



HAROLD K.L. CASTLE  
FOUNDATION

To: Hawaii State Board of Education Chair Catherine Payne  
Members of the State Board of Education

From: Alex Harris, Vice President of Programs

Date: February 18, 2021

Re: **III. A. Presentation on Department of Education requirements and guidance regarding calculating student hours for the 2020-2021 School Year in accordance with Hawaii Revised Statutes Section 302A-251**

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We know that instructional time varies widely by school. Our Foundation supported a recent time utilization analysis to support potential changes to the master schedule that increase teacher collaboration and instructional time. Just prior to the pandemic, the analysis shows that a student in grade 3, for example, can receive very different math and ELA instructional time even within the same school complex.

The pandemic has obviously thrown carefully crafted master schedules out the window. Given the widening academic gaps shown in the Return to Learn data metrics, we must be especially vigilant to account for instructional time this school year. On behalf of the Harold K.L. Castle Foundation, I urge the Department to **work with the respective unions to restore some or all of the lost instructional days** - especially for those students behind grade-level expectations.

I also urge the SAC committee to **request additional information** from the Department on how many schools are on-track to meet current guidelines for attendance and student hours if the 9 days were to be restored.

A decade ago, and with the full agreement of the relevant unions, Hawaii successfully extended learning time for schools serving struggling students in rural and remote regions so these students had more opportunity to catch up. As students increasingly transition back to in-person learning it is clear that they need more, not less, instructional time with their teachers.