID-19 relief package and annual federal spending bill.

I would also like to testifying in support of Action Item A. for the Special Meeting, regarding Superintendent Christina Kishimoto's discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language programs.

The austerity logic of this current administration is cruel and wrong. The proposals brought today amount to shock doctrine tactics that undermine the education of indigenous people, people with disabilities, kua'āina, working class people, and homeless 'ohana while the richest in the state sacrifice *nothing*. This behavior is abhorrent. I urge you to use the fiscal stabilizers right under your nose (CARES money, taxing millionaires and billionaires fairly, etc.) and stop eroding our public education in Hawai'i.

Tom Iwanicki

--

Tom W. Iwanicki
PhD Candidate
Department of Biology
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa
Honolulu, HI, USA
c: 808-745-8013
tomiwani.wix.com/iwanickiresearchpage
@twiwanicki



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

Testimony on BOE General Business Meeting action item V. B

1 message

Laura Uber <lauraeuber@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Feb 16, 2021 at 5:02 PM

Aloha,

My name is Laura Barbato, a Special Education teacher in the Leeward District of Oahu. I could not be more strongly against the Department of Education's plan for use of federal funds in the new COVID-19 relief package and annual federal spending bill.

My husband and I have been teaching here for a combined 20 years in Waianae, but the cuts and non-renewal of differentials are causing us to quit our jobs, sell our home here in Hawaii, and move back to the mainland. We will be yet another statistic of the retention of teachers in Hawaii.

Just when we thought we could sigh in relief with the differentials last year, we realized that our contract was up for negotiation and it just put us on pins and needles once again. How could we have guessed that the first thing the department would go after is teachers, and even more-so, special education teachers? Of course we could have guessed. It was no surprise that I would be having to write this testimony, but it is still heart-wrenching.

Please reevaluate the budget, but furthermore the message you are sending not only the educators you rely on, but to the young keiki that YOUR future depends on.

Mahalo and thank you for your time,
Laura Barbato
Grade 2, Special Education
Kamaile Academy PCS



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

TESTIMONY

1 message

Shantell-Tiare Tom <shantell.h.tom@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Feb 16, 2021 at 5:03 PM

Memo: I am testifying on the BOE General Business Meeting **Action Item V, B**: Board Action on the Department of Education's plan for use of federal funds in the new COVID-19 relief package and annual federal spending bill.

My name is Shantell-Tiare Tom, and I'm an alumna and an educator at Wai'anae High School.

Hiring a Tutor to do my job, is a slap in the face! I am my student's teacher. We lost money by allowing our students to use a program- ACELLUS - which FAILED THEM! And at the same time, being asked by our Administration to help TUTOR our students on a program WE didn't agree to using in the first place! Now, the BOE wants to use funds that could easily help support teachers and classroom supplies - for TUTORS! What For?! We have educators that know their craft and subject areas with more experience and skill than any private company tutoring center. Educators create the curriculum, spend tireless hours creating lesson plans, activities, projects and student engagement activities - only to turn around and say, "we don't need you anymore" and hire 'out of state tutors." What are their criterias for becoming a Tutor? Is it the same as a certified teacher license? If not, why is this even being brought to the table?

A solution could be:

HIRE EDUCATORS as TUTORS! or Give the Money to the schools and ask educators to become TUTORS!! I work at Wai'anae High School and we have to fight for grant money, every year; to pay teachers to TUTOR students. I don't see why THE BOE cannot do the same.

USE THE FUNDS TO KEEP EDUCATORS in the CLASSROOM! Period!

Shantell-Tiare Tom



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

Testimony

1 message

rena paopao <gizmopao@yahoo.com>

Tue, Feb 16, 2021 at 5:54 PM

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

My name is Rena Kohagura I am a Special Education Teacher at Hilo Union School Elementary.

The proposal is a slap in the face to our students and educators. Our students deserve more than untrained, unlicensed people filling the shoes of a Special Education Teacher. Pay teachers instead of paying tutors or summer programs. As a Special Education Teacher, the proposed pay cuts of 9.23% and elimination of the shortage differential would mean a loss of income of \$16,729. Unfortunately, with that large decrease in pay, I can't see how I could continue in this profession and be able to pay my living expenses.

Please do not eliminate the shortage differential or cut the pay of teachers. Pay teachers, not tutors.

Testimony BOE

From: Kit Brizuela <kitbrizuela@gmail.com> on behalf of Kit Brizuela
Sent: Tuesday, February 16, 2021 6:45 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony re Tutors vs Teachers

Aloha Esteemed Board of Education Members!

I am testifying on [**BOE General Business Meeting action item V. B**](#): Board Action on Department of Education's plan for use of federal funds in the new COVID-19 relief package and annual federal spending bill.

Logically, it makes much more sense to retain qualified teachers, by using all of the funds provided by the federal government to restore 100 percent of funding to schools, instead of spending money on tutors who are not qualified to teach, or digital curricula that do not match the high quality education that our students deserve. If students need extra help, let's ask our teachers how we can help them in our current school system.

Also, restoring full funding for schools will allow them to cover their needs for summer school, computer technology, and COVID-19 Health and Safety.

Finally, the condition for accepting federal funds requires us to not cut funding for education. Please restore full funding to schools.

Mahalo!
Kit Brizuela, teacher
Kahuku High and Intermediate School
Windward O'ahu

Testimony BOE

From: Yvette Rapozo <yrapozo0@twc.com> on behalf of Yvette Rapozo
Sent: Tuesday, February 16, 2021 7:13 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Dear BOE,

I am a 2nd grade teacher on Kauai at Kapa'a Elementary School and I am writing in regards to BOE General Business Meeting Action Item V, B:: Board Action on Department of Education's plan for use of federal funds in the new COVID-19 relief package and annual federal spending bill. I have written to you many times this school year. I am here again writing to you because of the possibility of many qualified teachers losing their jobs. My understanding is that the DOE has been given money to avoid layoffs of qualified teachers and staff. If the proposed layoff goes through, my school will lose approximately 14 teachers which will result in several possible situations. The first being that each class (especially the upper elementary grades) class size will increase. We will see our classes grow quite a bit. The other scenario is that we may go from seeing kids in person every other day (an A/B blended learning schedule) to seeing our students once every 3 days (an A/B/C schedule) due to the larger class sizes and the social distancing procedures we need to follow. How does a young child learn when we go from a 50% in person time to a 30% in person? They don't!! Many of our students are struggling to learn with our current schedule of attending 50% in person time. By the time they return to class, the lack of consistency makes it hard for students to retain information. Students cannot continue like this for another year. We need these qualified teachers in the classroom to help provide as much instruction and consistency as possible to our students. This is the only way we can try to help them learn and to retain what they have learned. I would like to see our students thrive and not have to suffer academically anymore more during this pandemic.

Also, I would like to see the money used to keep and retain qualified teachers than to be spent on tutoring services for students. Many of the students who need it the most will probably not be able to get it. How can we ensure that these tutoring services will get to those who need it and that it will help them? We can't. But we can use the money to keep our teachers in the classroom where it will benefit our students the most.

Please keep our teachers in the classroom to help our students. That is the best way to ensure all students are getting a quality and consistent education during these tough times.

Testimony BOE

From: STEPHENIE BLAKEMORE <stephenieblakemore@sbcglobal.net> on behalf of STEPHENIE BLAKEMORE
Sent: Tuesday, February 16, 2021 7:25 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

As sad as it is to be asking that this board ensure that federal funds be responsibly allocated in the current DOE budget proposal here I am asking that federal funds be used to prevent the layoff of real teachers rather than allowing them to be squandered on hiring private tutors, many of whom I would not doubt will be teachers who would have lost their jobs due to the approval by the BOE of using federal funds to hire tutors and fire teachers.

It, of course, makes no sense to pursue such an idea with my hard earned tax dollars, but lack of judgement never stopped the DOE from proposing the preposterous and the BOE from approving, allegedly with tears. You need to do your job and approve financially responsible, student centered solutions that directly benefit the students living in the hundreds of communities where our schools are found: keep as many teachers and support staff employed as possible at the school level, and you will be keeping class sizes as small as fiscally possible. Research proves smaller class sizes always have positive benefit to our students. This should be the keystone in a plan to close the learning gap that has been made worse due to CV19.

Yes, rethink the spending, even if it means cutting the fat elsewhere; try to forgo paying for expensive consulting firms, football stadiums, libraries that cannot be completed. We need to look at funding not from the top down but the bottom up...keep the base of public education strong, stable and fully funded.

Demand the HIDOE restore funding positions for all current teachers first, and fully fund all and any teaching positions needed so we can best serve our keiki. The DOE budget must fully restore SWF, fully fund SpEd budgets, keep differentials for hard to fill positions and put Hawaii's Keiki first or we lose the future to bad choices and irresponsible stewardship on your part.

We do not have time for the BOE to tell us how they regretfully and tearfully approve what is wrong. This budget is wrong. Our Keiki deserve real teachers and the responsible use of the public's hard earned money. Stand up for the keiki of Hawaii and step into a brighter future; fix this budget today.

[Sent from AT&T Yahoo Mail on Android](#)

Testimony BOE

From: Vanessa Picon <vanessa.picon@gmail.com> on behalf of Vanessa Picon
Sent: Tuesday, February 16, 2021 8:24 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

My name is Vanessa Knoepfel I am a teacher at Kahalu'u Elementary School. I am testifying on the [BOE General Business Meeting Action Item V, B](#): Board Action on Department of Education's plan for use of federal funds in the new COVID-19 relief package and annual federal spending bill.

I disagree with the HIDOE proposing using stimulus money to hire private tutors for students instead of saving qualified teacher positions. This money should be returned to schools via the weighted student formula and special education funding, not private tutors. These funds should retain qualified teachers that know and have built important relationships with students. How is a tutor more qualified than a teacher who has training, and experience? If teachers lose their jobs because of lack of funding this will hurt students. Class sizes will get bigger, the quality of education will decline.

Thank you for your time,
Vanessa Knoepfel

Testimony BOE

From: S Gough <saijgou@gmail.com> on behalf of S Gough
Sent: Tuesday, February 16, 2021 8:32 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony on Action V, B

This email is in regard to the BOE General Business Meeting **Action Item V, B**: Board Action on Department of Education's plan for use of federal funds in the new COVID-19 relief package and annual federal spending bill.

My name is Saint-Marie Gough. I am a teacher at Aliamanu Elementary School in Central District on Oahu. 18 months ago I wrote a letter in support of support of SB 2488, proposed SD1.

I spoke about how the differential improved my family's quality of life. While that amount was enough to give my coworkers a financial security that meant not needing a second job.

Please consider using the funds from the federal stimulus to preserve current staffing and programs. The superintendent and governor continually talk about making hard cuts. But what the conversation seems to be missing is the human element. As a special education teacher my numbers did not decrease. They have actually increased beyond pre-Covid numbers. The children in our community are not leaving us, our communities are growing and we need adequate funding in our schools to support existing programs and staffing.

I fail to see why those in a position to understand the ramifications of removing differentials and cutting staffing would mean for our IDEA eligible students. Larger class size, less individualized interventions, teachers again leaving SPED lines are the future if the plan of the superintendent is followed.

Testimony BOE

From: Logan Okita <lokitahsta@gmail.com> on behalf of Logan Okita
Sent: Tuesday, February 16, 2021 8:38 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony - General Business Meeting - Action Item B

Testimony
General Business Meeting Action Item B

Dear Chair Payne and Members of the Board,

My name is Logan Okita and I teach first grade at Nimitz Elementary School. I am writing to you today to ask that you prioritize restoring all cuts to the weighted student formula (WSF) and special education per-pupil allocation (SPPA).

The COVID-19 federal relief package that Congress approved at the end of 2020 could be used to end the expected layoffs and restore school-level funding, but instead the HDOE is proposing to spend on tutoring and academic coaches. Why are we going to spend money on a quick fix instead of addressing the long term problem? If my tire has a slow leak because the treads are worn, I don't buy a fancy tire patch in a can so that my low pressure light goes off and keep driving. I make the responsible choice to get a new tire so that I am safe on the road in the long run. We cannot rely on these contracted tutors for a quick fix but return these students to overcrowded classrooms without the resources to educate the whole child because we had to cut positions when the budgets were cut.

I am fortunate that my administration understands the importance of small class sizes and qualified teachers because they have adjusted our budget for next school year in order to save all of our teaching positions. There is some shuffling because of enrollment and some are choosing to leave for other reasons, but none of us are being cut at this point. This prioritization reduces student services and opportunities in other areas though. There will be less funding for additional PTTs and PPTs who help with tutoring, differentiation, and other services. We will also have to cut back on other resources that we have come to rely upon.

This school year has already been hard enough on all of us. I cannot imagine being told that after everything I have done this year to provide my best for my students in each situation I will be displaced next year because of cuts. Or to be a new teacher who is struggling to stay afloat and be told that they might not have a position next year.

Please help Hawaii's teachers and keiki by prioritizing the restoration of all cuts to the weighted student formula (WSF) and special education per-pupil allocation (SPPA).

Sincerely,
Logan Okita, MEd, NBCT
Nimitz Elementary School

Testimony BOE

From: Lauren Fuchigami <laurenfuchigami@gmail.com> on behalf of Lauren Fuchigami
Sent: Tuesday, February 16, 2021 8:49 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am submitting my testimony for the BOE General Business Meeting: Teachers vs. Tutors

Again, absolutely ridiculous. I am currently a probe 6 position and my position is on the line right now. We have 2 positions at our school and 5 of us without a job. If the budgets get cut, they will have to displace us to another school but if positions get cut for all schools, where am I going to go? I am a damn good teacher with exception ratings.

Along with that, I already have 27 students. The highest I've ever had. If we lose positions, that will go up to 30. Can you believe, 30 5th graders all in the same room? I already have 24 and we're on top of each other as is. Along with that TUTORS!! TUTORS!! Why don't we pay our teachers first, maybe we won't need teachers!! Please tell me there are like 30 subs on the entire island who are actually good subs. One time we had a sub in a walker try to teach a class of 1st graders. A SUB IN A WALKER! THESE ARE THE TYPES OF TUTORS WE WILL GET. Please tell me that a sub with a walker who can't even stand is qualified to become a tutor for kids when they can't be qualified for a sub. "Oh but we'll train them to be better than subs" as our excuse. Isn't that teachers? Why not pay the teachers we have NOW! I don't understand. Please tell me why a teachers with an undergrad and graduate degree in Elementary Education with a Graduate Degree in Education, a teaching certificate AND born and raised in Hawaii deserve to have my position taken away from SOMEBODY ELSE?!?!?

Testimony BOE

From: DW Ab <dabuel247@gmail.com> on behalf of DW Ab
Sent: Tuesday, February 16, 2021 9:30 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

I would like to introduce myself. My name is Dwayne Abuel, Highlands Intermediate School Technology Coordinator and Computer Science teacher. I have been a teacher for more than 25 years now.

I am writing to testify against Tutors over Teachers. I am asking the board to prioritize keeping teachers and other school employees on the payroll instead of using federal stimulus money to hire tutors.

Although I have found a few good tutors, these tutors are not plentiful in numbers. Also, these tutors do not coordinate with teachers to align content and instead teach things their own way. I do not see, being that I have observed this many times before, why tutors would be hired over qualified teachers.

Any cuts to the budget would affect me greatly in that my wife does not have a job thanks to the pandemic lock downs and she worked in a school. Although her position is not officially cut, she is also not being paid. Unemployment did not accept her because her records reflect her still employed. So we are down to one paycheck, mines. This is a burden that will not go away very easily as there are bills to pay, including medical bills. My wife's story is one of many amongst so many schools. Those people are important to our daily operations and teaching. My wife and I have made many cuts just to survive. The cuts also go to doctor visits and other things in life. My pay is very small even after all these years, I have not reached the highest pay. I am just somewhere in the middle considered poor if you look at my net income. My certified area does not offer enough classes for me to take so I can move up quickly.

The loss of teachers and maybe EAs in school will definitely increase class sizes to unmanageable proportions. It's already hard to manage a class of 18. All it takes, as it was demonstrated before in other schools, is one bad student to cause havoc and a small group of followers. Even the sharpest teachers I know would have difficulty in that situation. We are only human after all. And as it goes, everytime a problem arises, the teacher gets blamed, school gets a media black eye, and the DOE tries to wash their hands. I have observed several teachers in my career, great teachers, fall into this situation and they end up resigning. And even though we know it wasn't their fault, much of the problem were parents or a parent that is too much to handle that causes a cascade of things to happen. It gets to the point that that complaining parent(s) gets their way and their child gets all the attention and the others have to suffer because of it. In the end, one teacher lost, the parent got their way, the child still misbehaved, and DOE got to wash their hands somehow. Do we really want this to happen MORE often due to bigger class sizes? With special programs and SPED also being cut, there will be less enjoyment and inspiration in the schools. It will be a school of basics that will register as boring without special classes that could allow application to happen. Like math to STEM projects. You will be taking away what the students come for, or a majority do. I can't mention everything here, but I can tell you I have taught many things in my career, many grade levels, and many schools. I have seen successes and failures in many schools.

During these hard times, not once has anyone above me come down to the frontline and spent time to see how we are doing as teachers. This is so disappointing. All we get is people mandating,

shoving things down our throat, making us digest what they want, and then giving us orders that look like choices but when there's only one path to that choice, it really isn't a choice. I urge all of you to make the right choices. Listen to my colleagues. We even invite you to our level, especially when school begins opening up. Spend time with us. Learn what we have to go through. Know what we do. Know our successes and failures. Know our suffering as well. I urge you to take action and prioritize keeping teachers and other school employees on the payroll instead of using federal stimulus money to hire tutors.

I have so much to say and share but I want to respect everyone else's time. I will reserve any further discussion of my view for a personal visit by our leaders and board members.

Mahalo for your time. Stay safe and please take care.

Sincerely,

Dwayne Abuel
Highlands Intermediate School
Technology Coordinator and Computer Science
Certified Secondary Music Teacher

--

<----- Greetings ----->

Mahalo,

Dwayne Abuel

Life in this world is limited. Never be in the least bit afraid!

"The Proof of the Lotus Sutra" (WND, 1109)

A person, who no matter how desperate the situation,
gives others hope, is a true leader.
- Daisaku Ikeda

DISCLAIMER: The opinions expressed in this e-mail are not those of any known person. **Do not send confidential information over email. E-mail is not considered secure or private.**

"Confidentiality Notice: This e-mail message, including any attachments, is for the sole use of the intended recipient(s) and may contain confidential and/or privileged information. Any review, use, disclosure, or distribution by unintended recipients is prohibited. If you are not the intended recipient, please contact the sender by reply e-mail and destroy all copies of the original message."

<----- Greetings ----->

Testimony BOE

From: Julie <jamperkins@aol.com> on behalf of Julie
Sent: Tuesday, February 16, 2021 9:25 PM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Children First

Dear BOE,

We are all struggling with this pandemic! Our children, families, and schools need You to make the best choices in regards to funding public education.

Please put the needed money into what matters most, our children. The future of this state, country, and world are counting on You to put Children First.

Mahalo,

Julie

DOE Teacher 21 years

Testimony BOE

From: Gavin Hashimoto <gavin.hashimoto@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Gavin Hashimoto
Sent: Tuesday, February 16, 2021 9:35 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am testifying on the BOE General Business Meeting **Action Item V, B**: Board Action on the Department of Education's plan for use of federal funds in the new COVID-19 relief package and annual federal spending bill.

THIS IS A NO BRAINER! USE THE MONEY TO SAVE TEACHERS! Why would you fire highly qualified teachers and hire unqualified or less experienced people to work with the children? That's like firing Alan Wong or Sam Choy and hiring a couple sous chefs to replace them. It's like paying McDonalds prices and expecting Roy's quality. Makes no sense, but then again there are a lot of things happening in this state that makes no sense.

Maybe we can replace everyone looking through the craigslist jobs list? We can save a few more bucks!!

Gavin Hashimoto

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

Testimony BOE

From: Claire Barroga <claire.barroga@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Claire Barroga
Sent: Tuesday, February 16, 2021 9:45 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha Board of Education,

I am testifying on the BOE General Business Meeting Action Item V, B: Board Action on Department of Education's plan for use of federal funds in the new COVID-19 relief package and annual federal spending bill.

These budget cuts and loss of positions will affect me personally, because I, amongst a countless number of other teachers, have taken upon a second job just to make ends meet. I think of the qualified teachers who are new to the profession, who may be renting, paying for their student loans, on top of transportation they may use to commute to their workplace. I have seen teachers who have continued to teach following the teacher strike in 2001, as well as the furloughs during the last recession in 2008. I know those teachers have definitely not recovered financially from those times. I was always told that teaching is an honorable profession, and while we may love teaching our students, living honorably is becoming unsustainable to survive.

For the Department of Education to use federal funds to hire tutors instead of retaining qualified teachers feels like an insult – as if stating that teachers are too costly and ineffective, so let us purchase tutors because they will...save money? What an insult it is to replace a qualified teacher, whether they have been teaching 22 years or only two, who have sacrificed their time, their blood, sweat, and tears to obtain their certifications and licensure, and then state that students will be provided a more quality education by tutors.

Will these tutors be capable of handling larger class sizes? Will these tutors be putting in the extra time and effort to design lessons for virtual learning if schools are shut down again? Will tutors be undergoing the same "training" that us educators were provided at the beginning of this school year?

I sincerely want to understand the Department's decision in why they believe that allocating money to a new resource instead of using what is already available, our highly capable educators, and supporting us in what we are so passionate in doing: educating our keiki, and providing them with the education they deserve.

Mahalo,

Claire Barroga
Kindergarten Teacher
Palolo Elementary School

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

Testimony BOE

From: Michael Kline <mikekline999@msn.com> on behalf of Michael Kline
Sent: Tuesday, February 16, 2021 10:04 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY

02/16/2021

I would like to submit testimony on [BOE General Business Meeting action item V. B](#): Board Action on Department of Education's plan for use of federal funds in the new COVID-19 relief package and annual federal spending bill.

I am a Special Education preschool teacher at Kilauea School on the island of Kaua'i. I am a National Board-Certified Teacher, as an Exceptional Needs Specialist since 2003. I have been teaching 22 years now.

During the Covid 19 pandemic, I and all other Special Education teachers, as well as all teachers, have been working harder than ever to meet the needs of our students. These are challenging times, but we love our students. I have 11 students attending in-person at present and will have 14 by the end of March. This is an incredible amount of work in these times with 3–5-year-old students with all of the Covid 19 regulations. If there are budget cuts, the support I have in my room will decrease. If there are budget cuts, I may have to not only teach my Special Education preschoolers but also Special Education kindergarten student because of teacher cuts at my school. This will increase my class size significantly and definitely decrease the amount of learning, increase off-task behaviors and most definitely impact their progress on their IEP goals and objectives. Because of the negative impact to Special Education students, I wouldn't be surprised if there was a lawsuit filed like the Felix Consent Decree address many years ago. This would be unfortunate and costly to the state.

It is my understanding that at present, our salaries will be significantly cut. It is proposed that there will be a 9.23% salary reduction. On top of that, a 1.23% salary reduction due to the elimination of the 21 hours. This will be a devastating cut to our salaries. Even more, the superintendent is proposing to cut the 10% differential that SPED teachers had started receiving last school year. This does not make sense. We are working harder and longer hours and will be rewarded with a devastating pay cut? Our Special Education students are struggling in these times and the superintendent would like to undermine our morale?

From my understanding, there was a significant increase in the number of SPED teachers across the state because of the increase in pay. Why would you want to negatively impact our students by imposing a pay cut, which will definitely impact teacher retention and recruitment?

Please consider using Federal Funds to prevent teacher salary reductions and the negative impact to our students. Please use Federal Funds for our teachers and not on tutors.

Michael Kline
Special Education Preschool Teacher
National Board-Certified Teacher Exceptional Needs Specialist
Kilauea School
Island of Kaua'i

Testimony BOE

From: Steve Legare <leg@aloha.net> on behalf of Steve Legare
Sent: Tuesday, February 16, 2021 10:06 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Board Action on Department of Education's Plan for Use of Federal Funds in the New COVID-19 Relief Package and Annual Federal Spending Bill

Sirs,

I want to voice my opposition to the plan to cut funding to schools, teachers, children, the educational system in general. The best use of funds is the education of the next generation. I fully understand the financial situation of the State, but to cut funding of the educational system is absolutely the wrong course of action. Further, especially in the area of Special Education and especially so for the outer islands, Federal regulations and laws have been sighted in past lawsuits and will undoubtedly be revisited going forward if these cuts are implemented.

Respectfully,
Streve Legare

Testimony BOE

From: Carole Hasan <carolehasan9@gmail.com> on behalf of Carole Hasan
Sent: Tuesday, February 16, 2021 10:15 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony BOE GeneralBusiness Meeting Action Item V, B: Board Action on Department of Education's plan for use of federal funds in the new COVID-19 relief package and annual federal spending bill

Aloha Hawai'i Board of Education members,

I am testifying on the BOE General Business Meeting Action Item V, B: Board Action on Department of Education's plan for use of federal funds in the new COVID-19 relief package and annual federal spending bill.

I am asking the Board of Education to prioritize restoring all cuts to the weighted student formula (WSF) and special education per-pupil allocation (SPPA), which would eliminate the need for layoffs of any HIDOE employees, including all teachers. I ask HIDOE to follow the law by using federal stimulus funding to avoid future pay cuts.

My name is Carole Hasan, I teach at Konawaena Middle on the Big Island in Kealahou. I grew up on Oahu attending public schools from 1st grade-12th grade. I have 14 years of experience teaching special education and 12 years as a middle school counselor.

I believe the HIDOE should use \$183.6 million in federal funds from the most recent COVID-19 federal relief package and approved by Congress at the end of last year to end all layoffs and pay cuts while restoring school-level funding versus spending nearly one-third of the federal aid funds (\$48.5 million) on tutoring and academic coaching while budget cuts next school year would result in 1,000 school employees, including 700 teachers, losing their jobs, with various school programs slashed.

I, my school, and our students will be greatly affected by potential budget and position cuts, along with the HIDOE's proposal to use a large share of the latest federal stimulus funds on tutors instead of restoring funding for schools so they can retain teachers. It is important that we use these funds to retain our qualified teachers. Qualified teachers are a valuable asset to Hawai'i's keiki's future, and cannot be adequately trained over-night to replace those who leave the profession due to senseless budget changes. We do not need to squander them away.

These budget cuts and loss of positions affect me and a wonderful new SpEd teacher, who team up to serve the 7th grade SpEd students. Our students love her and are fully engaged in participating and

growing in being successful in learning their academic content. She is being let go, not because she is a poor teacher, but because of budget cuts due to the new weighted student formula.

When she leaves, my classes will double from 2 math resource and 3 inclusion classes to 4 resource (two 7th math and two 7th ELA) classes in going from teaching math in resource and inclusion classes to teaching math and ELA with less time in inclusion classes. It is difficult to be a content expert in both areas and be able to collaborate with Science and Hawaiian Studies teachers for inclusion students. How will I attend both math and ELA department meetings to stay on track with content? It just makes me think about transferring or finding another field to work or leaving Hawaii.

Plus we will lose 1 of 2 seventh grade teaching assistants critical to our inclusion and resource classes. I just don't know how I will be able to teach both 7th grade math and ELA with best practices.

My students will suffer because they will not get the assistance they need to be academically successful and meet their IEP goals. And this is just in the seventh grade. We face loss of teacher positions in the 6th and 8th grades, along with losing our Librarian, and teacher mentor for all new teachers.

Our 7th grade Health teacher is losing her position and is interviewing for teaching positions in Kentucky and elsewhere on the mainland. It makes no sense.

I worry that budget cuts like this will worsen Hawai'i's teacher shortage crisis. I am concerned we will see a collapse in our public education system. We cannot allow this to happen. Our keiki will suffer the most, especially our most vulnerable students who need experienced educators during these difficult times.

Mahalo,
Carole Hasan
7th grade Math SpEd Teacher
Konawaena Middle
Kealahou, Big Island

Testimony BOE

From: Mahina B. <m6mabarr@gmail.com> on behalf of Mahina B.
Sent: Tuesday, February 16, 2021 10:18 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am writing to you to testify on BOE General Business Meeting action item V. B: Board Action on Department of Education's plan for use of federal funds in the new COVID-19 relief package and annual federal spending bill. I am against HIDOE using federal funds to hire tutors. These federal funds should and must be used to retain our highly qualified teachers that our students deserve and love. Federal funds can end all layoffs and pay cuts while restoring school-level funding and I am in complete agreement that this is the only solution that best suits the needs of our keiki, their families, our teachers and our schools.

Mahalo

Testimony BOE

From: Katie Mullen <kemullen1@icloud.com> on behalf of Katie Mullen
Sent: Tuesday, February 16, 2021 10:23 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am testifying on [BOE General Business Meeting action item V. B](#): Board Action on Department of Education's plan for use of federal funds in the new COVID-19 relief package and annual federal spending bill

I didn't become a teacher to make excess money or to have ample opportunity to progress in my career as compared to peers in other careers.

I became a teacher with the understanding that adequate compensation for my effort and extra hours put into my job comes from non-tangible events in my workplace. With that being said, in order to stay in this career I need to be able to afford a place to live and pay my bills.

The state of Hawaii highly underpays their teachers when compared to other states teacher wages across the country. Especially taking into consideration the cost of living in Hawaii. The differentials put in place were an incredible step in the right direction. This pay increase made me feel like I could afford to stay in this career.

I moved to this state and decided to continue my career as a Special Education teacher (in a fully self contained classroom with students who have severe disabilities) even though I would be receiving a large pay cut. If these differentials are cut, and our salaries are cut, then I cannot afford to stay in this career. I will have to make a hard decision to move back to the mainland as a public school teacher and receive a salary that is even higher than what this state can offer me. My other option would be to stay in the state and pursue a completely different career. I am not alone in feeling this way. Many coworkers at my school have expressed serious intentions/plans of leaving the teaching career if these cuts are approved.

These teachers that are expressing Intentions to leave (if these pay cuts are approved) are not teachers close to retirement age. Neither are the people who have changed to the teaching career later in life. These are all very young, talented, beloved teachers who are otherwise dedicated to serving students. Teaching graduates are expressing concern to pursue other employment options. The state of Hawaii simply cannot afford to lose this many teachers. We need to keep the pay for teachers and the differentials in order to improve the future for all the students on these islands. Hawaii education has a long way to go to improve and give students greater opportunities. Losing teachers and replacing them with tutors will never accomplish that goal.

If these pay cuts are approved, I will be forced to resign as a teacher in the state of Hawaii.

Testimony BOE

From: Reid Childress <r_childress@icloud.com> on behalf of Reid Childress
Sent: Tuesday, February 16, 2021 10:45 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

To whom it may concern,

This is my testimony on the following: BOE General Business Meeting action item V.B: Board Action on Department of Education's plan for use of federal funds in the new COVID-19 relief package and annual federal spending bill.

As a spouse of a teacher, we know the special heart given to our significant others and the genuine love that they carry for their jobs and the students that they teach. Our spouses wake up and are on the job before many with traditional jobs are even clocking in; whether it be morning duty, meetings, or preparing for their day. These selfless teachers not only do this but also spend countless amount of hours at home preparing for their lessons all to further the education of the students they have been given the charge of bettering and furthering the future of. This extra time is performed without pay where in no other professional career that requires a college degree would this even be on the negotiating table. Nonetheless, teachers do all this "off the clock" work because of the fulfillment they get from witnessing a child make a marked step forward in their personal education and development. Teachers know this going into their career and choose to make this monetary sacrifice because it's what the children require to get the most out of their short time in the education system.

In addition to this, as spouses of someone in the teaching profession, even more so of one in then HIDOE, we know the extra lengths and personal payment from our own pockets that are made weekly to support their classrooms. Materials are underfunded and more disturbingly curriculum doesn't even exist for the teachers and children that are in the special education program. These two factors cause teachers to regularly have to register on public sites such as Donors Choose in a last bid to get the resources that these students so badly need. Without them, this puts our teachers in the highly uncomfortable spot of choosing to either not fulfill what a student truly needs, or pay out of their already small pocket of salary.

Finally, this leads to why I write this today. I truly never imagined my spouse to ever have to say to me they are considering other careers because up until they became a teacher for the HIDOE, I only ever heard them refer to and talk about their job with an abundance of passion and interest. The cuts that are proposed as part of this funding package are truly disheartening and seriously calls into question how this state treats it's devoted teaching body of employees. Teachers and their spouses know what they are getting into when they move into the teaching profession, what the teachers of the HIDOE couldn't have possibly known is how little their employer values their commitment and sacrifices to educate the future of this city, state, and country.

I implore you to reconsider this funding package and find an alternative that does not diminish the quality of education that is offered at its current levels.

Regards,
Reid Childress
214-507-3355

Testimony BOE

From: Kat S <kat1464@hotmail.com> on behalf of Kat S
Sent: Tuesday, February 16, 2021 11:20 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: testimony

Hello,

My name is Kathlene Suzuki, and I am a kindergarten teacher at Makalapa Elementary in the central district. This year is my second year in the DOE. I am testifying on the BOE general business meeting action item V, B: Board Action on Department of Education's plan for use of federal funds in the new COVID-19 relief package and annual federal spending bill.

Please do not hire tutors to take the jobs of qualified teachers. I have been teaching in Hawaii for over ten years and I just want to beg you to understand where we are coming from. Our keiki need qualified people to be teaching them their education. Our school is cutting on jobs because we don't have enough in our budget to keep them. We have very few SPED teachers who can accommodate the growing numbers of SPED students. I feel that we need to keep the teachers where they are needed, in school. I have wanted to quit teaching many times in my life, but in the end I tell myself that I can make a difference in a child's life. The reason behind my thoughts of leaving is simple, low salaries. If you cut more positions and even our paychecks, no one will want to be a teacher in Hawaii. I feel like our teachers here in Hawaii are underappreciated, overworked, and very exhausted from this COVID pandemic. I can't believe that nurses and doctors, who already make tons of money, are getting pay raises, while teachers are getting pay cuts and position cuts. Does this make any sense? I don't think so. We didn't do anything to deserve this, yet we are getting punished for doing our jobs the best that we can to survive this year. Please stop this right now. I need my job. I want to stay a teacher in Hawaii for many more years to come. Please make that happen by keeping us in our positions and funding our schools.

Sincerely,
Kathlene Suzuki

Testimony BOE

From: Sheri Majewski <sheri.majewski@yahoo.com> on behalf of Sheri Majewski
Sent: Tuesday, February 16, 2021 11:41 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am writing this testimony in support of Hawai'i teachers and the urgent need to fund public school education in Hawai'i.

I teach 5th Grade at 'Ele'ele Elementary School on Kaua'i. Finding ways to meet student needs has been my priority since I began my teaching career. This past year, I put in double time and energy by teaching half of my class online while simultaneously teaching the other half in person. On the following day, the groups switch places...day after day, it's the same thing and there is no extra planning or prep time given to accomplish this feat.

My colleagues and I have all been adapting our teaching in new ways since the Covid-19 Pandemic hit. We work harder so our students and their families will have an easier time. And yet, after all we have done, it pains me to learn that there are plans to cut our pay and benefits in order to balance the state's budget.

We all agree that teachers are important. Certainly, I do my part for our society. It is inherent in my position as a state employee to maintain and teach societal norms. Teachers are in the business of improving lives and building futures. In our line of work, we recognize talent, skill, and aptitude. We germinate seeds of curiosity and cultivate achievements. In doing so, we raise law-abiding and productive citizens that have potential to rise above poverty and make contributions to society. Teaching is important work; essential and imperative for a thriving society.

But when does the State of Hawaii plan to value my contribution to society? And when will the professionalism I am required to possess, be deemed worthy? When are the unpaid hours of my labor going to matter? Will my compensation ever be commensurable?

Please, put more resources toward the budgetary needs of education. We need pay increases, if anything, not decreases at this time. The necessary funds can come from the CARES Act, new or existing tax revenue, or other sources. What is it going to take for your critical and realistic support of educators? It's not only that pay cuts will devastate morale, which they will. What's more is that teachers will still have increased work loads and responsibility put upon us. For the Herculean task that teachers are in the midst of performing, we should be rewarded, but instead we are expected to do more for less. Do you think it is possible to support so many students and families, and project hope at this level of degradation?

Simply put, the cost of living is going up every day. For example, it was \$5 for a half gallon of milk at Walmart yesterday. Every month there are so many bills to pay....housing, school loans, vehicle loans, medical bills...These are all on automatic payment plans as well, and it's

hard to get by as it is. So after a pay cut, I wonder, how food will be bought? And what about gas to drive [the 30 miles] to and from work everyday?

Your decision on this budget will affect our communities for years to come. Please be careful not to make decisions that lead to teachers experiencing more poverty, food insecurity, homelessness, and insult under your proposed terms. Try and think of the future, not just the present.

Remember that teacher pay cuts will affect the health and well-being of the whole community in as much as the community depends on teachers. The state should take care of teachers so that teachers can continue the important work of raising up students to be competent leaders of the future.

Respectfully,

[Sheri Abigania](#)

Grade 5 Teacher, 'Ele'ele Elementary School

Testimony BOE

From: Serena Nishihara <snishiha@hawaii.edu> on behalf of Serena Nishihara
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 12:00 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov; crosenlee@hsta.org
Subject: Cutting Budgets as well as differentials does not help our future

Dear Sir and Ma'ams,

I would like to inform you that cutting our budgets and differentials does not help our keiki's at all. Sup. Kishimoto should cut back the higher level positions where they are not in the classroom teaching and making six figures. Those in the higher positions have forgotten what it is like to be in the classroom. We also have too many resource teachers running around and not being in the classroom. Cuts could be done elsewhere rather than cutting back on teachers who are in the classroom to teach.

Tutors are not teachers and they are not credentialed as such and should not be considered to take over the credentialed teachers positions which may in turn hurt our keikis in their learning/ We stress on STRIVE HIGH how would you expect our STUDENTS to become advanced learners without the credentialed and licensed teachers.

As a special education teacher I have had to use my own money's to purchase needed supplies for dissection since our Federal IDEA monies were given majority to the regular education departments. I remember receiving \$1,300 of federal monies in special education years ago but now those federal monies have been fizzled out to the other departments rather than to the Special Education Department. I am wondering is this legal for the State to do? Whenever there is a shortfall it is always the Special Education Department which gets hit drastically. Do you think this is fair?

I would consider removing the top echelon people who may be sitting on their "okoles" and not doing their jobs like we are. I start at 5:30 am and do not leave school until 4:30 or 5:00 pm or sometimes later until my planning is done.

I humbly remain, Kumu Serena

Testimony BOE

From: Inga Park <ingapark@me.com> on behalf of Inga Park
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 12:17 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha Chair Payne and Board of Education Members,

My name is Inga Park Okuna and I am an elementary school counselor at Kalihi Uka School and parent and grandparent of public school children (at Roosevelt HS and Manoa Elementary). I am submitting testimony on the BOE General Business Meeting Action Item V,B: Board Action on Department of Education's plan for use of federal funds in the new COVID-19 relief package and annual federal spending bill.

I would like to ask that you use the funds to retain qualified teachers in our schools. We are using our EL, RTI and Title 1 teachers as classroom teachers this year to allow for smaller classes so we can have our student safely in school. We need all of our teachers on the campus to be able to have enough classes to allow for students to be spaced 6 feet apart and maintain a safe distance. If we lose even one classroom teacher, we would have to have some students learn from home.

I don't understand how hiring a tutor can replace a qualified teacher. One elementary teacher can reach an entire classroom of students, every day, all day. A secondary teacher can reach 150 students. Teachers know their curriculum, know their students, and know how to instruct, assess and adapt instruction to meet learner needs. We also need to keep our specialists; our art, music, and PE teachers in schools who are fortunate enough to have them. A student who may not excel in math or reading, may be gifted in music, art or athletics; but if we don't nurture their gifts, we could limit their potential for a successful future. They may never even discover their gifts.

Tutors are more like band aids, they try to fix things on the surface. Tutors can teach isolated skills but it takes a teacher to truly **teach** what students need to learn as a **whole**, in context. Tutors can supplement, but can't replace a teacher. Our children need teachers.

We are so fortunate to receive the federal funds, let's put them to use to provide our students with qualified caring teachers who are there for them every day, all year long.

Thank you very much,
Inga Park Okuna

Testimony BOE

From: Maile French <halia36@hotmail.com> on behalf of Maile French
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 5:43 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

BOE General Business Meeting Action Item V, B

Tutors vs teachers??? I am so confused by this. The answers are teachers! Keep money in the schools. Why would you weaken the school and provide support outside of that? You fund the schools. You support the teachers. You support the KIDS! Its bad math. What are the requirements to become a tutor? Let me guess teachers would not be able to do this job and I am sure the educational requirement to be a tutor will be a high school diploma?!?! I have a Masters in Ed and have been teaching 25 plus years but cut the schools funds and staff to pay for tutor, that isn't insulting at all.

As a parent of 3 public school children, I want teachers and schools to be well funded during the school day. I want my children to be provided a fully funded and supported school. I do not want cuts and then try to fill those cuts with tutors. NO this is a terrible idea. As a parent I WANT a teacher over a tutor and my children, all the children DESERVE a teacher over a tutor!

Maile French
Central Middle School
SPED FSC Teacher
Mother of 3 public school children

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

Testimony BOE

From: Glen Eastman <gdeastman@gmail.com> on behalf of Glen Eastman
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 6:55 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony Item VB

Aloha

My name is Glen Eastman and I am a Special Education teacher at Pomaka'i Elementary School on Maui. I am testifying on **BOE General Business Meeting action item V. B**: Board Action on Department of Education's plan for use of federal funds in the new COVID-19 relief package and annual federal spending bill.

I am shocked that budget cuts are being considered for our Hawai'i teachers, which will be devastating for both teachers and keiki across the state. I have never had to work as hard as I have this year and this is a slap in the face to all of us that have tried to adapt and go above and beyond to risk our lives in the middle of a global pandemic and educate our keiki.

My wife hasn't been able to work since March because she was temporarily laid off due to covid. I had a second job at a resort at nights to help pay our bills and that job is now gone. Now we have a baby and with those added bills these possible cuts will hurt us even deeper. I had to sign them onto my health benefits which is taking even more money out of my take home pay, a lot of my colleagues are also on single income right now.

You are asking us as teachers to do more and more for less and less and the long term fallout for students in Hawai'i will be devastating. A lot of my colleagues will not be continuing, either retiring or choosing to move out of state or find other careers. The pay gap between Hawai'i teachers and their mainland counterparts is already far enough apart, more pay cuts makes teaching here even less attractive.

I'm especially shocked that cuts are being considered with Special Education. Taking this out on our most vulnerable keiki is appalling. You would think that the governor and BOE would want to avoid potentially another Felix case, but cutting resources to make it even more difficult to meet the needs of our Special Education students through furloughs and budget seems to say otherwise.

Please no budget cuts for teachers

Mahalo

Glen Eastman

Testimony BOE

From: Lisa Galloway <lisa.galloway@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Lisa Galloway
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 7:01 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony supporting extra compensation and use of federal funds

I respectfully ask the Board and Superintendent Kishimoto to ask themselves and Hawaii's legislators why teachers are always the last in line to receive even basic salary increases (like keeping up with the rate of inflation) and the first to have them taken away (as has been promised several days ago)?

I've worked on Lanai for 12 years, where EVERY item in our stores costs at least \$1 more than on other islands, and some items cost double! Add to this the lack of, and expense of, housing, and it is no wonder we cannot retain teachers here. Finally, last year, extra compensation helped us retain teachers and attract them. Yet already, the threats we are used to hearing are eroding this success.

One skilled teacher has resigned mid-year. The relationship between the DOE and teachers has caused too much stress, year after year, so this teacher is now leaving the profession!

Another who we managed to recruit as an emergency hire in special education, and train to become an excellent educator, was poised to leave for the mainland last year. This teacher stayed because of the hard-to-fill and special education pay bumps. This teacher will definitely leave as soon as these are taken away.

This leaves the rest of us to hang on and burn out, initiating another group of emergency hires, and short-changing our students because we lack the time to teach them at the same time we are training unqualified teachers and EAs (without any compensation, of course)!

We know there is a pandemic, and the state budget is badly effected by this. But wouldn't it be great to see the BOE stand with the teachers, and ask the governor to look further down the line at who can better afford a budget cut? Especially when federal funds are coming our way specifically to help schools where the impact of the pandemic is already so harsh?

Please don't make things worse by ending differentials that worked, or hiring tutors to help kids whose teachers have been let go! We have the time for the BOE, DOE and HSTA to work together on this. We are counting on you!

Thank you for your time,

Lisa Galloway, PhD
Lanai High & Elementary School

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

Testimony BOE

From: Kaumualii Titcomb <kaumualii_titcomb@anuenue.org> on behalf of Kaumualii Titcomb
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 7:21 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony - Tutors vs Teachers/Differentials

Aloha,

My name is Kaumuali‘i Titcomb, and I am a 2nd grade teacher at Ke Kula Kaiapuni ‘o Ānuenue. This is my fourth school year as a full time teacher and it has been a rocky road. I still consider myself a new teacher but those first two years were very taxing and it seemed like I was underwater the whole time. Teachers in general work very hard and put in a lot of time into their students. But to be honest, the amount of extra work that is required from kumu kaiapuni is enough to push away a lot of people. When I started at my school, there were 3 other kumu who had just recently started as well. Out of the four of us, I am the only who still teaches Hawaiian Immersion. The other 3 either left the Hawaiian immersion program or left teaching altogether. It is not an easy job.

I have never been in this job for the money, obviously. But that pay differential given last year was very helpful to me and my ‘ohana. Although it only came out to an extra \$500 every month, I appreciated every cent. It showed the extra work and the extra certification I had to get was valued. I will struggle a lot next year trying to bridge the gap for my new students, a gap caused by this crazy pandemic. And now I hear that money will be funneled to paying for tutors.

Tutors and PTTs are helpful. But how can they replace the value of a highly-qualified teacher? My co-workers and I have worked our asses off to reach this position, to be deemed qualified to be a kumu kaiapuni. I can’t see any sense in spending all this money on tutors and then letting go seasoned and veteran teachers. Our school alone has grown exponentially to the point that we have had to increase the number of 1st grade and 2nd

grade classes. We have turned our library into classrooms because we don't have any other building to house the new classes. If we have to get rid of anymore teachers, I can imagine the size of our classes bursting at the seams. My 2nd year I had to teach 28 keiki, that felt like my first year all over again.

Please reconsider your position on cutting the differentials for these teaching positions that are so valuable but that take so much more. And please use your power to keep teachers over tutors. Mahalo a mālama pono.

Me ke aloha,

Kaumuali'i Titcomb

"I ulu nō ka lālā i ke kumu"

This e-mail is being sent by a student or employee of Kula Kaiapuni 'O Ānuenue.

Testimony BOE

From: Sandra Hashida <sjhashida222@gmail.com> on behalf of Sandra Hashida
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 7:43 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony
Attachments: Differential testimony 2 - Google Docs.pdf

Action Item A: Board Action on Superintendent Christina Kishimoto's discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language programs.

BOE General Business Meeting **Action Item V, B:** Board Action on Department of Education's plan for use of federal funds in the new COVID-19 relief package and annual federal spending bill.

Honorable Members of the Board of Education;

I am testifying in support of using federal funds for the continuation of shortage differentials and teacher pay and **not** for private tutors, BOE Special Meeting **Action Item A:** Board Action on Superintendent Christina Kishimoto's discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language programs and BOE General Business Meeting **Action Item V, B:** Board Action on Department of Education's plan for use of federal funds in the new COVID-19 relief package and annual federal spending bill.

My name is Sandra Hashida, and I am a special education teacher who has been teaching for 19 years here in Hawaii. I teach at Kipapa Elementary School and live in Mililani.

Previously, the Board recognized the importance of providing differentials for special education and other hard-to-fill positions. The results of providing the differentials have been a reduction in positions filled by unlicensed and unqualified individuals and fewer teachers leaving the profession.

Now, in addition to across the board cuts in education, the state superintendent wants to take those differentials away.

This would be unfair for the teachers who earn the differentials by providing specialized services during the school day; and by planning, preparing, facilitating, and documenting IEP related meetings after school hours - quite frequently working on the paperwork during evening, weekend and holiday hours. This year alone, I have had thirty-four such meetings. In a typical year, I am assigned to either a inclusion class or a resource class. This year, I am assigned to both an inclusion class and resource class. I have had students coming to school in-person from day one in both settings, while also teaching students online from day one. I am sure I am not alone in experiencing these work demands. Whereas general education teachers are able to stay in the same position for years or even a whole career, special education teachers must be flexible to the needs of the students and must be prepared for any assignment.

Teachers in hard-to-fill positions would be doubly affected by the pay cuts. Not only would they lose the differentials, but also have a decrease in their base pay. How unfair would that be?

Tutors are not the answer to supporting struggling students! The majority do not have specialized training to identify and target students' specific needs. They are not familiar with grade level standards. Several years ago, tutors were offered. The results were unimpressive. Why would it be any different today?

Thank you for your keeping our students' best interest in mind .

Sincerely,

Sandra Hashida

Testimony BOE

From: Anjelica Ayers <aiayers@yahoo.com> on behalf of Anjelica Ayers
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 7:50 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY

Dear BOE Members,

I am testifying on the BOE Special Meeting Action Item A: Board Action on Superintendent Christina Kishimoto's discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language programs. I am also testifying on the BOE general Business Meeting Action Item V, B: Board Action on Department of Education's plan for the use of federal fund in the new COVID-19 relief package and annual federal spending bill.

In regards to the pay differentials, I implore the Board to not allow funding to be cut for programs that have shown to benefit our community. Special education differentials attract high quality teachers to educate our most vulnerable population. Without them, teachers will leave those positions, forcing schools to employ unqualified persons in their place. Moreover, with reduced number of special education teachers, students with disabilities are put into classrooms with a larger amount of students. In this situation, their needs are not met.

This land belongs to Kanaka Maoli. The Hawaiian culture and language has been systematically oppressed by foreigners' policies and actions. It is an insult and unethical to continue the systematic destruction of Hawaiian language by cutting extra compensation that attracts Kanaka Maoli and their expertise to the classroom.

In regards to spending Covid -19 funds on private tutoring rather than restoring funds for schools cut from the DOE budget, I am appalled. The DOE has continuously insulted teachers throughout this entire pandemic. It is ludicrous to spend that money on a pilot program that has no research backing rather than providing schools with the funds they need to operate. I view this as an attack on Hawaii's public schools. I ask the Board to not approve the DOE's plan to use federal funds to hire tutors and instead prioritize keeping teachers and other school professionals on payroll.

My name is Anjelica Ayers. I am a 4th grade teacher from Queen Kaahumanu School. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Testimony BOE

From: Ezra Witsman <yoshitoshi2@yahoo.com> on behalf of Ezra Witsman
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 7:51 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for BOE General Business Meeting Action Item V, B: Board Action on Department of Education's plan for use of federal funds in the new COVID-19 relief package and annual federal spending bill.

Aloha Board Members,

I am submitting testimony for [BOE General Business Meeting Action Item V, B](#): Board Action on Department of Education's plan for use of federal funds in the new COVID-19 relief package and annual federal spending bill.

My name is Ezra Witsman and I have been a social studies teacher at Kealakehe High School for 18 years. During this pandemic the education of students has suffered. The students' suffering will be increased if teacher positions are eliminated.

The monies from the most recent COVID-19 federal relief package should be used to eliminate the need for layoffs of any HIDOE employees, including teachers. Additionally, I would ask HIDOE to follow the law by using federal stimulus funding to avoid future pay cuts.

Instead of using the federal funds from the last COVID-19 relief package to hire tutors and academic coaches, these funds should be used to avoid laying off any HIDOE employee, including teachers.

Thus, I would ask the Board to prioritize restoring all cuts to the weighted student formula (WSF) and special education per-pupil allocation (SPPA).

Mahalo nui loa for reading my testimony. Take care, Ezra Witsman

Testimony BOE

From: Ida Kila <idak@hcapweb.org> on behalf of Ida Kila
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 7:56 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

PLEASE save our at risk SPED children. DO NOT cut needed funds and resources for these children's programs. Please provide and protect these teachers that give so much time, energy, love and care to our children. They also spend their OWN monies on their classrooms. To purposely take away needed monies to provide for these teachers and children is a disgusting and weak act and abuse of power!! You would punishing the meek and needy! Step up all of you and bless these people!
Ida Hokulani Kila

Testimony BOE

From: Calley Neva <calley.neva@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Calley Neva
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 8:01 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony--Action Item B

This testimony is for the BOE General Business Meeting Action Item B

Please prioritize certified teachers and other school employees over hiring tutors. This is a huge slap in the face to our hard working teachers and staff. Qualified teachers have the knowledge and skills to teach our students. By cutting positions students will be forced into bigger class sizes with significantly less support. This is going to affect the quality of education, and retention of good teachers. A state that doesn't prioritize it's teachers is not a state I want to work in. Taking a pay cut will leave me no choice but to leave the DOE and pursue work elsewhere. I urge you to keep as many teachers and employees in their positions as possible.

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

Testimony BOE

From: The Burtons <kauaiburtons@gmail.com> on behalf of The Burtons
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 8:06 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for BOE General Business Meeting Action Item V, B

Aloha,

I am writing today to plead that you continue to fund all of our teacher positions across the state.

I am an elementary school teacher on Kauai. I have been successfully teaching Kindergarten on Kauai for 12 years. I love what I do, and I am very worried about Governor Ige's proposed cuts to education.

I was very saddened, and extremely concerned, when I learned that our school may be losing now up to 13 classroom & SPED teachers next school year (that is 20% of teachers at our school). A loss of this many teachers will be devastating to our student population of almost 1,000 elementary students - mostly low income and a large ELL population. All of our grade levels will be impacted, as well as our SPED dept., which is already overwhelmed. We need to find a way to save these positions! Our class-sizes will go up, making it difficult to provide in-person instruction on alternating days. We would then have to expand to an A/B/C day rotating schedule, further cutting in-person learning time, in order to accommodate our increased class size during the COVID pandemic. This would be detrimental to our students, causing them to fall even further behind than they might already be this school year.

On a wider scope, cutting large numbers of teachers across the state will cause disruption at all schools, with teachers having higher years of service bumping other tenured teachers out of their positions at other schools, causing anxiety, frustration, and resentment among our tenured professionals, and bumping experienced teachers into less familiar grade levels or out of their specialties, hence slowing their effectiveness. Morale during this already challenging time will sink lower. Even more quality, tenured teachers may be lost, across the board.

Additionally, so much effort and energy has been put into hiring new teachers into the profession in order to address our teacher shortage. During the last few years we have gained so many amazingly talented, caring, and hard-working new teachers at our schools across the state. It would be a shame to lose them at this time when students need good teachers the most.

We are praying that our new President and new U.S. Senators will provide more funding to states and to schools. I know that the Biden Administration pledged (Thurs. 1/14/21) a desire to provide the states monies to help retain teachers, nurses, and other essential workers. We appreciate your support for this funding!

PLEASE HELP INSURE THAT ALL PREVIOUSLY RECEIVED CARES ACT MONIES GO TOWARD RETAINING AS MANY TEACHERS AS POSSIBLE!

Teachers are essential! We love our students and our work! We have shown flexibility, creativity, and endurance during this extremely challenging time in education! And, despite the challenges, many students are flourishing. Please continue to support us in supporting our keiki!

Mahalo for hearing my statement. I love what I do! And I care deeply about Hawaii's students and our teachers!

Sincerely,

Laura Burton
Kauai Teacher

Testimony BOE

From: Ashley Katamoto <akatomoto13@gmail.com> on behalf of Ashley Katamoto
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 8:13 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Dear Board of Education,

This testimony is in relation to BOE General Business Meeting Action Item V, B. I am writing this testimony as a charter school visual art teacher, and would like to request that you use the federal funds to help stabilize the school budgets to prevent cuts. I understand that right now funds are set to be used to create tutor and coaching jobs rather than prevent teachers from losing their jobs. I don't agree with this action as Hawai'i is already in a teacher shortage and we cannot afford to lose more qualified teachers. I believe that highly qualified teachers can help to close the gap created by this pandemic better than tutors and coaches can. If we do not use the funds to stabilize the budget, teachers will lose their jobs and class sizes will increase. Not only that, but teachers like me who offer classes outside the standard "core" classes will be at risk. To me this will only increase the number of students falling through the cracks as teachers will have to even less time during their teaching for individual help with so many students in the classroom. And students will lose out on the opportunity to learn in different ways in classes like art, music, physical education, and other electives. I firmly believe that each and every teacher has gone above and beyond during this pandemic. It has by far been the most challenging year of my eight year teaching career. I think that we all know that there will be budget shortfalls and that even with the federal funding, it will be a long road ahead to recovery. That being said, I feel that hearing that the money we fought hard to get in congress will not be used to help to keep and maintain highly qualified teachers in the classroom is disappointing and an inappropriate use of funds.

Thank you for all that you do to help create a better public education system in Hawai'i and thank you for taking the time to read through and consider my testimony.

Ashley Katamoto

Testimony BOE

From: K <tolaer@hotmail.com> on behalf of K
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 8:17 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony: Action item V.B.

Ridiculous! Why use millions of dollars to pay for special tutors when that money could be used to pay to keep teachers in the classroom? Smaller class sizes, offerings of afterschool tutoring or summer school classes conducted by qualified teachers would help to address the concerns of those students who have been negatively impacted by COVID-19. If parents (and students) are reluctant to return to in-person instruction, how will hiring tutors help? Use that monies to keep teachers and help with classroom size and instruction. Do you know how difficult it is to conduct in-person AND online lessons at the same time? Do you know how much more time and effort teachers are working to develop lessons for in-person and online instruction?

Don't use the monies for tutors--keep the teachers!

Thank you,

Kathryn Inouye
Linapuni School
National Board Certified Teacher

Testimony BOE

From: J T <tamajej@gmail.com> on behalf of J T
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 8:32 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Hello,

I am testifying on the BOE General Business Meeting Action Item V, B: Board Action on Department of Education's plan for use of federal funds in the new COVID-19 relief package and annual federal spending bill.

As a DOE teacher of 21 years, I do not feel that my service is appreciated when federal funding is being used to hire personal tutors rather than support the much needed funding for the public schools. Now more than ever we need to support our public schools and teachers if we want to provide the quality education that our keiki deserve. How does it make logical sense to use resources for an outside source rather than use the trained professionals within your own organization? To make matters worse, public schools are struggling with the fact that there will be budget cuts ahead and the possibility of letting go of teachers. This will have a drastic impact on the entire school community for the sake of hiring private tutors. Please consider the broader consequences of these actions when making your decision.

Thank you,

Jacob Tamaye

Testimony BOE

From: Tracy Deshield <tracy.deshield@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Tracy Deshield
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 8:33 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: re: Testimony!

To Whom it Concerns,

Could you please explain to me why the HIDOE released a revised plan explaining how it proposes to use \$183.6 million in federal funds from the most recent COVID-19 federal relief package and approved by Congress at the end of last year. If the federal funds could be used to end all layoffs and pay cuts while restoring school-level funding, why won't this happen? Why is the HIDOE planning on using it to aid tutoring and academic coaching? Plus, add to those services while budget cuts for next year will result in 1,00 school employees, including 700 teachers, losing their jobs, from various school programs being slashed.

The superintendent appears to be targeting teachers for discontinuing the shortage differentials. What about the other HIDOE employees who receive shortage differentials?

I'm a special education teacher. This is an area that has been in need of teachers for as long as I've been teaching (23yrs) in Hawaii. The differential has closed the gap on the number of special education teachers needed! For too long, our special needs students have gone with non-qualified teachers in the classroom because the positions were hard to fill. The pay differential has made a huge impact in filling those hard to fill places. It has also taken the burden off the already burdened special education teachers in the classrooms trying to carry the load because of the lack of special education teachers.

According to data, these differentials have made a huge difference and have decreased vacancies in shortage areas by 66% in just the last year alone!!!

How is the superintendent taking a 10% cut to the HIDOE's budget when on 1/21, Gov. Ige restored a great majority of the HIDOE's cuts, reducing the original 10% reduction to a 2.5% reduction. It doesn't factor out if you're looking at \$100 million in cuts to the HIDOE's budget this school year. The cuts next yr rise to about 8.6% which is still not the 10% she referred to in her memo!

If Kishimoto really cares about Hawaii's Keiki and the school system, she will rethink what she's proposing. Let's just see how she really cares!

Mahalo,

Tracy (Special Education Teacher)

Testimony BOE

From: James Atkins <james.atkins@k12.hi.us> on behalf of James Atkins
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 8:54 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Budget Cuts

BOE Members:

Re: BOE General Business Meeting Action Item V, B

Using COVID relief funds to hire tutors at the expense of experienced, qualified teachers makes no sense. Like many schools in Hawai'i, my school is in a rural area. Given that, it would be quite difficult to even find tutors with enough knowledge in a content area to be effective. How would these tutors operate? Would it be via distance learning? Haven't students had enough of that? Why not allow teachers to use their expertise to teach our students? We are trained professionals. What kind of criteria would be used to hire a tutor? Again, it makes no sense. It would be bad for our students. Hawai'i has a teacher shortage. Using these funds to hire tutors instead of fairly compensating teachers will only make the situation worse. It is my understanding that the funds were supposed to be used to avoid budget cuts. Why would you use it any other way? The ones who will suffer the most will be our students.

James Atkins
Honoka'a High and Intermediate

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

Testimony BOE

From: N <nikki.lashelle.b@gmail.com> on behalf of N
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 9:02 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Restore the Budget

Dear Board Members,

I am writing to ask that you restore the budget. We know that a fully resourced school system, which also includes staff, is the best way for students to learn and thrive in order to reach their goals. I appreciate your time and for listening. I leave you with the quote that moved me to write in solidarity:

"Mahalo for all your hard work and dedication. We promise to fight for you and for the quality public education our keiki deserve."

Thank you,

Nikki Baker

Testimony BOE

From: Julia Fernandez <juliafern0908@gmail.com> on behalf of Julia Fernandez
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 9:04 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am submitting testimony regarding BOE General Business Meeting **Action Item V, B:** Board Action on Department of Education's plan for use of federal funds in the new COVID-19 relief package and annual federal spending bill.

It is absolutely ridiculous to cut teacher's pay and hire tutors. What you need to consider is to use the federal funds to stabilize the status quo. You need to keep teacher's pay for our economy to continue. You need to keep teacher's pay to educate our youth. You need to keep teacher's pay to support our community and show we are strong and can withstand anything. You need to keep teacher's pay for my son's sake.

Don't pivot and hire tutors. Doing this would create more work and headache for our community. We already have enough on our plate as parents and students. My child, a kindergartener, needs stability and consistency. He wakes up at 6:15 am every morning. He goes to school 2 days a week. The other days he goes to Kama`aina kids and has to log on to a Webex class by himself three days a week. This is a lot of pressure to put on a 6 year old. I do not want to deal with a tutor on top of all of this. I don't want to know in the back of my mind that my son's teacher has to work the same and her pay is cut. Absolutely not; this is unacceptable!!

My son's school schedule and placement has changed 3 times this school year. I don't want to deal with another change because now he would have to work with a tutor. That's one more person that he would have to get to know with more rules and procedures to follow. I like his teacher now. She's amazing. Pay her well with the federal funds.

Mahalo for your consideration,
Julia Fernandez
Mom of a DOE Kindergartener

Testimony BOE

From: Justin Allen <allenjc511@gmail.com> on behalf of Justin Allen
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 9:21 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony BOE General Business Meeting Action Item V, B

Dear BOE,

I am going to keep this short and sweet. Why would anyone consider hiring tutors with Federal Stimulus money when the TEACHERS are being threatened with pay cuts and job loss? Teachers can barely afford to live in Hawaii as it is (with no pay cuts or furloughs). Take care of the ones that have been working so hard through this whole pandemic for the students; that's the teachers, in case there is confusion. There shouldn't be any mention of tutors until we ensure our teachers at LEAST retain their current salary moving forward. Good grief. Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony.

Sincerely,
Justin Allen
Secondary Mathematics Educator

Testimony BOE

From: Gordon Piianaia <heulup@yahoo.com> on behalf of Gordon Piianaia
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 9:28 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: testimony

My name is Gordon Piianaia, I am a teacher at Keaau Middle School(7th grade Social Studies). I humbly ask that you do your very best to make sure that teachers continue to be funded. We are all working tirelessly to not only teach via distance learning, but we are already bringing students back to school. This is all being done with little to no support from the DOE! We are doing this on our own and the leadership from our DOE has been inadequate at best. Many of the supplies we are using to "reopen" to support our students is being paid for from our own wallets and now we're being told that we'll be given even less \$. Where has Kishimoto been throughout the decision making process to decide whether or not to bring back students? Are those making these decisions to fund our schools and deciding our fate even concerned that they've completely left our schools without guidance? Never as a DOE teacher(16 years) have I ever felt so unsupported by our state leadership. I get it, times are tough financially(even though the Fed has given significant support), but if our schools and DOE is working together and united for our State, then why are our leaders walking out of the room and leaving teachers, who let's face it, are really the front liners alongside of all school staff and personnel, being left unsupported. As teachers we don't sit behind a desk in some office tucked away from the realities of sitting in a class of 10-15. We don't have that freedom of choice. What we do have though is a Superintendent who not only believes it is fair to pass the buck and let schools decide for themselves what's best(which is incredibly divisive) and let it be known that you'll also be paid less, even though the funding is there. We're going back to face to face and many haven't even been vaccinated yet! But we're doing it anyway because that's what we've always done, bare the brunt of the decisions that our leadership makes and feel unsupported and left to pay for things ourselves yet again, this time with just less \$. Mahalo for being board members and making decisions that will hopefully impact our students, and school communities for the better.

Testimony BOE

From: heather sokei <heathersokei@gmail.com> on behalf of heather sokei
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 9:28 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Using CARES act funds/COVID relief monies to stop the cuts to school budgets.

My name is Heather Sokei I am not only a parent but I am also a kinder teacher at the same school that my students attend. This school year has been difficult for not just myself but for my children as well. With current budget cuts my school will be losing a significant amount of teachers thus raising our class sizes. Even with the new CDC guidelines of 3 feet we cannot accommodate 20-29 students in a class daily. We are looking at an ABC rotation for students. So much learning has been taken away from the students this year it will be nearly impossible to teach them the basic reading skills if we are at a ABC rotation next school year. We are putting so much on our parents and most of the time no work is done at home which is adding to the gap that we are starting to see in our students. Money has not come down to the schools which is causing so much uncertainty. What happened at the beginning of this school year was unacceptable. We as teachers were forced to make plans and change them daily. We talk about our students and their mental health as that is important most teachers are going through the toughest time all while being bashed by parents constantly. I love teaching so much and I hate the fact that I have to now think about leaving the profession because of so many shortcomings from our government and leadership. Comments made by some BOE members that teachers need to be more accommodating for their distance learners are ridiculous. Not all schools have a specified teacher to handle their distance learners. I as a classroom teacher have to handle my inperson students as well as my distance. By cutting funds we will be handling more students as well as juggling more distance students all while getting paid less.

This does not even touch on the fact that most teachers are buying more snacks, clothing, and basic necessities for their students as well. So we will be getting less pay all while doing 10X the amount of work. Most of us signed up to be a teacher to make a difference in our students' lives and by not allocating funds properly the State of Hawaii will be losing a significant amount of talented and dedicated teachers. I have many years to go till retirement and I would love to keep doing what I love but this pay cut will be detrimental for my family of 6. I appreciate that the BOE has been making more sense than our Superintendent whom seems to want to please the parents and general public all while giving us teachers the short end of the stick. I hope to keep doing something that makes me so happy.

-Heather Sokei

Testimony BOE

From: Robert Lozano <rnalozano@yahoo.com> on behalf of Robert Lozano
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 1:29 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: Robert Lozano
Subject: Testimony

I am testifying on [BOE General Business Meeting action item V. B](#): Board Action on Department of Education's plan for use of federal funds in the new COVID-19 relief package and annual federal spending bill.

Aloha,

My name is Robert Lozano. I am a teacher at Waikoloa Elementary & Middle School K-8 on the Big Island of Hawaii. Please ensure that federal funds are used to offset planned budget cuts and pending layoffs in current and future school years. Current and future budgets will have a negative impact on my school without federal funds being used in schools.

My school's administration has shared how budget cuts will affect our school programs in the 2021-2022 school year. Five to seven teacher positions are planned to be cut in the budget proposed by our school's administration. Resource classes and elective classes will be cut as a result. Students will not have classes such as music, art, P.E., and Hawaiian Studies as a result of budget cuts. Pending layoffs will also affect how many support personnel will be available to meet the needs of our students with special needs, English language learners, and students who need extra help in a variety of academic areas. My son, a student at the school I teach at, and others will directly suffer less educational opportunities and support from a combination of furloughs, budget cuts, and layoffs.

The financial impact of not using federal funds for personnel will make it difficult to cover the rising costs of utilities, food, transportation, and health insurance. Less disposable income will put a strain on covering my own children's current college tuition as well as lessen the amount of money I can contribute to goods and services in my immediate community.

Please consider the combined impact our schools and the greater community will have as a result of implementing furloughs, budget cuts, and layoffs when you vote on these measures as a Board of Education member. If we take such shortsighted measures now, both the immediate and long-term adverse effects to our schools, our students, and our communities will be felt for years to come.

Mahalo,
Robert Lozano
Teacher
Waikoloa Elementary & Middle School

Sent from my iPad

Testimony BOE

From: Natalia Kalama <nkalama@makahaelemschool.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Natalia Kalama
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 1:26 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: concerns for budget cuts

Aloha,

I would like to voice my concern for the budget cuts that will affect not just me but my family as well. Many of us are our only source of income and rely on this job to support our families needs and well being.

The way the funds will be disbursed is going to impact not for good reasons but cause a lot of hardship.

Thank you,

Natalia

Testimony BOE

From: Luz Larotta <luz.larotta@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Luz Larotta
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 1:24 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am testifying on BOE General Business Meeting on action item V.B. Board Action on Department of Education's plan for use of federal funds in the new Covid-19 relief package
I have been a teacher for 5 years in Hawaii. We need more qualified teachers NO TUTORS. Invest the money in good instruction with prepared teachers. A tutor does not have the knowledge of imparting the right instruction. Our students will suffer more and more, their scores will not improve.
If I receive a pay cut, I will not be able to pay my rent or live in Hawaii because it is very expensive. Food and housing are very high. Please!! Help the teachers for the benefit of our students.
Think about our future generations
Thanks

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

Testimony BOE

From: Amanda Elswick <elswick.amanda@gmail.com> on behalf of Amanda Elswick
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 1:24 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

I am writing today to give my testimony regarding the B.O.E. General Business Meeting action item V.B.

The proposed budget cut to schools needs to be reconsidered. The budget cuts will effect the jobs of 2 special education teachers and up to 3 educational assistants at my school. This is unfair to the special education students who require services and the remaining special education teachers. The special education teachers will have their caseload increase for IEP's, meetings and services for students for the 2021-2022 school year. I am a general education teacher in an inclusion classroom. I currently co teach with a special education teacher that may lose their position for next year. If this position is cut then my grade level will have to share a special education teacher with another grade level. This will decrease the special education students time for specialized direct instruction.

I also want to express my concern for the federal funding that will be given to Hawaii. All of that funding should go to schools and teachers so that the proposed cuts do not need to be made. We need to keep the teachers we have to educate the students at our schools. Money should not be taken from teachers and given to hire tutors. We need to pay the highly qualified teachers to teach our students. Class sizes and caseloads should not be higher for less teachers. General Education and Special Education teachers have so many duties and responsibilities already, I cannot imagine adding more and still being able to give my students the education they deserve.

Thank you for your consideration,
Amanda Elswick

Testimony BOE

From: Keanuenue Gannet <keanuenue.gannet@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Keanuenue Gannet
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 1:24 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Tesitmony: BOE General Business Meeting action item V. B

I would like to testify on [BOE General Business Meeting action item V. B](#): Board Action on Department of Education's plan for use of federal funds in the new COVID-19 relief package and annual federal spending bill.

I am a special education teacher at Makaha Elementary School

Thanks,

--

Keanuenue Gannet
Special Education Teacher
Makaha Elementary School
84-200 Ala Na'auao Pl.
Wai'anae, Hawai'i 96792
(808) 307-7400
Alternate Email: kgannet@makahaelemschool.k12.hi.us
Website: <http://bit.ly/mrgannet20202021>

Confidentiality Notice: This e-mail message, including any attachments, is for the sole use of the intended recipient(s) and may contain confidential and/or privileged information. Any review, use, disclosure, or distribution by unintended recipients is prohibited. If you are not the intended recipient(s), please contact the sender by reply e-mail and destroy all copies of the original message.

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

Testimony BOE

From: Christopher Neppl <christopher.neppl@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Christopher Neppl
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 1:19 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

My name is Chris Neppl, and I am a 4th grade teacher at Jefferson elementary. I've been teaching with the DOE, state of Hawaii for 19 years. I am testifying on the BOE General Business Meeting **Action Item V, B**: Board Action on the Department of Education's plan for use of federal funds in the new COVID-19 relief package and annual federal spending bill.

Assets-a useful or valuable thing, person, or quality. A person's home can be considered an asset that must be maintained in order for that asset to hold, and even increase in value. This is the goal of the fiscally responsible homeowner. Teachers are assets. Teachers must be maintained in order to hold their value. Their value is only increased when properly maintained through reinforcement by who they work for through many ways, one being compensation or in this case more specifically keeping teachers on the payroll, and not having those federal stimulus monies going to hire tutors. Maintain and reinforce what you already have-quality teachers who need to be valued by keeping the monies directed to the schools and their positions.

Mahalo,

Chris Neppl

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

Testimony BOE

From: Heather Tyrrell <hty9@yahoo.com> on behalf of Heather Tyrrell
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 12:53 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: testimony for pay differentials

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing in response to board action on Department of Education's plan for use of federal funds in the new COVID-19 relief package and annual federal spending bill. I am a special education teacher on the windward side of Oahu. I have been teaching special education for twenty years. I love my job and have invested in learning as much as I can about how to do it well, earning a Master's Degree from Teacher's College at Columbia University. When the pay differential was first introduced, I was contemplating switching to a general education classroom. I was feeling overwhelmed by my caseload, the abundance of meetings and the sheer volume of paperwork and mandates. I came to school an hour early and left on average two and a half hours after school ended each day. I am an efficient worker and most of that time was spent in front of a computer report writing or making materials. I began thinking about my dual certification (general ed/special ed) and the reality of switching to a general education classroom. I was ready to switch. The pay differential kept me from following through, it kept me in the special education classroom.

Now we are opening schools during a pandemic. Once again, special ed teachers are being asked to do more. We are being asked to put our own health and the health of our families on the line to work face to face with students, students who sometimes refuse to wear masks and keep socially distant. We are told we will be provided with PPE and trainings, but I have not seen any evidence of it. In addition to asking us to risk our health, now the HDOE wants to take away the pay differential and risk our livelihood. The job does not pay enough to live off of without the differential. I am back to contemplating a general ed job so I have the time for a second job or a new career altogether. I have felt so much love and appreciated many things about teaching special ed the past twenty years and it would be sad to leave. Twenty years is a long time to be dedicated to something.

The pay differential was put in place to ensure we retain and attract special education teachers and it was proven effective. Taking it away will no doubt create a greater need at a time of uncertainty and put a greater burden on those who decide to stay in the position.

Sincerely,
Heather Tyrrell
special education teacher



February 18, 2021
General Business Meeting

Dear Chair Payne and Members of the Committee,

V. B. Board Action on Department of Education's plan for use of federal funds in the new COVID-19 relief package and annual federal spending bill presentation on Impact of 2021-2023 Fiscal Biennium Budget cuts on school and Complex Area levels

We are not in support of the DOE's recommendation regarding the use of federal funds in the new COVID-19 relief package and annual federal spending bill.

In previous testimonies the Coalition has consistently advocated that amid the budget reductions as a result of COVID-19, the priority for any funding for the DOE should be for health and safety and for quality teaching and learning in the classroom.

It appears that the DOE wants to use the \$184 million of ESSER II funds for things like shortfalls (\$83 million), the Accelerated Personalized Learning Program (\$49 million) and Summer Learning Programs (\$10 million). We think that the best use of the federal funds would be to focus first and foremost on maintaining resources at the school level through EDN 100 (school-based budgeting) and EDN 150 (special education), and on school level supports for vulnerable students. We favor using the federal funds for health and safety resources such as Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and additional personnel in the classroom to support teaching and learning.

If the federal funds give us the ability to do more than restore what was previously cut at the school-level, then we think additional funds should go towards strategic, systemic investments that will have a long-term positive effect on our system. For example, we should invest in a sound resource management process so that we use our resources optimally to obtain our desired student outcomes; this would help us both in good and bad economic times. To address learning loss, more resources should be allocated to shore up the state's Response to Intervention (RTI) process which addresses our high-needs students so that it is consistent and effective. Additionally, we should invest in a system-wide literacy framework to address learning loss in the early years. We made reference to focusing on literacy in our January 21, 2021 testimony to the Finance and Infrastructure Committee:

"We understand that the Department wants to address the learning loss which has occurred as a result of the impacts on schools due to COVID-19. We want to point out that learning loss was occurring prior to COVID-19, as evidenced by our large achievement gap. We agree that learning loss has been exacerbated by COVID-19, but rather than implement special programs like tutoring and summer school, we believe it is better to allocate more resources and supports in the classroom during the regular school year to address our struggling students. A strategic move would be to steer more resources to the elementary level to focus on literacy. The reason is if a student cannot read, they will struggle throughout their journey through the education system. "

Furthermore, although the Governor announced he would adjust the DOE program reduction to 2.5% from 10%, representing a \$123 million dollar restoration to the DOE, this is not a guarantee. Therefore, the DOE should anticipate different scenarios with respect to the reductions, such as the worst cast of 10%, middle case of 5% and best case of 2.5% reduction and present their respective plans for each case. The DOE has only presented the best case of a 2.5% reduction.

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
*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
Special Education Provider Alliance
*Teach for America
The Learning Coalition
US PACOM
University of Hawai'i College of Education

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

Aloha,

I am testifying on BOE General Business Meeting action item V.B.: Board Action on Department of Education's plan for use of federal funds in the new COVID-19 relief package and annual federal spending bill.

I am sending in my testimony against the HIDOE's plans to use federal funds for tutors and academic coaching. I am baffled by the decision to put money towards this temporary solution instead of using the funds to retain current teachers. To let go of qualified, dedicated, and experienced employees and replace them with new employees who will have a short-term role in the system seems illogical. This decision is demoralizing for the thousands of teachers who have taken on so much daily, doing face to face, online learning, or both to bring some sense of normalcy to Hawaii's keiki, while also juggling the personal effects of the pandemic. What Hawaii's keiki need and deserve are qualified teachers for their whole educational journey; not temporary tutors to get them through a few months.

My household consists of 5 people – my partner, his elderly mom, and our two daughters. Me and my partner's income not only supports our two daughters' livelihood, but also his moms who has a few underlying health conditions and is hard of hearing, and is not able to work. My partner who works in the restaurant business has had hours that fluctuates each week because covid-19 has made the restaurant industry unstable and unpredictable. My salary is the only stable factor in our household, and a pay cut would put my family in a terrible and uncertain position. My family relies on my full income to make ends meet on a monthly basis.

I stand in support of HSTA and all of its members who have been working tirelessly this school year and last, to continue to do the job they have signed up to do, despite the difficult and numerous challenges that have changed teaching so abruptly during this pandemic. I hope the Board of Education can understand that by preventing layoffs and salary cuts you are acknowledging that teachers are important and matter. The decision to support education supports the livelihood of your employees along with the wellness of keiki across the state, not just for today but for years to follow. Board of Education and HIDOE has the power to support and empower, to bring positive outcomes even during these dark and uncertain times. Please reconsider the use of funds to provide financial support to the schools and retain employees who can make a difference for Hawaii's keiki.

Akiko Miyata
Pre-K Teacher at Palolo Elementary School

Testimony BOE

From: Jai Me <kapualani_22@yahoo.com> on behalf of Jai Me
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 12:32 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Position

To Whom It May Concern,

Kuhio Elementary School (KES) principal informed me on 1/5/21 that my full-time counselor position would be cut to a half-time position due to, "budget cuts." I was notified by phone although we were both working on campus at the time. Principal stated that the decision was made by the SCC and later told me to check the faculty meeting minutes. No dates were given and I didn't recall any prior discussion of position losses since the administrator eliminated 5 full-time teacher positions, 1 ELL coordinator, and 1 tech coordinator last SY 19-20. This SY 20-21, the 10 month academic coach position was converted to a 12 month position with the stipulation of additional duties including Title 1, ELL, and Tech. The understanding amongst faculty and staff was this new 12 month position would be responsible for all of those duties mentioned.

In February 2021, an ELL teacher was hired to teach ELL students, while the, "academic coach," would remain the ELL Coordinator. Reasons for unexplained appearance of funds include special education and Title 1 funds. To my knowledge, no updated budget was shown to faculty members and when principal was approached she claimed that the SASA shared the document. To date, no document was shared or no further information provided to locate said budget.

According to KMR HSTA Uniserv and DOE guidelines, KES projected enrollment for SY 21-22 (according to principal) requires a full-time counselor on campus. I informed principal in-person and she stated that the SASA didn't receive the same information from Honolulu Personnel Officer, Gabriel Townsend. I asked principal to find out if that statement was accurate and to date she has not gotten back to me, except for a written Summary of Conference dated 2/11/21. SASA has been out on leave. Grievance filed on 2/12/21. My response to her Summary of Conference inaccuracies were placed in her box on 2/16/21. Prior attempts for further clarification were made to principal via email and in-person meetings.

In addition, although asked I'm expected to "help" supervise recess, lunch, and all day "hub" classroom five days a week. Counseling intern is also placed on this schedule to assist with supervision. No duty free lunch breaks are allowed on a regular basis. Inconsistent coverage is provided, despite a written schedule (administrator request) when advance requests are made to principal for alternate coverage due to student meetings, trainings, or other. Administrator and other adults on campus text my personal phone to complain about lack of supervision knowing that I'm covering the area discussed. Repeated requests have been made to administrator and others to contact me via radio, school phone, email, or in-person versus my personal cell phone. The understanding is to contact me via cell phone for emergencies only and since I don't carry it around and look at my cell phone throughout the school day like they do.

Thank you,

Jaime Lee
Kuhio Elementary School Counselor

Testimony BOE

From: Ashleigh King <ashleighchristineking@gmail.com> on behalf of Ashleigh King
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 12:28 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Name: Ashleigh King

School: Waimea Elementary

When I heard that there was a teacher shortage crisis in Hawai'i, I knew that was exactly where I wanted to go. As a teacher about to graduate from my Master's program, I had several connections and potential interviews set up in my home state of Oregon. But I knew that I wanted to go somewhere where I felt like I could truly make a difference - where there were students in need that I could connect with and build relationships with. I left my life in Oregon to move here, and since my very first day, I have fallen so in love with the amazing students and families I get to serve. The Waimea community has become home for me. Now, I have been told that due to the proposed budget cuts, our school will need to cut 5 positions - which means, as a probationary teacher who was the last to be hired, my position has been cut. I no longer know if I will have a job at all next year, but I have been told that I will not be able to remain at this school where I have built so many relationships. Considering the high cost of learning here, I have no idea if I can afford to move to another area to take a job at a different school. Right now, I don't think that's possible. The more likely scenario is that I would be forced to return to Oregon where I know jobs would be available and the cost of living would be lower. I want to stay here. I want to remain in this beautiful place and surrounded by this incredible culture. But the proposed budget cuts mean that I will not be able to. I am heartbroken. But I still have hope - hope that this state and the BOE will work towards securing the future of teachers like me not just for our own personal benefit - but for the keiki. They are the ones who will be hurt by these position cuts. They are the ones who will be hurt by teachers moving away. They are the ones who will suffer. Please - support our keiki by supporting teachers like me. Mahalo. Thank you for listening to my story. Sincerely, Ashleigh King - 5th grade teacher at Waimea Elementary School.

Testimony BOE

From: Chrystie Cobb <chrystie4salsa@yahoo.com> on behalf of Chrystie Cobb
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 12:22 PM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: testimony

I am testifying on the [BOE General Business Meeting Action Item V, B](#): Board Action on Department of Education's plan for use of federal funds in the new COVID-19 relief package and annual federal spending bill.

Students will be affected by potential budget and position cuts, along with the HIDOE's proposal to use a large share of the latest federal stimulus funds on tutors instead of restoring funding for schools so they can retain teachers.

Please retain the funds for our qualified teachers. This will affect all teachers professionally and personally. Will class sizes be larger? How will this help our keiki? All teachers and students are already stressed out due to this pandemic. We have put in countless hours that we don't get paid for. A reduction in pay is definitely not the answer.

Sincerely,

Chrystie Isaacs

Testimony BOE

From: Joseph Hajirol <jshajirol@gmail.com> on behalf of Joseph Hajirol
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 12:17 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony Action Item V,B

I am a 25 year veteran in the Hawaii Department of Education and in support of federal stimulus money to support our new hire teachers already in the classroom. In order to have teacher retention the CARES Act money needs to stay at the school level for each school to save our teachers who have been and will continue to support our students.

Testimony BOE

From: jaynes57@aol.com
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 12:12 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: "Testimony"

Aloha,

My name is Jayne Heinze and I have been working for the HDOE since 1999. I am writing testimony on the general business meeting discussion item [V.B: Presentation on questions regarding Department of Education furloughs, including furlough schedule, impact on school planning and services, communications with families and employees.](#)

Our students have been out of school too long. I have been in first grade classrooms with students who are so far behind due to COVID restrictions from attending school. Furloughs are not the answer for this time. These next years are critical time to make up for lost hours of learning. Our children need to be in school now more than ever. Please do not sacrifice our future to penny pinch furloughs on our futures' education! Now more than ever schools need your help to support the children. Do the right thing and fund education do not cut it.

Sincerely,

Jayne Heinze

Waimea Elementary School, Big Island

Testimony BOE

From: Matthew McKinney <hewmattmckinney@gmail.com> on behalf of Matthew McKinney
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 12:11 PM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am testifying on BOE General Business Meeting action item V. B.

I am a new teacher from the mainland. This is my first year teaching, and due to these proposals I am on the cutting block for next year. Due to these cuts and budget proposals I am forced to relocate away from the community I have found at this school and town. Because of the transitions, I won't be able to stay in the school where I have found folks who care for me and these students.

Money is an object, and as a new teacher already on a tight budget due to cost of living, these changes make it very unlikely for me to stay in the state. The likely outcome of these proposals is another teacher shortage, as folks like me will have to return, or older folks will retire because of the larger class sizes.

What Hawaii needs is high quality teachers, and to take care of them. Unfortunately these proposals do not communicate this care.

I hope that this will be resolved and that Hawaii can continue to grow and build up great teachers, and use the money for bettering schools and teachers.

Thank you,

Matthew McKinney

Testimony BOE

From: Jennifer Kramer <jenniferfixman@hotmail.com> on behalf of Jennifer Kramer
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 12:04 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Dear Board of Education Personnel,

I am testifying on [BOE General Business Meeting action item V. B](#): Board Action on Department of Education's plan for use of federal funds in the new COVID-19 relief package and annual federal spending bill.

I strongly believe that funds need to be used to retain qualified teachers as a top priority. I became a teacher because I believe that we help build the foundation of society. I felt that the "best of the best" students should choose to become teachers to help create the best possible situation for our society. I did not become a teacher to become rich, but I planned to live comfortably.

However, in Hawaii, so many times, I have been given no pay, or pay cuts and furloughs in the last 18 years, to help Hawaii to overcome budget issues. None of this money had been "given back." I started in California, in a district where teachers will continue to get raises next year. Next year, the difference in pay will be about \$30 - \$40,000/year. That difference is enough to give people freedom to live comfortably.

Prior to the pandemic, I was proud that our union negotiated for differentials for teachers in hard-to-fill areas and SPED. Legislators seemed interested in also making up for some of the time that teachers sacrificed for the economy by giving money to make up for compression--so that instead of being on step 12, I might be at the top of the scale, as I would be in other states. Once again, teachers are being asked to sacrifice.

I still believe that teachers are an important piece of the fabric that creates the foundation of society. We need to keep teachers, students, and the families they come home to safe--so money should be used for PPE and quality air filtration systems. Our salaries allow teachers to stay in Hawaii--although I personally know some who have left because it's just not enough. I want the best of the best high school students to aspire to become teachers. If the state respects teachers through creating a safe environment and a comfortable living, they will. Otherwise, I'm not sure how adults could recommend this career. This will create a spiral of further problems with education in our state.

Please, vote to use stimulus money to support teachers' safety and incomes. For the future, we need to find a way to do more to support education in Hawaii. Property values are skyrocketing. There is a huge disparity in our state between the rich and everyone else. Many teachers can barely get by, or can't afford to get by as it is. Please consider inflation, property values, and the importance of our profession as you vote--and as we together find ways to do more--to attract and retain the quality teachers that our keiki deserve.

Mahalo nui loa,

Jennifer Kramer

Testimony BOE

From: Ryan Link <ryan24link@gmail.com> on behalf of Ryan Link
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 12:03 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha Board of Education,

I'm testifying to Board Action on Department of Education's plan for use of federal funds in the new COVID-19 relief package and annual federal spending bill.

I'm in my 18th year of teaching here on Molokai. I moved here from Seattle when I was 26 and love it. One thing that does always enter my mind is, "do I want to move back to Washington?" I always think this after spending Christmas with family and friends on the mainland. Spending summer vacations. But I have always come back and am always happy with my decision.

One thing though that is a lure to move away is pay and cost of living. Yes, I love living here. But yes, we are extremely underpaid especially with our cost of living. I have hopes and plans as well as any normal adult would. Things I'd like to own, places I'd like to visit. These things cost money. But with what we make, many of these dreams and hopes are unattainable.

I am able to see what people I know make teaching in Washington. People that I went to school with to get my teaching degree and other friends that are teachers in Washington. They all make above \$110,000 or more. That is also in the Seattle area where cost of living is considerably lower.

Yet here in Hawaii, where I make around \$70,000 with a high cost of living, people want to CUT my pay? Seriously? Do you think I want to stay teaching here in a place that devalues my worth like that? No. I will move if my pay is cut. I love it here. But I can't afford to live here and do things I want to do. I was inline for the compression bill which people in my position I truly feel like we deserved. But due to Covid that was gone like that.

There is so much spent on stuff that doesn't need to be spent on in the DOE. Let's get rid of data coaches and any other curriculum people that are licensed teachers and put them back in the classroom. Save money that way. Helps fill teacher shortage and saves by not having those positions.

But again. Why on Earth do you think cutting our pay is a good thing. I know there needs to be savings somewhere due to the Covid pandemic. Totally understandable. But why keep coming back to teachers to take a hit? The state got Federal money. Let's spend it wisely.

In the end, if teachers are properly compensated, you will lose many. I already see tons of mainland teachers come and go, one of the reasons being pay. Well I'm an 18 year vet that's ready to pull that trigger too.

Please consider not cutting pay or differentials. It is huge.

Mahalo,

Ryan Link

Testimony BOE

From: Iris Kahaulelio <iris.kahaulelio@k12.hi.us> on behalf of Iris Kahaulelio
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 12:02 PM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: TESTIMONY

To Board of Education,

I am testifying on the BOE General Business Meeting Action Item V, B: Board Action on Department of Education's plan for use of federal funds in the new COVID-19 relief package and annual federal spending bill.

We are asking the board to prioritize keeping teachers and other school employees on the payroll instead of using federal stimulus money to hire tutors.

Mahalo for your service,
Iris Kahaulelio

--

IRIS KAHAULELIO
BIOLOGY, FORENSIC SCIENCE
SURF CLUB COACH
KAHUKU HIGH SCHOOL
56-490 KAMEHAMEHA HWY
KAHUKU, HI 96731
808-305-7300
808-293-8960 FAX
iris.kahaulelio@k12.hi.us

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

**State of HI BOE General Business Meeting
Thursday, February 18, 2021 @ 1:30 PM**

Subject: TESTIMONY

Name: Debra Yamakawa, Tech Coordinator

School: Nanakuli High and Intermediate School

Agenda Item V-A: Board Action on Department of Education's Plan for Use of Federal Funds in the New COVID-19 Relief Package and Annual Federal Spending Bill

Position: Support

Dear Honorable Board Members,

I support the use of Federal Funds for HI DOE. Investing in our public schools is an investment in our State's future. If we don't want to continue to lose our local people's children to the mainland, we need to provide our Keiki with a good foundational education, which we won't be able to provide with substitute teacher or unlicensed teachers.

Services that schools provide help our students become healthy, open minded adults that grow up to support our community. School support and services help prevent students from becoming runaways or getting involved in illegal activities. Schools are held accountable when a student fails, not their parents. Schools have been tasked with raising our island Keiki, without enough funding to provide the quality education and supports we would like to provide. Lack of funding will only further restrict student success and welfare.

As is, our schools do not have enough funds to provide classes with adequate supply of hand sanitizer, hand soap, paper towels and other cleaning supplies. Even before the Pandemic, we would spend much of our own money for these supplies. We need funds to be able to open schools safely for all.

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony.

Mahalo,
Debra Yamakawa

To: The Honorable Catherine Payne, BOE Chair & Members
From: Beatrice DeRego, Kahuku High & Intermediate
Date: February 16, 2021

Subject: General Meeting Item VB - Board Action on the DOE's Use of Federal Funds

To Chair Payne and Members of the Board:

I am Bea DeRego, Test Coordinator at Kahuku High and Intermediate for seven years and an educator in the Hawaii DOE for over 20 years. This is my 3rd career after serving my country in the US Army and working in the tourism industry as a controller. My extensive background has allowed me to review and analyze statistical data from both a broad and a nuanced perspective. I am recognized among my peers as someone who will delve into whatever evidence is available to find solutions to assist our struggling students, and I agree they are struggling. "Learning loss" will always be with us and I am grateful the DOE wishes to address the need.

Students were struggling before the advent of No Child Left Behind as a system wide measure of student progress. If you read the original document and have followed the research regarding student "learning loss," you will easily recognize that this legislation, which was advertised as a method of improving our educational standing in the global community, was faulty from the start. Now 20 years later, Hawaii is still using this flawed foundation to allocate funding based on the very narrow targets of reading and math scores from annual tests where student motivation to demonstrate standardized progress diminishes in a strong correlation with the number of years they have attended school.

While it is imperative that students have foundational skills in reading and math, recent events have demonstrated the error in relegating content such as Civics, Finance, and the Arts to a secondary role. The increased use and abuse of technology has increased the realization that students must be provided facts and understanding about its integration into our lives. Hawaii has begun the process of integrating **HĀ** into our system, but we have not fully embraced the philosophy by weaving it through our curriculum and instruction. We are still stuck in metrics dictated by 20th century business desires.

It is therefore crucial to determine what constitutes learning loss and student success before allocating limited resources to improving the condition. The major factors students need to improve their outcomes in all content are strong relationships, adaptability and resilience, and the grit and resources to follow their passion. Currently, our students are suffering not from "learning loss" in reading and math, but from the social-emotional drain of the relationships critical to their growth: friends, teachers, counselors, and administrators who give them "behavioral extra credit" when they make errant decisions. Tutors CAN'T fix that.

ANY funding that the DOE receives from ANY sources must be invested in ensuring students have a curriculum that is relevant to their personal goals, fair assessments that demonstrate their growth and needs rather than a data point for competitive analysis and sanctions, and the class size and educational experts necessary to provide whole group, small group, and individual instruction as needed. My most memorable classes have been a 34 student honors class that I strived to keep up with, a 28 student general class that laughed at their epiphanies, and a 16 student remediation class that I taught for double periods where students accelerated their reading 3 "grade levels" (a subjective measurement) during a year of learning.

With all due respect, the plan proposed in the Accelerated Personal Learning Program fails on all counts. It uses inappropriate measures of loss, ignores our students desire to be able to control their learning and destinies, and insults teachers by ignoring the fact that they have been regularly using the mitigation strategies suggested. Additionally, since WE never give up on any of our students, we use the following:

Strategy 7: Reached out to missing and disconnected students in an effort to return them to education that is relevant to their success;

Strategy 8: Connected with them during many hours of the day, evening and night when students have decided they have no purpose and are ultimate failures to remind them of their victories and their talents;

Strategy 9: Played games, laughed and celebrated to remind them that nearly EVERYONE is currently suffering emotional and learning loss, that school time is a concept not a reality, and that we will all gain unprecedented talents and skills when the Covid era has wound down.

I reiterate, any and all funds provided to the DOE must not only mitigate cuts to staffing, but must be increased to ensure all students - because they are ALL vulnerable - have a quality education with the research based factors necessary to succeed: a dedicated teacher with an appropriate class size, flexibility in curriculum, assessments that show students' individual needs rather than a nation's economic issues, and the time necessary to learn at their own pace, whatever that is.

Testimony BOE

From: SLL Riel <arielhsta@gmail.com> on behalf of SLL Riel
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 11:34 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha esteemed Board of Education members,

My name is Amber Riel and I teach math at Waianae High School. I'm writing today in regards to the spending of the federal stimulus funds for tutors. We will ALWAYS do our students a disservice when we remove highly qualified, trained educators from the classroom in favor of low-cost tutors. We are not interchangeable, just as you would never swap out a neurosurgeon for an orderly in a life or death operation. By using the federal stimulus funds to purchase tutors instead of paying professional teachers, that is exactly what would happen. Tutors do not understand how we have been teaching the students, the strategies we have been using, or the technology we have had to learn and utilize with our students. Tutors do not understand our learning targets and cannot see the big picture of where our curriculum and instructional choices are leading the students. Instead of tutors, our students need more qualified teachers on campus to make our class sizes smaller and more manageable, so that we will have time in a normal class period to provide the one-on-one or small group tutoring that our students need.

Sincerely,

Amber Riel
Waianae High School
Algebra 1 & 2 Teacher
(808) 341-6171

Testimony BOE

From: Krissy Pekala <apkrissy@yahoo.com> on behalf of Krissy Pekala
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 11:34 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am testifying on the BOE General Business Meeting **Action Item V, B:** Board Action on Department of Education's plan for use of federal funds in the new COVID-19 relief package and annual federal spending bill. Going into covid, our state was already at a huge loss for filling positions. There was differentials paid to keep teachers and to staff hard to staff areas. Now, we want to cut more money and more positions? Our children have a right to have highly qualified teachers TEACH them. We should be putting money towards keeping those teachers and hiring more to fill are abundant vacant positions that we have throughout the state. The qualifications to substitute are at a minimum right now, leaving many of our students with long term subs that are just not able to give adequate instruction. There would be no need for tutors if we could retain and put more highly qualified, highly motivated, Highly EDUCATED teachers in the classroom. Our students will only continue to fall behind if they do not get the instruction that they deserve. The huge difference between schools and their staff that are qualified is what leaves our public schools to have these huge disparities in the education they can provide. These disparities also are what I believe leads to "parent choice" in Hawaii, with regards to GEing. How about we put our money back into our schools and the teachers we ALREADY HAVE and DON'T WANT TO LOOSE! Let's make ALL public schools have equal education and all students have equal opportunity to have a highly educated teacher.

As a teacher with 10 years under my belt, a masters degree in Literacy, and a "teacher leader," I unfortunately can not just sit back anymore and continue to let our superintendent take advantage of us and continue to take away everything we have earned. I can not continue to teach making less money then I did waiting tables in college in Waikiki. I can not continue to mentor college students, and new teachers, and continue to tell them teaching is worth it and that they'll have a great comfortable life. That is not true at all. I live pay check to pay check, have a scholarship for my own child to even attend a community based preschool because we do not make enough, and have to budget for groceries and all necessities each week. I can not continue to see amazing teachers be let go, or watch amazing teachers leave our campus and be told they'll be picked up somewhere else. Let's support our teachers and students NOW and put money towards retaining and maintaining the amazing teachers that have no yet made the difficult decision to move states, or change positions.

Thank you,
Kristen Esposito

Testimony BOE

From: Sharon Saronitman <ssaronitman@gmail.com> on behalf of Sharon Saronitman
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 11:26 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: testimony on BOE General Business Meeting action item V. B

I am writing testimony regarding BOE General Business Meeting action item V. B. As a 24 year special education teacher on Kaua'i I have never had to submit testimony like I have this year. I truly cannot believe after the struggle our students have been through this past year we are even considering cutting school budgets and personnel. The students have been through enough and we should be looking at loading our schools with the resources and personnel to help them recover. Not to set them back even further. And to even consider using funds to hire outside tutors is just beyond belief. I don't know who would ever think this is an appropriate use of funds. Where would we even find these so called tutors?

Meanwhile we will be putting over 25 students in classrooms as well as students with IEP's struggling to get their needs met because the teachers positions and EA's were cut. At our school alone we are losing multiple EA positions who have become so vital in our special needs population education. We have evidence that inclusion programs that are appropriately staffed can be highly successful for all students.

Please do not allow our students to continue to be casualties of the state budget process. It's time to make them the priority.

Thank you for your time,
Sharon Saronitman
Kapaa, Kaua'i

Testimony BOE

From: Trey Balding <treybalding@gmail.com> on behalf of Trey Balding
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 11:22 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony (Issue Tutors vs Teachers)

My name is Trey Balding and I'm a teacher at Hawaii School for the Deaf and the Blind> I stand with HSTA for this testimony relating to tutors vs teachers.

I do not support this proposal to hire tutors when we already have plenty of teachers to cover the pay and teachers to teach the students in Hawaii schools. Please reconsider this situation for all of us, HSTA and all teachers who worked hard to get pay for living when you decide to cut our pay.

Mahalo for reading

--

Peter 'Trey' A Balding III



david.miyashiro@hawaiikidsan.org
hawaiikidsan.org

David Miyashiro
Executive Director

February 18, 2021

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

Aloha Chair Payne, Uemura, and Members of the Board,

Per Action Item B, **HawaiiKidsCAN would like to offer comments** regarding the Hawaii DOE's proposed plan for the use of federal ESSER II funds.

Founded in 2017, HawaiiKidsCAN is a local nonprofit organization committed to ensuring that Hawaii has an excellent and equitable education system that reflects the true voices of our communities and, in turn, has a transformational impact on our children and our state. We strongly believe that all students should have access to excellent educational opportunities, regardless of family income levels and circumstances.

Given the difficult financial situation facing our state and public school system, we recognize that every dollar spent must deliver strong impact, taking into account a number of priorities including health and safety, learning loss, and social-emotional needs. Protecting vulnerable students must remain a top priority, which is why HawaiiKidsCAN supports the continuance of the pay differentials for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language programs.

As such, HawaiiKidsCAN supports and appreciates the child-centered strategies outlined by the Hawaii DOE to mitigate learning loss. The data in the BOE metrics clearly cry out for aggressive intervention, as the trajectory of many of key metrics suggest this is becoming a "lost" or unrecoverable school year. While we believe maintaining resources at the school level is also incredibly important, we feel that specialized learning loss strategies such Accelerated Personalized Learning Program, Summer Learning Programs, and closing the digital device gap may have strong impact through a targeted approach to support tens of thousands of high-need students. It is

unclear if these specific students would receive the same level of intervention if the \$65 million currently earmarked to address learning loss were used to maintain resources at the school level.

We do find, however, that additional clarity is needed on the planned launch of the Accelerated Personalized Learning Program. What is the planned workforce to support this program, and how does it lean on the assets of Hawaii's trained educators and high-quality nonprofit organizations? What are the qualifications to become a tutor? What is the anticipated success rate for this program in terms of restoring students back to a track of academic success? How quickly can the program get deployed?

Research shows that tutoring yields positive effects on learning whether in person or virtual, in school or after school, although best results are embedded within the school day, at least 3x a week with a consistent tutor. Developing a local tutoring initiative not only will address learning loss and provide much-needed individualized support but also serves as a kind of economic stimulus if people in Hawaii are serving as the tutors. This could be a great opportunity to support students pursuing postsecondary degrees who need financial support by providing the opportunity for them to work as paid tutors. The Hawaii DOE and BOE could consider making tutoring a permanent intervention and keeping the pipeline open so as many people can do it as possible. Tutoring is often seen as an advantage available to affluent families or students looking to get ahead, so expanding this privilege to students most in need could be a powerful driver of equity beyond the pandemic.

Mahalo for your consideration,

David Miyashiro
Founding Executive Director
HawaiiKidsCAN

Norma Barroga Cronkite
691 Maika Place
Wailuku, HI 96793

February 17, 2021

Hawaii State Board of Education
Honolulu, HI
testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

SUBJECT: BOE General Business Meeting Action Item V.B.

My name is Norma Barroga Cronkite, I am a retired school principal on Maui. I am submitting testimony in support of SB 2488, proposed SD1.

Please provide enough funds to fix the teacher salary compression issue, and provide funding for the pay differentials for teachers in special education, Hawaiian language immersion, and hard to staff positions to show that we as a state value our hardworking teachers. The Department of Education will need \$45 million more than this bill provides to do so. Our teachers are worth as they are important to the future of our keiki.

In my experience as an educator and school administrator, I was involved in the Felix Consent decree as a school renewal specialist in the Maui District. It was a very costly endeavor and it will most likely to happen again if we do not provide sufficient funds to pay differentials for teachers in special education.

Thank you very much for your kind consideration of this matter. If you need to contact to me you may do so at (808) 385-0856 or email barroga f001@hawaii.rr.com.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Norma Barroga Cronkite". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The first name "Norma" is written with a large, stylized 'N'. The last name "Cronkite" is written with a large, stylized 'C' and a long, sweeping tail that extends to the right.

Norma Barroga Cronkite

Testimony BOE

From: Vickie Parker Kam <vlpkam808@gmail.com> on behalf of Vickie Parker Kam
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 11:07 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony General Business Mtg Item V.B

Chair Payne and Board Members,

My name is Vickie Kam, I have been employed by the DOE since 1992 and have taught at Ilima Intermediate for the past 17 years. I have seen this state go through budget crunches, furloughs, and strikes. I have seen attacks on our education system, the destruction of quality curriculum due to Race to the Top, and I have worked with a variety of principals and complex area superintendents.

The funds restored to the Department, as well as the new COVID-19 relief package should be used to RETAIN QUALIFIED TEACHERS for the keiki of Hawaii, it should NOT be used to bolster Edubiz corporations from out of state that literally cut teacher positions!! Why is the superintendent so set on TUTORS? The false narrative of "loss of learning" has blinded many to the reality of the data and allows for taxpayer dollars to be wasted on this type of Edubiz rubbish.

Please hear our truths. For far too long the DOE has intentionally delayed, deflected, and deferred use of funds to the individual principal level without guidance or organization. The day before the last BOE meeting, Governor Ige restored the \$123 million of funds illegally taken from the department, yet, as of the writing of this testimony, the funds and positions cut from our schools have NOT been restored. The funds should be used ONLY to restore the teaching positions for the 21-22 SY that were erroneously cut when the Superintendent instructed the principals to cut school budgets by 10%... Ilima alone will be losing 9 positions and 14, yes FOURTEEN teachers (5 leaving, some leaving the profession)!

These include:

- 1 ELA teacher
- 1 Math teacher
- 1 Science teacher
- 1 Social Studies teacher
- 1 ELA/SS split line teacher
- 1 Math/Sci split line teacher
- 1 Media/Video CTE
- 1 Family & Consumer Science CTE

We also lost 1 Art position this year which was sold back to purchase PPE. This disorganization, lack of communication, chaos and distress is putting pressure on teachers, principals, and the community, not to mention all of you, since we keep submitting hundreds of pages of teacher truths that you have to read and consider.

Much Mahalo for hearing our voices. We are front line. We are not making six figures. We are fighting for the roofs over our heads, the student loans we owe so we could teach, the food for our families. Please, direct the superintendent to restore funds to the schools and save teacher positions for our students.

Aloha and #StaySafe,

Vickie L Parker Kam

HIDOE Educator, Tax Payer, and Mother

Testimony BOE

From: Emmanette Haiola <japel.emm@gmail.com> on behalf of Emmanette Haiola
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 11:05 AM
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony on the BOE General Business Meeting Action Item V,B

I, Emmanette Haiola, ask the board to prioritize keeping teachers and other school employees on the payroll instead of using federal stimulus money to hire tutors. BOE Superintendent Christina Kishimoto how can we entrust our keiki to private tutors when we are already having difficulty meeting with our students virtually and face to face. How is hire tutors any better? As versed educators a sense of belonging and relationships are extremely important.

My own teenagers attending public schools deserve educators with a teaching license who have learned education pedagogy and young adolescent learning development. Our educators in the Hawaii DOE know the culture and know their communities in which they serve. The federal funds in the new COVID-19 relief package and annual federal spending bill should be spent on educating and supporting our families. The focus should be on supporting families in creating the best learning environment during this time with distance learning.

We need to educate our families and students how to best have health and safety practices dealing with COVID-19. This will best support families in being aware of what we can control during these pressing times. It can alleviate fear, anxieties and confidence in our schools ability to educate and keep our keiki safe.

Emmanette Haiola
Kahuku High and Intermediate School
12th Grade Counselor
305-7353

Testimony BOE

From: Aaron Day <addleewardhsta@gmail.com> on behalf of Aaron Day
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 11:04 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for Action Item V, B

This testimony is being submitted for the BOE Special Meeting **Action Item V, B: Board Action on Department of Education's plan for use of federal funds in the new COVID-19 relief package and annual federal spending bill.**

My name is Aaron Day and I have been a mathematics teacher at Waianae High School since the 2005-2006 school year. During this time I have helped develop the curriculum for a math course at least eight times. This is a long, involved and collaborative process. One of the goals of our math department is to strengthen our vertical alignment so that we are using common terms and methods and are preparing our students for the next class. We make sure that our instruction and assessments match in terms of standards covered, types of problems and the way that problems are presented. This year I had to help tutor our students who were using Acellus. One of the things that distressed me greatly was watching a video with the students and then the questions following the video were not always in line with the video. Some of the questions were not even related to what was in the video. Others were presented in a different way from how they were in the video and so the students did not understand what they were seeing. As a highly qualified math teacher, I was able to explain these things to the students.

This brings me to my deep concerns about hiring tutors to help our students as a response to COVID. Someone who does not know or curriculum will not present things in a way consistent with how the students are going to be assessed. They may not cover the correct things. They may use entirely different methods or name the methods in a way that the students won't recognize. They may present problems in a way that they will look foreign to the students. It can be little things. We recently had a discussion about writing logs. At least one student had seen logs written as $f(x) = k + a \cdot \log_b(x-h)$ instead of $f(x) = a \cdot \log_b(x-h) + k$. While as a math teacher I can see that it is a simple thing and they are actually the same, the student was extremely confused. If you are looking at that and are lost, you know how our students feel. If they spend time with an outside tutor and they do things differently, the students don't see how it is a simple change and it will still work out fine.

There is an additional concern about equity in the use of outside tutors. The students who may need the additional help the most may be the ones least likely to take advantage of optional tutors. The students who are likely to take advantage of the tutors are likely to be the students who have been most successful during COVID because they are the ones willing to do more than is required or they are the ones who are willing to ask for help.

If this money is instead used to prevent pay cuts and positions cuts to school staff, the money will be used in a way that will support what we are doing in our classes and will be applied more equitably for our students who need the most help.

Thank you.

Testimony BOE

From: Amie Stroud <amieestroud@gmail.com> on behalf of Amie Stroud
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 11:01 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Esteemed board,

I present this testimony for BOE general business meeting action item V.B: Board action on Department of Education's plan for use of federal funds in the new COVID-19 relief package and annual spending bill.

First and foremost, let me say that I love my students, my profession, and my island. I have been so thankful for the board's past actions and stance on the matter of keeping students and educators safe and well as moving toward making the teaching profession a livable wage.

With the current state of the economy, the massive cut again falls on education, its special education taking the greatest hit at my school. At my school we have several special education teacher positions being eliminated as well as losing more than half of our educational assistants. So not only will each special educator have a greater caseload and even less support. Please re-evaluate and reconsider the definition of "unmet needs." Our vulnerable students should be taught by highly qualified professionals. They cannot afford to be part of another experiment to save money. Please invest in our children's futures!

Mahalo for your consideration,
Amie Stroud
Special Education Teacher
Kealahou Elementary

Testimony BOE

From: katrina haddin <calypsosea2019@gmail.com> on behalf of katrina haddin
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 11:00 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Katrina Haddin, Kailua-Kona, K12 High School English Teacher's Testimony ...Kealakehe High School

To Whom it May Concern,

Regarding: Teacher cuts due to Covid.

There are several issues I wish to address. For one, what is on the block to be chopped and obliterated is up to 9.3% of my pay over 4 years, the hard to staff income for people who live in hard to staff areas which comes close to an additional 9.3% of my pay over 4 years, and sabbatical for those who are interested in getting their masters in administration to one day be a participating vice principal or acting principle. What I am looking at is close to \$48,000 lost in my pay over the next 4 years.

This is concerning because not only am I one of the lowest paying teachers in the entire country per cost of living, but the average rent here in Kona is atrocious. Moving somewhere else to commute is NOT an option for me because of shared custody for my oldest son. Additionally, for perspective purposes, teachers in Indiana make on average, between \$2-7 K more than beginning teachers in Hawaii.

Lastly, how can it be considered appropriate to take what could be close to a 1.5-2% raise for all existing teachers, and give this to unqualified tutors through a private sector while those who have decades of service and experience are looking at close to a 20% pay cut for hard to staff teachers who depend on the \$400 each month for survival. This is backwards. Award the unqualified corporate world while punishing the hard working teachers who have bent over backwards for years and years for the future of our youth. Yeah, this makes total sense. This is the exact way you will lose all your teachers who are already here.

Now, how does this all affect a mother with 3 kids? This will wreck me. This will make me homeless. This will devastate the educational world! With a state who has a teacher deficit every single year, with SFA teachers who live with 2-3 room mates for survival, we are going to see the largest exodus of teachers the state has ever seen.

My monthly childcare bill alone is close to \$2000! This is 2/3 of my take home pay every month. With the pay cuts and the hard to staff money, this is a \$800 dollar a month deficit. This means that my take home after childcare will be \$200! How the hell does a person survive on this? How can we make life happen? With two in diapers and that cost in and of itself, how do you expect mothers like me to stay teaching? If I can't pay my student loans or provide for my family, I might as well quit and do this tutoring gig you want to do. All of us GREAT AND AMAZING TEACHERS will leave and then what is left? A bunch of substitutes (which there is a shortage of too) will be teaching our kiki? This isn't right.

I can attest that it takes a good solid 3-5 years before a teacher is really, really, amazingly effective...this is the average range of when teachers quit in Hawaii. I don't want to be a statistic and become part of this number. I have plans to stay at Kealakehe High School until I retire or begin a quest of joining the admin team. I am a good teacher...I am worth keeping. With this pay cut, however, you will see another great teacher walk away.

Lastly, what is really the worst in all you are considering is that you are taking away the future from our kiki. If, if I can stay with a 9.3% pay cut due to you keeping the hard to staff work, I could possibly stay but I would

have to get another job. This means, whatever teaching I do...lesson plans, grading, calling parents, etc...would have to happen in the 2.5-3 hours of prep time we're given each week. This means, getting a second job to make up the 10-20% will take away great feedback and grading. With a generation of kids who struggle to write and read, this would be a huge deficit for them. I would literally have to do completion grading the entire year. Is this fair? Not at all. Please consider everyone involved before making such horrible cuts.

Thank you.

Katrina Haddin

Testimony BOE

From: Rachelle Ricardo <rkricardo3@gmail.com> on behalf of Rachelle Ricardo
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 10:59 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

My name is Rachelle Ricardo. I am veteran public school teacher employed by the Hawai'i State Department of Education. I transferred from Manoa Elementary on O'ahu to Hanalei Elementary on Kaua'i this school year.

I am testifying on BOE General Business Meeting action item V. B: Board Action on Department of Education's plan for use of federal funds in the new COVID-19 relief package and annual federal spending bill.

In 2011 Professor Dana Mitra of Pennsylvania State University wrote a document called,

Pennsylvania's Best Investment: The Social and Economic Benefits of Public Education

The document's abstract clearly summarizes my testimony and I implore the BOE to look at teachers as investments in Hawaii's future. By NOT investing in teachers and schools, RESEARCH shows the state will be looking at increased societal problems down the line as a direct result.

The abstract states:

"Public education is a worthy investment for state government, with immense social and economic benefits. Research shows that individuals who graduate and have access to quality education throughout primary and secondary school are more likely to find gainful employment, have stable families, and be active and productive citizens. They are also less likely to commit serious crimes, less likely to place high demands on the public health care system, and less likely to be enrolled in welfare assistance programs. A good education provides substantial benefits to individuals and, as individual benefits are aggregated throughout a community, creates broad social and economic benefits. Investing in public education is thus far more cost-effective for the state than paying for the social and economic consequences of under-funded, low quality schools."

I highly recommend the Board Of Education to have a read of Dr. Mitra's document or take a moment to look at the research this document is based upon as it does not simply impact teachers, it's a domino effect on our society as a whole.

Sincerely,
Rachelle K. K. Ricardo, M.Ed

Testimony BOE

From: Chloe Fredericksen <cfredericksen@hanalei.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Chloe Fredericksen
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 10:57 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: testimony

This is my testimony in regards to BOE General Business Meeting action item A/ V. B

During 2018-2019 Hawaii classrooms had more than 1,000 emergency hires and long-term substitutes to cover vacancies because our teacher shortage is so severe. My name is Chloe. I work at an elementary school on Kauai, and I am currently one of those long-term substitutes. Before that, I was one of the emergency hires. Before that I was a student attending public school in Hawaii. I have seen the system from both sides, and I can say with utter and complete confidence that the continued defunding of public education in Hawaii is the greatest scourge on our community's future. As a high school student, I experienced furlough Fridays, a result of our state slashing the already miniscule education budget. My high school, which was already greatly lacking in resources, was not even open most Fridays. I, a child, paid the price when I started college. I was so far behind my peers. I struggled to catch up, but I pressed on because I knew I would lose my chance to learn if my grades dropped and my scholarships disappeared. Upon graduating and returning home to Hawaii, it was such a blessing to get the chance to work for the keiki. Although I struggled financially to survive in Hawaii on this income, I pressed on because I am honored to work with the youth of this island as well as some of the same teachers who helped raise me. I felt a renewed sense of hope in our future. I learned from the teachers and faculty that it is up to us as a community to provide love and knowledge to the keiki.

However, I also learned from a new perspective what I had already discovered in highschool... no amount of work is ever enough to help and support everyone when the state refuses to acknowledge the objective importance of teachers and education and continues instead to defund it. I come from a family of teachers, beyond that I come from an island full of elders and educators who come in all forms. I am reminded daily that knowledge is power and freedom and hope. When the state proposes to cut education funding, to cut teachers salaries, and to cut special program funding for SPED and Hawaiian immersion programs, what I see is an attack on knowledge, freedom, and hope. I see a proposal to cut the already dwindling access the youth of Hawaii have to a bright and inclusive future, one that prioritizes youth, education, and funding for our most vulnerable and oppressed community members, those who rely on our SPED and cultural programs to make it in this world.

When the state cuts education funding, they cut off the access teachers have to live dignified lives in which they can take care of their most basic needs- housing, health care, food- a struggle they were already toiling with before the pandemic and current budgetary cuts. Teachers are leaving Hawaii at alarming rates because it is impossible to survive here under the current circumstances, and with even further cuts we will lose more teachers. Meaning more students will suffer. So, let's call it what it is. Let's not mince words. This is not just a proposal to cut a number, this is the state's continued attack on public education, teachers, and students. It is abusive. Teachers have been working harder than ever to support students through a global health and financial crisis all while trying to stay safe, and they are met with even further cuts to the funding that was barely sustaining them before these added pressures. This proposal is crue and if Hawaii cares about its teachers and students it will stop it at all costs.

Testimony BOE

From: Kekoa & Kela Bay <kbaysquared@gmail.com> on behalf of Kekoa & Kela Bay
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 10:52 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony - General Meeting - Action Item B

Aloha Board of Education,

I appreciate this opportunity to testify against the Department of Education's plan for use of COVID-19 relief funds. After reading through the proposal it is clear that the Department of Education is missing some major conditions within their student support section where they are proposing an intensive support program utilizing tutors. There is not anything within this program that would suggest a level of qualification for "tutors" and we have a substantial resource of highly qualified teachers who are available to provide the support.

The DOE is currently seeking to reduce budget going into positions for teachers, yet they want to hire non-descript tutors without a specific level of qualifications. This is not at all reasonable or right.

The other major shortfall of their plan is that the work they presented is missing a quarter of our student population. Not including High School needs in their projections and planning is an extreme shortfall. As a High School special educator I am seeing the impact that COVID is having on both students in the General Education population and students with needs for extra support such as special education, English language learners, and other support programs available at the schools.

The reality is that we are currently compounding the problems by not opening our schools fully. Data from school districts nationwide demonstrate that schools are safe to open with appropriate social distancing, masking and cleaning procedures in place and our failure to open all of our schools appropriately is only putting our students more at risk and further behind.

I encourage the Board to reject the Department of Education's current plan and request they revise it to ensure we maintain our current teachers and provide qualifications for any further support that would be brought in addition to the teaching positions we have.

Although this isn't part of this action item, I also encourage the Board to request an immediate plan for getting as many students back into classrooms as possible. The longer we maintain distance learning as a model, the further behind many of our students are getting. With this trend we are increasing the number of students who are at-risk in many ways; academically, socially, emotionally, and physically. The CDC has stated "Opening schools for in-person learning as safely and quickly as possible, and keeping them open, is important given the many known and established benefits of in-person learning." I would add that keeping them closed or primarily distance learning has a detrimental impact as is evidenced in the DOE's data they provided in their request for approval.

This should be our biggest priority, yet the DOE and the Board have left it to individual schools and complexes to determine the level they will return to learn.

Thank you for taking the time to review my testimony. We need to be clear in properly supporting our students with the money that has been provided to the DOE.

Mahalo,
Kekoa Michael Bay

Testimony BOE

From: Kaiea Ebanez <kebanez11@gmail.com> on behalf of Kaiea Ebanez
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 10:50 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

I am testifying on [BOE General Business Meeting action item V. B](#): Board Action on Department of Education's plan for use of federal funds in the new COVID-19 relief package and annual federal spending bill.

I have been a teacher at a hard to staff school for 4 years and I love it! I love taking on these students who remind me of ME! I grew up on the westside of Hawaii with little to nothing and going to school and connecting with my teachers was my sanctuary. Mainly because these teachers were people I could connect with, they were like an uncle or aunty. However, I see a trend at our school that is becoming quite alarming; we are bringing in too many teachers from the mainland. Don't get me wrong, employees coming from Teach for America are wonderful people, but I see too many students with a disconnect as it pertains to relationships with these individuals. I mean they are gone and off to their next career choice after two years anyways. BUMMER. What I am trying to say is that local teachers chose to take on the challenges of these hard to staff places because of the differentials that were being provided. I see new co-workers that live outside of Waianae choose our schools because of the extra money, because our salary just won't cut it. But they take the extra drive out to teach here, fight traffic, come home late, work extra hard because YES, it is a challenge to teach on the westside. Now you want to take away this incentive?! These local teachers will not be here in the years to follow and this westside will be filled with teachers that cannot relate to the students. Are we thinking about this? Do we care about our keki? In my first year teaching I've seen first hand a teacher straight from the mainland being assigned to teach Hawaiian History because of the shortage here on the westside. This is outrageous and this is what is to come if we take away our differentials and choose to enforce a pay cut on current, and very low salary. I have not even got into how this can impact me and my family. Let me explain, I already live paycheck to paycheck. I have over \$10,000 in student loans, which I racked up trying to complete all the necessary education to become a PROFESSIONAL teacher. So why are we getting paid so low! I cannot even save money on the side to buy a house, yes I am renting. What kind of future am I providing my own keki? I feel sometimes it is not worth it and think about changing careers, but then I look back on the endless nights and years it took to obtain my teaching degree and all the sacrifices my family had to make. THIS IS UNBELIEVABLE HOW WE SAY WE CARE SO MUCH ABOUT OUR KEKI, YET CARE SO SO LITTLE ABOUT OUR TEACHERS. Especially during a time like this where I am teaching online, in person, and attending numerous parent-teacher conferences. When I tell people that I am a teacher, the first thing that they say is, "teachers get paid so little." How am I supposed to feel when we are considered a professional career. Please help our local teachers and not drag us through the mud, because we are tired of getting dirty. Mahalo!

Testimony BOE

From: daniel mclaughlin <danisensei@hotmail.com> on behalf of daniel mclaughlin
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 10:49 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Use funds to keep teachers-not hire tutors

My name is Daniel McLaughlin
1410 Hoakoa Place
Honolulu, HI 96821
808 782 7408

I work at Roosevelt High School and previously worked at Castle High. This is my 20th year teaching Special Education in the Hawaii DOE. I urge the Board to consider using the federal money accorded to the HDOE to retain teacher positions, rather than hiring private tutors.

It has been very difficult to retain teachers in hard to fill positions such as special Ed. I have seen many highly qualified colleagues quit teaching for higher paying jobs, or go back to the mainland where the salaries are higher. I suggest continuing to fund the "shortage differentials" with the millions of federal dollars our superintendent would rather spend on hiring tutors. The federal dollars could fund the shortage differentials while the economy recovers. It would act as a stop-gap measure as the economy gradually recovers and the differentials could go back to being funded by tax revenue.

In the end, the students will lose. They will lose many of their cherished teachers. They may also lose manageable class sizes and teaching assistance. We have the funds to keep the talent we need to enrich our Keiki's education. Shortages have been reduced by 66% last year, and it would be sad to return to a time of constant vacancies. Mahalo

Testimony BOE

From: Dale Matsuura <ojosan_m@yahoo.com> on behalf of Dale Matsuura
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 10:46 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: testimony

February 17, 2021

Hawaii Board of Education

RE: BOE General Business Meeting action item V. B: Board Action on Department of Education's plan for use of federal funds in the new COVID-19 relief package and annual federal spending bill

Dear Chairwoman Payne and Board members,

As a Student Services Coordinator (SSC) of five years, one of my many duties includes training and mentoring Special Education teachers. Prior to becoming an SSC, I was a Special Education teacher for 13 years. I can not remember a single year that I did not have to train a new Special Education teacher. I am writing to support and encourage the Board of Education to retain funds to retain our qualified Special Education teachers including their hard to staff differential.

This is the first year of promise and hope, not only for overtired and overworked special education teacher filling more than their work load but also the first year of hope for special education students. For the first time classrooms were filled with a qualified teacher as compared to a long term substitute. For the first time, students had the opportunity to learn side by side with their general education peers and had an opportunity to close the achievement gap. And for the first time, teachers were getting some sort of compensation to attract and retain professionals.

Please urge the Department of Education to use their monies to retain Special Education teachers and not for privatization in the form of outsourcing new positions. Please do not allow the Superintendent to unilaterally discontinue the shortage of differentials without the BOE approval.

Thank you for your diligence in supporting students and teachers in the State of Hawaii.

Respectfully,

Dale Matsuura

Testimony BOE

From: Mrs. Rossman <rossman_mrs@yahoo.com> on behalf of Mrs. Rossman
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 10:45 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

I am a teacher on the big island, as is my husband and brother-in-law. We are able to keep teaching in large part because of the shortage differentials and ability to move up the pay scale, which helps us to keep up with the cost of living. I have watched so many teachers come and go over the years and have wished so many of them would have stayed. They were quality educators, who loved the keiki, but couldn't afford to live here- so back to the mainland they went.

Tutors are great when you are in college and you go to a math or English lab to get help from a peer. Tutors at the primary and secondary levels are a waste of time and money. Who knows best what their students need help with, what areas they lack necessary skills in and what type of remediation would best help them to move forward? The teachers! Do not take money away from the dedicated, hard-working teachers to waste it on tutors. There could hardly be a bigger way to waste our money.

Mahalo,
Tina Rossman
Kealakehe High School

Testimony BOE

From: Cussana Mapu <sanamapu63@gmail.com> on behalf of Cussana Mapu
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 10:44 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Tutors vs Teachers

I am submitting testimony in opposition to hiring tutors to replace teachers.

This pandemic HAPPENED to teachers and students. It is not something anyone planned for, yet teachers are getting demoralized two ways.

CUTS AND BEING REPLACED.

This pandemic will end, and what will be the end result. A greater shortage of teachers which will be difficult to fill as the confidence in the DOE/BOE will be shattered as history shows when push comes to shove, the State of Hawaii CUTS, instead of enduring with their teachers through this hardship.

Please reconsider this option.

Thank you.

Testimony BOE

From: marylee fredericksen <mfredericksen@hanalei.k12.hi.us> on behalf of marylee fredericksen
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 10:41 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: testimony

I am providing testimony for the BOE special meeting action item A and V/B:

I have been a teacher in Hawaii for over 20 years. I have taught at multiple schools on different islands. I am currently a lower el teacher at a public school on Kauai. It is the greatest blessing of my life to serve the keiki and community of this island. My service, the same as every teacher I have worked with, has never been about money. It is no secret that if you are a teacher in Hawai'i, your primary concern is not the money. Year after year, we are repeatedly ranked as one of the worst states for teachers due to the low salary and astronomical price of living. This was before the pandemic hit. Most teachers, myself included, were already struggling to pay their bills. Many of us worked second jobs (most lost due to the pandemic). Since 2012, the number of teachers leaving Hawaii has increased by 70%. Now, most of us are the only people in our home still earning an income. My husband and son both lost their jobs due to the pandemic and have spent almost the entire time struggling through issues with the unemployment system (like many in our community) in order to receive their benefits. They went months without any assistance. On top of the added psychological stress of not being able to cover rent, car insurance, car registration, health care and other necessary costs, I am working harder than I ever have.

Teaching on an A/B schedule during a health and financial crisis has been beyond daunting. I spend each day working as hard as I can, working more hours than I ever have, and I still feel that I am not able to support the students enough, support my family enough, support myself enough. So, when I see the proposed budgetary cuts, I am gutted. This devastation is not about the number or the money itself, it is about the complete disregard it shows for teachers and students' real lives, their lived reality, a reality that with the added stress of the pandemic is beyond the scope of normal human coping abilities. The fact that the state would propose further budgetary cuts to teachers and schools is a direct statement to us as educators that our lives simply do not matter to the state. Our ability to pay rent does not matter, our ability to afford food, support our families, pay our medical bills does not matter to the state. By slashing our already objectively meager funding, the state is explicitly saying that the teachers do not deserve access to resources that can sustain even their most basic needs.

By extension these proposed cuts show us that the state does not care for the keiki of this land, children who are already deeply marginalized and disadvantaged due to the underfunded public school system in this state. Teachers are the lifeline for many of these children who experience intergenerational trauma, poverty, and addiction. It is our labor and energy that makes up for the already lacking support system the state has put in place. By cutting our already meager support, the state is directly harming the children and the future of the islands. It is a cruel and unethical way to account for a failing financial system that already marginalized teachers and students. We all deserve better.

Marylee Fredericksen

Testimony BOE

From: Kori Harvey <koriharvey@gmail.com> on behalf of Kori Harvey
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 10:37 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Re: Action Item V, B

Using the One Time Federal Stimulus funds to hire private tutors does NOT guarantee closing the education gap. The best tutors are trained teachers and trained school staff - funding teacher positions and education staff should take priority over hiring tutors. Investing in Tutoring by Teachers program would be helpful, we would just need to keep the teachers we have.

--

Kori Ann Harvey

Koriharvey@gmail.com
808.224.1953

Public Education Teacher - 10 years
Host of FLHI Girlz Surfing & Sports

Testimony BOE

From: Cindy Cruse <clcruse4@gmail.com> on behalf of Cindy Cruse
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 10:34 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for CARES ACT funds/COVID

I am a Kindergarten teacher at Kapaa Elementary who is currently experiencing displacement due to the cuts to education. Because of this, I will be forced to leave education and seek employment elsewhere because our family will not be able to live on Kauai without dual incomes. The unpredictable future of our education system and the inability to give the keiki what they deserve is heartbreaking. They deserve better.

Our school currently has 8 kinder teachers who have struggled to reach our keiki through a variety of different teaching methods. We have bought clothes, food, and supplies for them and cried when they cried because of their crazy schedule. The use of the CARES ACT will allow for teachers to keep their jobs and teach our keiki the skills necessary for their education foundation.

Please help us to help the keiki of this great state because in the end, they are our future and the future of this island.

Cindy Cruse
Kapaa Elementary School
Kindergarten teacher

Testimony BOE

From: Rachelle Ricardo <rricardo@hanalei.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Rachelle Ricardo
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 10:34 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Shift the view to see teachers as INVESTMENTS in the future if Hawai'i's economy.

In 2011 Professor Dana Mitra of Pennsylvania State University wrote a document called,

Pennsylvania's Best Investment: The Social and Economic Benefits of Public Education

The document's abstract clearly summarizes my testimony. Taking away from teachers is the first domino to fall. The state will be looking at increased problems down the line as a direct result of cutting teacher pay.

“Public education is a worthy investment for state government, with immense social and economic benefits. Research shows that individuals who graduate and have access to quality education throughout primary and secondary school are more likely to find gainful employment, have stable families, and be active and productive citizens. They are also less likely to commit serious crimes, less likely to place high demands on the public health care system, and less likely to be enrolled in welfare assistance programs. A good education provides substantial benefits to individuals and, as individual benefits are aggregated throughout a community, creates broad social and economic benefits. Investing in public education is thus far more cost-effective for the state than paying for the social and economic consequences of under-funded, low quality schools.”

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony BOE

From: Ashley Olson <ms.a.olson@gmail.com> on behalf of Ashley Olson
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 10:24 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony: BOE General Business Meeting action item V. B: Board Action on Department of Education's plan for use of federal funds in the new COVID-19 relief package and annual federal spending bill.

Aloha esteemed members of the Hawai'i State Board of Education-

My name is Ashley Olson and I am a veteran educator who is struggling to find polite words to express myself in the face of draconian cuts to school budgets and teacher salaries. The very idea that positions will be cut and teachers will face salary cuts while millions upon tens of millions of dollars will be diverted to outside tutors and summer school that will benefit only a fraction of our student population is an obscene malfeasance

Please, ask yourselves, how many teachers who are eligible to retire will stick around when their "high three" years of compensation (upon which retirement is based, in case anyone was unaware) are behind them, and their salary is in fact, decreasing? Ask yourselves how many teachers will leave Hawai'i for better paying jobs- and a lower cost of living. Ask yourselves who in their right mind would look at the cost of living in this state and the abysmal teacher pay and decide to dedicate their career to public education in Hawai'i. Ask yourselves how public education in Hawai'i will survive when you cannot find more than a handful of qualified educators willing to work in conditions and for a paycheck that I doubt any of YOU would be willing to accept.

I am about to lose the \$5000 annual differential and it would seem that my position has been cut. I will still have a job, thanks to my seniority, but how much will I hate it? This really isn't how I thought my employer might show appreciation for the years of service and dedication I have given to my students and to my school. This is not the thanks I'd hoped for after giving my employer thousands of hours of uncompensated hours (and by thousands, I mean 4000 at a bare minimum).

You have the power to demand that federal Covid funds are not squandered on 'outside vendors'. You have the power to see that those federal funds are used to get public schools through this crisis intact. You have the power to ensure that the Department of Education does not drive away every teacher who has any other option than the HIDOE. You have the power to ensure that public education in Hawai'i is not crippled.

Use it.

Thank you-

A. Olson

Testimony BOE

From: Liz Noetzel <lizziecakes@icloud.com> on behalf of Liz Noetzel
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 10:24 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha,

I am writing regarding two issues that I would like to submit for testimony - BOE Special Meeting Action Item A- Superintendent Christina Kishimoto's discontinuance of extra compensation, as well as BOE General Business Meeting Action Item V, B: Board Action on the DOE's plan for use of federal funds.

I am a seventh grade English Language Arts teacher at Waikoloa Elementary and Middle School. I have been teaching in the DOE since 1994, so I am included in the group of compressed teachers earning much less than I should be at this stage of my career. Because I love my profession and I have been in Hawaii since 1968, I have chosen to stay with the DOE system. My husband is employed at a private school in our community and consistently informs me of job openings, many of which actually pay more than what I am currently receiving. I've been tempted in the past, but I've chosen to stay with the public school system because I believe in servicing our Island's communities that cannot afford a private education.

HOWEVER- I am currently exploring leaving the DOE and joining the private school community my husband works for, for several reasons. At the very top of my list is the constant disregard our Superintendent has for teachers and her blatant choice to ignore the very real benefits of the differentials, not just the financial ones to teachers, but the trickle down effects for the students, a top priority. There is data which shows that more than 29% of our teachers transferred into special ed positions, and nearly twice as many transferred to hard-to-staff locations such as the one I work in. To eliminate a large chunk of my salary which I deserve after decades of work in this system will not only cause devastating effects on my own family's financial situation, but equally if not more importantly, it will have lasting ramifications on our school: teachers WILL leave, new teachers will NOT come, and **our students** will be the ones who suffer. Even *with* the differentials, we have had three subs in our Art line in the middle school since January. The differential has made it possible for my college-aged child to pick the university she wanted to attend, and even then, I come up short every July and December when her tuition is due and I must take the balance out of my retirement. No teacher in Hawaii is living the high life- we are all getting by paycheck to paycheck, and to reduce that paycheck is unfair and devastating. We all do understand that Hawaii is in a budgetary crisis due to this pandemic, however, there are alternatives other than forcing teachers to carry the burden of society's debts on our backs. I beg of you- please- do not let Ms. Kishimoto discontinue the extra compensation. It will hurt so many teachers like myself, it will hurt the economy because we will have less to spend, and it will hurt the students because some of us WILL leave if we cannot afford to work for the DOE with all of the impending cuts.

Additionally, I am absolutely *flabbergasted* that our superintendent has chosen to use a huge share of the federal stimulus funds for tutors instead of restoring funding for our schools. This is truly unbelievable and unacceptable. There are teachers at my school whose positions were eliminated - our entire line of Electives were cancelled for next year- the students will not have Music, PE, Art, Drama or any Languages because of these cuts, and she has the audacity to allocate money for tutoring? It is unbelievable! She clearly is spewing nothing but rhetoric when she states that she cares about and appreciates the teachers! I cannot wrap my brain around this decision- this has a direct and negative impact on our students who will not be able to take ANY of those classes listed above next year. Can you even imagine yourself as a middle schools student, forced to only take core classes every day? Some students **ONLY** come to school because of the joy they find in their electives classes. Please- someone, do something- this cannot happen- over 700 teachers are slated to lose their jobs and she could clearly care less, about the adults, their families, or the students we are here to serve. I am horrified at

her short-sided, uninformed, uneducated choices. Please save us and the students from her lack of vision and do not allow her to follow through with this ridiculous plan. I predict that if her plan is passed, *very* few students will receive *actual tutoring*, in comparison to how many will receive a well-rounded, quality education that addresses the whole child, if their teachers and programs are retained.

I realize this is long, and I apologize. But this is important, and I appreciate your taking the time to consider the teacher's voices, needs, and opinions, as well as listening to our most important client- our students.

Thank you for your time,
Liz K Noetzel

Testimony BOE

From: Deborah Anderson <Deborah.Anderson@waiakeai.k12.hi.us> on behalf of Deborah Anderson
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 10:20 AM
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

- [1:30 p.m. General business meeting](#) (school-level budgets, positions, salaries)

Federal monies which are being allocated to retain staff should be used precisely to prevent loss of full-time positions.

Give our Legislators the time to raise their voices to insist that our state follow the guidelines attached to federal allocations: Retaining full-time teaching positions is essential.

As our Superintendent's proposal is NOT supporting the use of these federal stimulus dollars appropriately, particularly by using almost a third of the monies (almost \$50 million) to hire temporary tutors, this seems very short-sighted. Please don't let that go unchallenged. These are unprecedented times for our state, and retaining professional teachers should be a paramount responsibility. We're facing a statewide loss of 700 teacher positions.

At my school our Library position is stated for cutting, while our greatest need is supporting students more than 2.5 years behind in their literacy skills. This seems so wrong. Your support could mean the difference in this decision.

Please do what is best for both the short and long-term success of our system: maintain our teaching positions.

Mahalo

Testimony BOE

From: Nancy Johnson <nan2@hawaii.edu> on behalf of Nancy Johnson
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 10:16 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony-Budget

BOE Meeting action item budget

I have been a resident of Hawaii for 27 years. I raised my son here, buried my mother here and truly believed it would be my forever home. The callousness and lack of foresight of Governor Ige and Superintendent Kishimoto however, have left me stunned. I chose to work in the DOE because I wanted to work for and with my community. My background is in counseling and I even worked while in graduate school, as one of these "tutors" the BOE is so willing to toss 49 million at. Do you realize they earn more than teachers already? When I worked as a tutor while getting my 2nd master's degree, I earned 35-40 dollars an hour? That is significantly more than I now earn. I do what I currently do for the love of my kids and because of my incredible respect for my fellow educators. Everyone has their price though and a total cut of almost \$10000 to my annual income, including the proposed loss of the differential, firmly places me below the poverty level and it will be time to quit and go back into the private sector. Teachers in general are highly educated yet earn significantly less already than their counterparts with the same level degrees. When the government starts penalizing the "helpers" in a time of crisis, it is time for a new government and for everyone to take stock.

How are the proposed budget cuts playing out? Our school has been an interesting case study. We have a supportive and seasoned administration, but in the 1st semester, very few staff were granted telework. Ironically, if we had let teachers work from home there would have been a significant reduction in operation costs, but that was not deemed an acceptable solution. Instead, our school is trying to make up the severe budget deficit by cutting multiple positions that leave our keiki unsupported and next year's teachers over-extended. Our administrators were visibly saddened by this, but others options were not pursued. I know teachers who are at a loss as to what to do next after being told that their position was being phased out. The main cuts are in electives, GE, with a counselor and SPED instructor losing their jobs as well. Aren't these the areas our kids need most right now? COVID has strained our mental health in ways we don't yet realize and here we are cutting SEL-rich positions. Now, we are faced with not just losing our jobs, but losing, in my case, more than 1/6th of my income. There are other ways to cut fat. Again, don't go after the "helpers".

I think the most frustrating thing about the current proposal is the incredible disrespect it shows for teachers and students alike. It states very clearly that teachers are expendable and accepted collateral damage during this time of COVID. Do you not see that this influences public perception of teachers and in a way also states that our public school kids are expendable? How are you going to improve the students' learning experience without teachers? Are you really going to hire quality tutors? When I worked as a tutor, it wasn't DOE kids I worked with. It was academically entitled students; private school kids whose parents had disposable income and wanted the best for their kids. I think that is what I find the most frustrating in this situation... Governor Ige is not just spitting on teachers, but the kids who must attend public school. When you tell the world your teachers don't matter and make no mistake, that is what Governor Ige and Kishimoto are saying, what you are really saying is that the general public doesn't matter. Trust your teachers, support your teachers and remember they are the most important part of your team. Fred Rogers once said, "when I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, 'Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.' " If Governor Ige and Superintendent Kishimoto get their way, the "helpers" will be penalized and our students will have less and less "helpers" to look to. If the Governor's plan passes, many teachers will have no option, but to go back to the private sector and many will leave the island. Aren't our keiki and teacher worth another thought? Please reconsider and do not go forward with your current plan. Instead, please use the funds to support our schools and teachers and end the proposed lay-offs and pay cuts.

Nancy Johnson, MA LMHC
Waikoloa School, Big Island Hawaii

Testimony BOE

From: Natalia Sandoval <nataliasandoval.hi@gmail.com> on behalf of Natalia Sandoval
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 10:13 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony

Aloha Board of Education,

I am writing testimony to ask that the Board prioritize keeping teachers and other school employees on the payroll instead of using federal stimulus money to hire tutors, especially those who are unlicensed teachers, work out of state, and have more of an interest in making a profit rather than the success of our keiki.

We have thousands of highly qualified teachers here in Hawaii who would be more than willing to tutor and work with students in their schools and communities to address any gaps in learning or loss of learning due to the pandemic. The fact that our own teachers were not offered the chance to work face to face with our own keiki is appalling. Superintendent Kishimoto has no sense of what ohana means. To give millions of dollars to for profit, out-of-state companies, before investing in our own teachers, shows how little she thinks of our education system and educators, here in Hawaii.

I am also writing to request that the Board direct Superintendent Kishimoto to rescind her memo ending teacher shortage differentials. As a special education teacher, I, along with my fellow SPEDucators and our students, will be directly impacted by the loss of the shortage differentials.

There are thousands of special education teachers who have been tirelessly working for years, without proper compensation or pay. We are all burned out by the demands of our profession, but have nowhere else to go. We do not have the luxury of teaching in private schools, as they do not serve the population of students we love working with. We do not have the luxury of switching professions, as we are bogged down by debt we've accumulated over the years building our professional capacity. We are truly public servants to the communities, families, schools, and exceptional students we service.

Should the shortage differentials be taken away, I fear we will lose so many special education teachers again. Less qualified teachers means more work for those of us who are highly qualified. More work for those of us who are highly qualified, means less time spent on providing students with the proper services, instruction, and support they desperately need. Poor servicing, instruction, and support for our special needs students could place us in another FELIX situation, where the Department of Education will be held to stricter mandates by the courts; how sad and embarrassing would that be for the DOE!

Our special needs students are the ones who will truly suffer with the loss of shortage differentials, and I do not want to see what happened with Felix to happen again. We have a moral and ethical obligation to fully fund, support, and service all students, especially those with exceptional needs.

Thank you,
Natalia Sandoval, MA SpEd, NBCT
Waikiki Elementary School
Special Education Teacher
SPEDucator Project Fellow
#SomeOneSpecial808

Testimony BOE

From: Haley A. Ku'uipo Bufil Agbayani <hakbufil@gmail.com> on behalf of Haley A. Ku'uipo Bufil Agbayani
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 10:01 AM
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony - 2/18/2021

To the Hawai'i Board of Education:

My name is Haley Agbayani and I am in my eighth year of teaching with the Hawai'i State Department of Education (HIDOE). I am currently a third grade teacher, but have also taught in grades K, 2, and 4. My first three years of teaching were done at Mountain View Elementary. I now work at Pāhoa Elementary School (PES) and unless something comes up that forces me to transfer elsewhere, I am in it for the long haul at PES and within the HIDOE. I work amongst some of the most resilient students and colleagues in the Kea'au-Ka'ū-Pāhoa Complex Area, as we have endured and continue to persevere a multitude of life-changing and trauma-inducing events: Hurricane/Tropical Storm Iselle, lava flow 2014, Hurricane Lane, the Leilani lava flow of 2018, and now, COVID-19. I am also a proud product of our public education system and graduate and alumni of Hilo High School, as well as a proud alumni of Prince Jonah Kūhiō Kalaniana'ole Elementary and Intermediate School in Pāpa'ikou.

I am writing this testimony with regard to **differentials and restoring budgets**. At a time when teachers and educators are working in overdrive to provide quality education to students both in person and at a distance via virtual learning, in some cases simultaneously, removing differentials is an erroneous move. I work in a hard-to-staff area and the differential has helped me offset my extra out of pocket expenses to support students and their families. Additionally, the extra differentials has also helped me in being able to make extra payments toward the principal balance of my family's mortgage. Without these differentials, I will no longer be able to afford the little extra I do for students to support them or make extra principal payments on my mortgage because the cost of living is exponentially higher here in Hawai'i, let alone rural Pāhoa. What also worries me with regard to differentials and possible pay cuts is that our most senior teachers may decide to retire and leave the profession further widening the teacher shortage our state currently faces, potentially causing increased class sizes in the even that we do not have enough qualified teachers to provide quality instruction.

With regard to restoring budgets, does it really make sense to invest federal stimulus funds in the form of tutors outside of a school-work day? This money should be used to retain our qualified teachers and sustain our new-to-the-profession teachers instead of cutting positions. Additionally, this money should be used to support educational assistant (EA) positions to support the needs of students with IEPs. I teach in an inclusion setting and am very thankful that we started the year with an EA, that extra help should be afforded to all teachers especially during a time when students' needs far surpass what we would "normally" endure in a "normal" school year.

Please consider ensuring that our differentials continue and that federal stimulus monies are used to retain our qualified and new-to-the-profession teachers. Let's support our students and ensure that they receive what they need to be successful by support our teachers and educators!

Me ka ha'aha'a,

Haley Agbayani, M. Ed.
Pāhoa Elementary School, Grade 3 Teacher
7-year Hawai'i Public School Educator

Proud HSTA Member & School and Chapter Level Leader

--

Haley Ann Ku'uipo (Bufile) Agbayani, M.Ed.

808-315-0102, hakbufile@gmail.com, HC 1 Box 4069, Kea'au, HI 96749

- 3rd Grade, P-18, Pāhoa Elementary School, Pāhoa, Hawai'i
- SLL HSTA Grievance Representative, Pāhoa Elementary School, 2019-2021

Testimony BOE

From: Paulina Felcher <paulinafelcher@gmail.com> on behalf of Paulina Felcher
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 9:46 AM
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony from a Hawaii public school teacher on BOE General Business Meeting Action Item V, B and BOE Special Meeting Action Item A

Aloha,

This is testimony regarding **BOE General Business Meeting Action Item V, B:**

I am a 1st grade teacher at Kapaa elementary school on Kaua'i. I'm extremely disappointed in the BOE for either not doing their due diligence on what the federal stimulus funding can be used for OR just disregarding the law and hoping to use it for anything other than avoiding pay cuts. The notion of using that funding for hiring private tutors while allowing pay cuts and teachers to lose their jobs is absolutely outrageous. The priority for the funding should be to keep and improve the compensation of highly qualified teachers to provide quality instruction to our children. The logic of cutting teacher positions and pay, and then hiring "tutors" to help catch students up is ridiculous. It gives me very little assurance that the BOE has competent/qualified individuals in office and that the BOE has the best interest of Hawaii students at heart. The current teacher pay is not adequate for the cost of living in our state. There are many skilled teachers who leave this profession because they don't deserve to struggle financially to be a teacher when they can pursue other career options that compensate them adequately. They'd even be better off teaching in a state with teacher compensation that matches the cost of living. If you want good teachers in Hawaii, pay us a professional salary that allows us to live comfortably in our state. It will attract quality individuals to this profession. Use the federal stimulus funding to secure and raise the compensation of the teachers of Hawaii who selflessly devote themselves to this profession. Cutting teacher positions in our state should not even be a question. That would cause class sizes to increase so we are unable to safely distance. It makes no sense and it saddens me to even have to submit testimony for the poor decisions the BOE is making. Please do better.

Regarding **BOE Special Meeting Action Item A:** The differentials have made a huge difference across the state. Our union (HSTA) has provided the facts to support that with all the new SPED teacher candidates applying to the teacher prep programs, etc. SPED positions are extremely hard to fill. At my school, there are SPED teaching lines open every year because the new teachers keep leaving. If you want our SPED students to have qualified teachers, you need SPED differentials to attract people to that very challenging position.

Going forward, please work with our union (HSTA) more as you are supposed to. The back and forth with proposals from the BOE, Ige, and the superintendent during covid have been exhausting. You are putting the teachers, students, and families of Hawaii through unnecessary stress when consulting with HSTA first could have avoided most of it.