



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

In favor

1 message

Robert Garcia <kaipog75@gmail.com>

Fri, Feb 19, 2021 at 12:24 AM

To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I support the kaiapuni kumus!! Give them the pay!!!

Sent from my iPhone



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

(no subject)

1 message

Mahe Directo <mahe0571@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Thu, Feb 18, 2021 at 7:24 PM

Aloha,

I teach at Waiakea Elementary School on the Big Island of Hawaii. I've worked in the public school system as an EA for 2 years, a substitute teacher for 5 years and 2 years as a Licensed Certified Special Education Teacher. Choosing to be an Educator has always been my passion. Hawaii has been my home since birth almost 50 years now. I received my primary and secondary education from public schools on Oahu. I attended college in the mainland for 2 years and returned home and attained my college degree from UH-Hilo. I decided to stay on the Big Island, established roots, I married and raised my 3 children here. My husband is also a public school General Ed Elementary Teacher who is in his 16th year of teaching on the Big Island. As you can see, teaching is our livelihood and teaching is what feeds and support my Ohana. We all know that there is a price to pay for living in Paradise. I don't want to ever leave my home or even consider leave teaching because it can no longer support my Ohana. It's heartbreaking to think that MONEY is the factor that will strip that away from me. But more painfully, MONEY will strip away the future dreams of our keiki of living in Hawaii. So I humbly ask to continue providing differential pay for teachers as it has personally helped me to stay in Hawaii and provide for my Ohana. Especially during this pandemic, every penny counts to keep our families and community thriving. Mahalo for your time.

Sincerely,
Mahealani Directo



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

Testimony, Special Meeting, Agenda 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

1 message

Dona Ahuna <10014859@k12.hi.us>
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Thu, Feb 18, 2021 at 5:54 PM

Aloha Kākou,

My name is Dona Ahuna and I am the Family and Community Engagement Resource Teacher for the West Hawai'i Complex Area.

I am writing to provide testimony for *Agenda 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* in the BOE Special Meeting on Feb. 17th. at 11am.

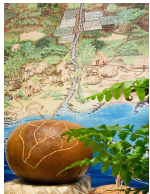
I am writing in opposition to this agenda Item.

There are three main points for this opposition. 1. The BOE already approved Policy 105-8. This policy states that Hawaiian Immersion teachers will be compensated for the extra skill set required. 2. The new differential has helped to dramatically reduce the vacancies in kaiapuni schools and special education positions. More qualified teachers leads to increased student achievement and therefore a stronger economy. 3. The amount of money needed is within the budget allotments with new federal aid and the state should dig deeper into new and innovative ways to cut costs that don't directly impact student achievement.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

--

Dona Ahuna
Family & Community Engagement
West Hawai'i Complex Area



"A man who cannot tolerate small misfortunes can never accomplish great things"
Chinese Proverb

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

Testimony

1 message

Zellie Kamahele <zelliek@icloud.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Thu, Feb 18, 2021 at 5:15 PM

BOE SPECIAL EDUCATION ACTION A

I am writing on behalf of the pros all to Cut special education and hard to staff differentials. First off, we have all seen a POSITIVE impact in the gap closure of openings that these Hawaii schools have suffered for many years for certified special education teachers and other specialist that have closed gaps in hard to staff areas as well as for Hawaiian immersion language schools. Taking these differentials away would have the opposite effect and leave Hawaii with uncertified educational supports that our keiki need. Especially in a time of crisis like this pandemic and years to come- the gap of many students' education in the nation will be heavily affected by many factors of this year. If anything should be done it is keeping the differentials and a raise to keep the certified special education teachers in their positions and helping to assist the many students that have had huge losses and gaps getting larger due to the COVID 19 pandemic. Many Special education teachers I know are planning to leave the special education position including myself if differentials are taken away. It is not for the love of what we do but to the extent we have had to perform this year while dealing with everything else. This is not the right choice for our keiki, it is not the right choice for our schools, and most importantly it is not right for the future of community and our states academic potential.

Thank you for your consideration,
Zellie Kamahele



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

Planned Differential Discontinuation

1 message

Lisa Garcia <john1513nogreaterluv@yahoo.com>

Thu, Feb 18, 2021 at 11:50 AM

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

Dear Christina Kishimoto and BOE:

As to the memo and preposed ending of differential moneys that were just enacted a year ago; reneging on such an important ground braking event, which has helped to provide districts with teachers in areas and positions that have historically been hard to fill will only set Hawaii's school districts, and the entire education system back many years increasing the already disproportionate disadvantage our children face in an effort to be prepared to take their place in a every growing technological future they will need to work in.

This sadly doesn't just affect today, or the children of the next few years but the generation that follows as they become parents whom we have failed and cannot get work here forcing them to seek employment outside our amazing state. This loss over the past decades has left our state, families, business' and future competitiveness in the world stage hollow. With the implementation of the differential moneys that was injected in our schools over the last year, we have seen a retention of teachers at an unprecedented level starting to set a foundation that we could build on in the future bringing hope back to our education system. This has lowered the stress our hard working administrators and teachers had faced in the past to a manageable level. Giving them smaller classes, a full complement of teachers in many of the basic departments like ELA English, Special Education and others.

But now reneging on the moneys that have shown such promise in just one year is bad business, reckless educational

planning and forcing our schools to teach in subpar conditions, which will build a weak foundation in our future work force when we as state with great potential to provide our residents, world industries and businesses with the needed workers; we rob our citizens of the chance to be successful in a highly technological future by using a weak out dated educational foundation.

Please rethink this action, or we will be facing a major loss of teachers who were just hired and those who enthusiastically want to come and join our educational workforce, to make a difference in the future. This in part due to the inability to financially live here in our very high cost of living, which includes shortage of housing for a reasonable price, high cost of food/gas, and the imbalance in the teachers packages where wages are low in comparison to cost of living, and high deductions to fund the needed benefits.

In rethinking where the needed funds are going to come from, why not look at all of the property owners who like less than six months out of the year here or not at all but use their property as a money making venture charging exorbitant prices to tourist to make high profits. Let's think about the less fortunate and begin to incorporate not just Aloha but sustainability and community again.

Let our state lead the way to equality for all including our kapuna, keki and disadvantaged. We once lived where everyone looked out for everyone else and was treated with care...The Golden Rule as westerners would call it. Let's do unto our teachers as we would like done unto us. Please, let us build and not tear down our future.

Mahalo,

Lisa Kartchner



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

Testimony

1 message

CAMILLE HAMPTON <camillet2@msn.com>

Thu, Feb 18, 2021 at 9:23 AM

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

Aloha Board members,

I am writing to submit testimony 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.

I have been a teacher at Wai'anae High School for almost 20 years and my children attend schools in the Leeward District. I am born and raised in this community and I have been passionate about creating learning experiences where teachers and students could thrive. As a teacher and a parent of students in our community, I have seen the detrimental impacts of the constant teacher shortage.

Each year in my school, I have watched nearly 30% of the teaching faculty leave every year. Whether due to geography or the added demands of teaching at a school that is continually under scrutiny because of low test scores, finding and keeping quality teachers seems to be nearly impossible. Each new school year, so many resources were spent on helping new teachers, many who come from the continent, gain their footing in what can be a very challenging environment. The hard-to-fill differentials have been instrumental in beginning to turn this around.

Teachers are not in this industry because of the financial rewards. However, surviving in Hawaii is a really struggle. Many of our teachers have at least two jobs. At our school, because of the unique needs of our students and administrative demands, it is nearly impossible to keep up the unrealistic schedule for an extended period of time. The hard-to-fill differentials have made it possible for teachers, including myself, to not take on as many hours working to earn supplemental income. Without these differentials, myself and most others, will have to take on more work outside of our teaching responsibilities and this will not be sustainable. We will begin to lose teachers and also the quality of work may be impacted because teachers have to divide their already taxed time.

It is not uncommon for those in our community to feel invisible. Geographic distance makes it easy for those in seats of power to not see the impacts of decisions made for and about us. Please consider how the decision to discontinue differentials will impact not just the teachers but also the children and families who have been somewhat forgotten. Continuing the differentials will not just allow teachers to continue to thrive, it will allow teachers to focus on creating environments where students and families can thrive.

Respectfully,
Camille Hampton
Teacher, Wai'anae High School
Parent
Community Member



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

testimony

1 message

Zhorein Galicinao <zhorein.galicinao@k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Thu, Feb 18, 2021 at 9:17 AM

To whom it may concern,

I am testifying in support of Action Item A. I am in disagreement with Superintendent Kishimoto's plan to discontinue the extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education. I have been a special education teacher for over 14 years and a general education teacher for 5 years. I have to admit that in the last five years, I have thought about going back as a general education teacher because I felt that teaching special education was taking a toll on me mentally and emotionally. The case loads that I had were very difficult. I had to see a therapist because my job was causing too much stress on me and affecting my marriage, my family, and my life in general. I finally decided that I was going to ask to be placed back in the general education but that also happened to be the same year that we were offered the differential pay. I have to be honest and say that the extra pay was what helped me to stay as a special education teacher. It really helped financially and helped to make staying in special education worthwhile. With the thought of not getting the extra differential does have me thinking of trying to go back in the general education classroom. I read that Hawaii always has a shortage on special education teachers every year except when the differential pays were made. I can attest that many special education teachers like myself will not want to be teaching special education if there is no extra pay. For years people would say and ask "Oh you're a special education teacher, you must get paid more?" I would laugh and tell them "NO". Up until last year I could actually tell others that "Yup, I am getting paid more and getting what we deserve." I ask you to please reconsider taking away the differential pay. I don't think that Hawaii is ready to lose more special education teachers which may in turn cause some due process because of the lack of great special education teachers available.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Zhorein Galicinao

Special Education teacher
Pomaikai Elementary School

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

Please support Hawaiian Immersion programs as you are bound by law to do♥🙏

1 message

Ki'inaniokalani Kaho'ohanohano <hokulani23@hotmail.com>

Thu, Feb 18, 2021 at 8:43 AM

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

Please continue to support our Hawaiian Immersion Programs as the law states necessary. Native Hawaiian programs for our youth are the foundation for returning pertinent cultural knowledge and practices that have been stripped from us in the past. It is imperative in order to thrive as a people to have access to our language, and what comes with that. Please support our KUMU, who give every ounce of their souls to provide this education, often as the ones who work round the clock to serve our lahui, with already limited resources. Do not cut them down even more so. I promise you that even the best teachers don't have to work as hard as our Kumu Kaiapuni. We have to be innovative and often create our own curriculum etc as we navigate the sharing and learning of our mother tongue in our own lands, after it being illegal to do so... please support us all in being able to thrive again.

Me ke aloha nui,
Pōhaku and Ki'i Kaho'ohanohano

Sent from my iPhone



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

Differentials

1 message

Dawn Homont <dhomont@gmail.com>
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Thu, Feb 18, 2021 at 8:39 AM

Dear Hawaii Board of Education.

My name is Dawn Homont, I'm a physical educator for our special education population as well as an AVID elective teacher at Wai'anae Intermediate School. This is my 13th year of teaching in the Hawaii Department of Education. I love my students and love my career, but last school year I became so burned out with the job demands that are required to change curriculum to online learning, from the extensive time needed to develop, plan and prepare for the needs of my students to the endless amount of energy to create lessons and engage the amazing learners I work with on a daily basis. I want to give my students the best opportunity for success and it began weighing heavy that I was failing my students because I was growing tired. This year has been especially challenging with the pandemic. I have been afraid to teach in person and put myself and my family at risk of contracting COVID-19, but I do it for my students everyday because I am recognized for the work I am doing. We received a differential for working on the coast. Now, sadly that is about to be taken away. I stated earlier that I was nervous to bring COVID home to my family. I am a single woman living with her parents because I can not afford to live on my own. I have a master's degree, and am still paying for that education with so many loans. I saw on the news just the other day that the police department is recruiting individuals with a high school diploma or GED and the starting salary is \$65,000. I'm almost in my 20th year of teaching (starting in California) and I'm not making that salary with a masters degree AND the differential. It's time Hawaii puts our keiki, teachers, and students first. It's time Hawaii puts value on education and educators. Please continue with the differentials, as they have been effective with teacher recruitment and retention.

Mahalo nui loa for taking the time for us.

Aloha,
Dawn Homont



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

Testimony: hard to fill differentials

1 message

Mila Savini <mboucheva@kamaile.org>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Thu, Feb 18, 2021 at 8:37 AM

Aloha!

I am submitting my testimony in support of keeping the hard-to-fill differentials. The fact that an option exists to take these extra funds away has been a huge source of anxiety and sleepless nights for me and my family. This money came as a blessing, at a time when I most needed it; at a time when I was making steps to leave the education field due to high amount of stressful work and little pay. The differentials made me reconsider this decision, and I stayed. Since that time, my husband and I bought a condo, a global pandemic ravaged out community, and my husband lost his job. My salary alone has been keeping us afloat - barely. We are drowning in fear, anxiety, and bills every day. If these hard-to-fill differentials get taken away from us, that will be the end of us living in Hawaii and my journey in education. When I also consider other factors that may influence my pay - my school is getting rid of ELT, furloughs, budget cuts, it is a sure nail in the coffin.

I know that I am not the only one. I know that there are a dozen of teachers at my school who are in similar positions. We talk weekly about what we're going to do next, what our next moves are going to be, what field will be suitable for us after leaving education, and so on. These are not new teachers. These are not teachers who have flown in from the East Coast on a TFA program. These are local men and women, born and raised in Waianae, who only want to give back to their communities.

Please, I am begging you as hard as anyone can beg to please keep these differentials. These cuts will be a devastating blow to our islands, our haumana, our kumu for generations to come.

Mila Savini
ELL Department CoordinatorKamaile Academy
[87-180 Ala Akau St](#)
[Wai'anae, HI 96792](#)
808-697-7110 (ext. 615)



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

Testimony

1 message

Gerianne Fujihara <gerianne.fujihara@k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Thu, Feb 18, 2021 at 8:2

Gerianne Fujihara <gerianne.fujihara@k12.hi.us>
to Corey

Feb 16, 2021, 2:38 PM (2 days ago)

I am a special education teacher in our public schools. I teach my own classes; co-teach in inclusion classes; modify the curriculum material and assessments for all of my students; spend extra hours helping our students with assignments; schedule/meet/prepare IEP's/eligibility/re-eval meetings/distance learning plans/COVID impact documents; take data and evaluate quarterly progress reports; take data daily for behavioral specialists; advise skill trainers and provide data sheets for skill trainers; deal with behavioral challenged children; and attend extra professional development trainings on top of doing the regular duties of a general education teacher. Special education teachers are required to provide documents in a timely and legal manner. We are liable by the law to provide adequate and professional educational services to our special needs and general student population. We kept working even during school closures to meet the demands and objectives to service our special education students even during Covid.

Unfortunately, the stress levels are high in the area of special education, which lead to a drain in highly qualified special education teachers. As a result, many special education students are left with unqualified substitute teachers that do not understand or have to carry out the legal responsibilities of the special education teacher. This leaves the education system open to lawsuits and inefficiency in our education department.

Taking away the differentials from our committed and hard working special education teachers will lead to a severe shortage of highly qualified special education teachers and will be a disservice to our keiki.

Thank you,

Gerianne Fujihara

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

Testimony, Special Meeting, Agenda 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

1 message

Ann Inaba <akiavon@hawaii.rr.com>
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Thu, Feb 18, 2021 at 5:16 AM

Aloha Kākou,

My name is Ann Inaba and I am a retired teacher from the DOE and a supporter of Ke Kula 'o 'Ehunuikaimalino.

I am writing to provide testimony for Agenda 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 in the BOE Special Meeting on Feb. 18th. at 11am.

I am writing in opposition to this agenda Item.

There are three main points for this opposition. 1. The BOE already approved Policy 105-8. This policy states that Hawaiian Immersion teachers will be compensated for the extra skill set required. 2. The new differential has helped to dramatically reduce the vacancies in kaiapuni schools and special education positions. More qualified teachers leads to increased student achievement and therefore a stronger economy. 3. The amount of money needed is within the budget allotments with new federal aid and the state should dig deeper into new and innovative ways to cut costs that don't directly impact student achievement.

Sent from my iPhone



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

Testimony

1 message

Kanoe Hezekia <kanoehezekia@gmail.com>

Thu, Feb 18, 2021 at 1:22 AM

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

To whom it may concern,

I, Kanoe Hezekia, Special Education Teacher of Waiiau Elementary support of Action Item A of Differential Pay.

This testimony is to testify as an special education educator and as teacher representing my schools unique situation of staffing Hawaiian Immersion Teachers.

On a personal note, the differential pay has helped my family financially. My father had a stroke last year and my Aunt passed right before CO-VID took place. Medical expenses and money to the family to cover necessary expenses helped keep our family afloat.

In the classroom, I am a Grade K-6 Fully Self Contained Special Education Teacher. My classroom services children with disabilities such as autism, medically fragile, emotional disorder, etc. This usually includes a plethora of behaviors, learning skills and challenges that my classroom staff and I deal on a daily basis.

My job is different from other teachers where it is expected that my classroom staff and I may get kicked, hit, punched, slapped, spit on, and bitten. Personal hygiene includes cleaning my students after they make bowel movements and handling sick situations. I had several situations where my student vomits and diarrhea's without any knowledge or ability to self care for themselves. My classroom staff and I may also run for lengths, climb and scale walls and handle other necessary problems that come our way. Our students may demonstrate these various behaviors and it is being targeted and worked on as specific goals. The ability to come to come back to the classroom daily and know that these things will happen to my staff and I is a reason why so few teachers choose this specific position. It takes a lot of effort and courage daily to know that there will be tough physical, mental and emotional situations.

My curriculum has to stretch not only seven grade levels (K-6) but also functional daily routines or activities that benefit and target my specific students needs. My school has tried their best to provide adequate funding but there will always be areas in my curriculum that our Purchase Order list cannot buy. The differential helped me supply my classroom with necessary items that was crucial to my lessons without asking for additional items from students families.

Lastly, my school is very unique and has Hawaiian Immersion Staff for each grade level. I am proud to be at a school that values Hawaiian values and practices. I believe one of the most important aspects of the Hawaiian community is to be able to perpetuate our Hawaiian values. Seeing my fellow colleagues teach their students in Hawaiian language and practices brings me joy. But I saw difficulty throughout the years keeping staff and transitioning to become highly qualified teachers. Most Hawaiian Immersion teachers I spoke to communicated that they were not considered a qualified teacher at first because they needed to have a teacher degree but was qualified in a degree or certification related to speaking Hawaiian. The opposite also happened where they may have had a teacher degree but did not have the necessary credentials to prove their mastery of Hawaiian language until those requirements were met. This took years of additional schooling, workshops/certification courses, etc. The process was long and rigorous which is why these educators are so hard to come by.

I also see them face similar if not harder situations in regards to the curriculum. My fellow colleagues are regularly translating their materials and lessons for their students. They are also regularly gathering Hawaiian items, resources, and learning practices to teach their students to become not only become successful academically but culturally aware.

Let us continue to be the educators we are by compensating us in fields that you know have their own specific difficulties. We are experts in our field and should be treated as such.

I see my students not as students with disabilities but children. Children who need love, care, support, growth. Families that need support, faith, and a community that regularly gives them assurance that we have the best intentions for their children.

We are not a number, a statistic, a budget, or things that can be cut or consolidated.

2/19/2021

Dell Marketing LP Mail - Testimony

My students, my students families, my colleagues, my school, public education MATTERS.

Please see the importance in valuing the teacher - our hearts our for the children.

Kanoe Hezekia



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

BOE Testimony - Hawaiian Language Immersion Extra Compensation

1 message

Kahea Faria <kaheaf@hawaii.edu>
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Thu, Feb 18, 2021 at 12:31 AM

Please find testimony for BOE

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Kahea Faria
College of Education,
Institute for Teacher Education-
Master of Education in Teaching
University of Hawaii at Manoa
Honolulu, HI 96822
Phone - [808-956-2889](tel:808-956-2889)

**Faria, Kahea_BOE Testimony_2021-0217.docx**
20K

February 17, 2021

To: Board of Education

From: Kahea and Keoki Faria

RE: Support the **continuance** of the **extra compensation** for classroom teachers in the Hawaiian language immersion programs

Aloha mai e ka Papa Hoonaauao,

I am writing to you today in support of continuing the extra compensation for Hawaiian Language Immersion teachers. It is my strong belief that all HIDOE teacher salaries should be increased immediately to acknowledge the importance of their work. There is a major disconnection between what teachers do for our communities, families and children - they are not merely babysitters, they are educators. Our teachers help develop the knowledge and skills that maintain our society as well as a common consciousness that moves us ever closer to a just, equitable society.

Hawaiian Language Immersion teachers are particularly deserving of a salary increase in addition to a pay differential for all that is expected of them. Nearly every teacher is a second language learner of Hawaiian and in addition to being up to date on their content, Hawaiian language immersion teachers also need to continuously work towards improving their basic proficiency in Hawaiian. These teachers also need to constantly create curriculum, or in some cases edit existing curriculum – finding ways to address educational standards while ensuring that the learning is culturally relevant and appropriate. Hawaiian education continues to lack a basic K-12 curriculum that achieves language and cultural competencies while also addressing HIDOE educational outcomes. This is understandable due to the systemic policies and norms that have removed Hawaiian language, culture and history for over 100 years.

If Hawaii is truly to achieve equity and excellence in our schools it must begin with the constitutional commitment to Hawaiian language, culture and history, and the full support of our Hawaiian Language Immersion Program as a means to that end. For Hawaii will never respect diversity if it fails to prioritize its initial commitment to the aboriginal people, language and culture of this land, Hawaii.

Me ke aloha mau o ka aina,

Kahea & Keoki Faria

February 17, 2021

To: Board of Education

From: Kahea Faria

RE: Highly recommend to continue the extra compensation for Hawaiian language programs

Aloha mai e ka Papa Hoonaaauao,

Recently, my colleague and I presented on the topic of Motivation for Self-Determination. Some of the things that we looked at were motivators for pre-service and in-services teachers. We found that one of the motivators were the involvement of *ohana* such as Hui Makua or parent groups. I am here as a makua or a parent of a student in a Hawaiian language immersion setting, in support of the continuance of the extra compensation for kumu.

Another motivating factor that we found was a *Sense of Belonging* – teachers create safe learning environments for our children, form strong bonds with colleagues, students, their families and the community.

Another motivating factor is *Building Competence* – as someone who works in teacher preparation, we are seeing Hawaiian language immersion graduates returning to teach in Hawaiian Education settings – I highly recommend that we do our part to help address the teacher shortages in Hawaiian education by continuing the pay differential/extra compensation.

The last motivating factor we mention is *Kuleana* – kuleana to our children, to curriculum, to each of their schools and their communities, to Hawaii. Teachers are responsible for the education of our children in Hawaiian language, history and culture – addressing the State's constitutional duty ([Hawaii State Constitution Article X, Section 4](#)). Our Hawaiian language immersion teachers deserve the pay differential and more as they are a small number of teachers who are able to address Article X, Section 4 of the Hawaii State Constitution.

My duty and responsibility as a makua (or a parent) is to support my children's teachers. As a Hawaii, it is my duty and responsibility to promote and preserve the language, history and culture of Hawaii that was left to me by my makua (or parents). As a makua, I am highly recommending, that we, parents, educators, community members do our part of in being a factor that motivates our teachers to address the State's constitutional duty. Keeping the differential pay/extra compensation will ensure that we continue to have teachers to do this.

No ka pono o ka aina,
~kahea



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

TESTIMONY in BOE Special Meeting Action Item A

1 message

Bernie Ibanez <kokonutwahine@gmail.com>

Wed, Feb 17, 2021 at 10:59 PM

To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Cc: Christopher Castillo <christopher_castillo@waianaeelem.k12.hi.us>

TESTIMONIAL: Opposition of Discontinuance Shortage Differentials

As a Native Pacific Islander teaching Special Education in an at-risk community of Wai'anae, I respectfully urge the Board to REJECT Superintendent Christina Kishimoto's unilateral discontinuance of differential compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language programs.

According to the Board's GBM_07232020_Board Action on Temporary Discontinuance of Extra Compensation for Teachers dated July 23, 2020, the following metrics are the number and type of transfers to Special Education Licensed Teachers:

SpEd Licensed Teachers	For SY 20-21	For SY 19-20	Difference
Teachers transferred to a SpEd titled position	106	82	+24
Teachers out of a SpEd titled position	40	92	-52
SpEd Teachers that Separated from Service	85	131	-46

[Source: https://boe.hawaii.gov/Meetings/Notices/Meeting%20Material%20Library/GBM_07232020_Board%20Action%20on%20Temporary%20Discontinuance%20of%20Extra%20Compensation%20for%20Teachers.pdf]

According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Hawaii's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate as of December 2020, reached **9.3%**. The discontinuance of shortage differentials will have a devastating impact on the Waianae Elementary School community that is already struggling with high unemployment.

[Source: https://www.bls.gov/eag/eag.hi.htm#eag_hi.f.2]

Personally, the differential was a life saver during these times of increased hardship, anxiety, and uncertainty. The differential was key to not only helping me to continue teaching Special Education students that need even more attention during these times of complexity and increasing uncertainty.

Respectfully,

Bernadette Ibanez



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

Testimony

1 message

Holden Takahashi <holdenkt@hawaii.edu>
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Feb 17, 2021 at 10:56 PM

Board of Education, Special Meeting

II. 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 immersion programs.

Aloha e ka Papa Ho'ona'auao (BOE),

My name is Holden Takahashi and I am currently a Master's Student in Hawaiian Studies at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. I am a supporter of Kaiapuni Hawaiian language immersion schools and increased and improved support of Kaiapuni schools.

I **oppose** the discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in Hawaiian language immersion programs and urge the BOE to **reject** the proposal. I would also like to advocate in support of the Hawaii Department of Education and the BOE honoring their commitment to all qualified and licensed teachers in the shortage differential category of Hawaiian language immersion, which is a key implementation of BOE policy 105-8. Our kumu are being asked to continue their most honorable work in these extraordinary times and they deserve the full annual shortage differential that they have earned. Mahalo for your time and consideration of my written testimony.

ke aloha,
Holden Takhaashi



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

Testimony

1 message

Matt Hawkins <madu94107@yahoo.com>

Wed, Feb 17, 2021 at 10:36 PM

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

Dear Board of Education:

Good Morning.

I am submitting testimony for 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.**

TESTIMONY

The first question to ask is whether the compensation program has worked. The evidence provided by the DOE demonstrates that the program has been extraordinarily successful in increasing teacher retention across all teaching areas targeted by the program: Hawaiian Language, SPED, and Hard-to-Staff (see Jill Akena 2/9/21 email to all CAS's and Principals including pdf attachments detailing the success of the program). This fact is uncontroverted.

The program was designed with the intention of alleviating chronic teacher shortages in Hawaiian Language and SPED fields and Hard-to-Staff locations that put Hawaii's children at a tremendous disadvantage in relation to their general population public school peers. Teachers often declined to enter these teaching areas because they: required specialized training, involved very challenging student populations, and/or remote locations. And what professional teacher would volunteer to subject himself to such hardship duty? The cost in daily stress and exhaustion is real.

Unfortunately, students in these areas became the red headed step child; pushed down the road for years without the benefit of a well trained permanent teaching cadre dedicated to seeing them flourish.

I teach at Olomana School, an institution targeted by the DOE's compensation program because the school is difficult for administrators to staff. I chose to work at Olomana: educating at-risk youth is my passion. My ability to continue in the teaching field, however, has been hampered on multiple fronts:

*Despite having an advanced professional degree and 10 years of private industry experience directly related to my English teaching line (I made a mid-career switch) the DOE declined to recognize the prior degree or experience. Instead, they elected to place me in a low salary Class.

*This move ensured that I did not earn a living wage despite attending a professional post baccalaureate teaching certificate at UH at a cost of \$13,000. I simply could not meet my monthly bills on the meager salary afforded by the DOE. I was obligated to draw down on an Individual Retirement Account, with associated tax penalties, in order to make ends meet, month to month.

*Attempts to move up the salary classes through professional development were equally unavailing. The PD classification forms and procedure for third party PD vendors were byzantine. To say the Reclass office was unhelpful in providing clarifications would be the height of understatement.

*With respect to professional advancement through PDE3 courses, the DOE began severely limiting space in classes over the past several years. It has become difficult to enroll in any class, much less one that would fit with a teacher's life schedule (including caring for their own children and kupuna) or professional interests.

*The DOE is now calling for the end of the 21 hours of embedded professional development in the contract negotiations currently underway. This would eliminate three professional development credits that teachers earn each year.

*In sum, there is little, if any, way to advance by pulling on one's own bootstraps.

PROGRAM RESULTS

The compensation program has allowed me for the first time in 5 years of teaching to pay my monthly bills. I am not able to save much money but I am able to pay my bills. The program has been a lifeline, a godsend.

CONCLUSION

I, and all of the teachers at Olomana, implore you to maintain the compensation program. It has been a tremendous assistance in making the teaching corps livable, stress wise and affordability wise. If necessary, make modest adjustments. To completely trash a venture that has proved to be such a resounding success, however, makes no sense and does a disservice to both students and teachers. The DOE rightfully proposed this successful program as a remedy to an entrenched problem.

I would be happy to testify before the Board in person, bring documents supporting the facts outlined in this written testimony, and invite other colleagues who could answer additional questions.

Sincerely,

Matthew Hawkins
Teacher
Olomana School
808 647-0228



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

From the Office of Holeka Goro Inaba (Support Continued Pay Differentials)1 message

Inaba, Holeka <Holeka.Inaba@hawaiicounty.gov>

Wed, Feb 17, 2021 at 9:29 PM

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

Aloha e ka Board of Education,

My name is Holeka Goro Inaba. I am the Hawai'i County Council Member for District 8 (North Kona). As a former student and staff member of the Hawaiian immersion system, I am writing this testimony in favor of continued pay differentials for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language programs.

Since January 2020, we have seen the positive effects of these pay increases across the state. In these times of difficulty, our underserved populations should be the last to experience a reduction of educational resources and services. With humility, I ask that you require Superintendent Kishimoto to continue these pay differentials to support our keiki. Mahalo nui.

**Na'u me ke aloha,
Holeka Goro Inaba**

Hawai'i County Council Member, District 8 (North Kona)

Phone: (808) 323-4280

Email: holeka.inaba@hawaiicounty.gov

West Hawai'i Civic Center - Building "A"

[74-5044 Ane Keohokālole Hwy, Kailua-Kona, HI 96740](#)



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

Teachers

1 message

Angela Chaffin <aychaffin@yahoo.com>

Wed, Feb 17, 2021 at 9:12 PM

Reply-To: Angela Chaffin <aychaffin@yahoo.com>

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

Aloha,

My name is Angela Chaffin. I moved to Hawaii in July of 2020 to teach 5th grade on Moloka'i. As a new Hawaii State Teacher I was moved to accept the position in part because they were going to help me move here and they were giving me a differential to ease the burden of my loss of years down fall.

When applying to teach here on Moloka'i I had to take into consideration the pandemic that was happening all throughout the world. Moloka'i is a small island that had few Covid-19 cases and the state had less overall cases than the mainland. I was moving across the country and my incentives were, I was going to be paid \$3000 help with moving and \$8000 hard-to-staff differentials. As a teacher I would be losing a lot of years from the mainland but receiving the \$8000. I could make by and maybe save a little.

As an educator I am constantly asked to do more before, during and after school and sometimes on weekends with no extra money given.

The HIDOE is telling teachers they are not valued. What we do to educate a child, their family,, and their community is WORTHLESS! Teachers are the first to go and then we will look at other areas. THEY SHOULD BE HAPPY THEY HAVE A JOB!

Throughout this pandemic, teachers have NEVER stopped working for children, families, and the communities throughout the state.

If a person who worked at McDonald's were asked to come before, do extra during, and stay after their day ended they and society would expect those people get paid.

When pediatric doctors deliver a baby, they get paid before, during, and after they work. No one would dare say their job wasn't valuable! We would never expect less FOR them and the job they do.

When you say that you need something in America, you are ALWAYS willing to pay MORE, except, except, except when it comes to teaching and teachers.

Everyone says you do it for the children. WHY is always teachers doing it? When is our elected/appointed leaders going to do it for the children? Where is that same attitude when it comes to those who are charged with the financial responsibility of educating children? Why is it you can give a line item for everything you can not do, for the children?

Let me state my opinion why to the question I posed. HIDOE does NOT VALUE EDUCATION! If you take money from education you have LESS educated people that will not FIGHT with you about why you are cutting education FIRST and not last!

Why is it that everyone from a part-time employee can get paid for every hour they work, but teachers can't get paid to stay?

What HIDOE is ALSO saying, without using the words, is that they DO NOT CARE about whar happens to the teachers, education and schools!

Anyone who lives in Hawaii knows this is NOT the cheapest place on earth to live. Every teacher I work with, LOVES their keiki and are invested in their future way beyond the classroom!

I brought 23 years of teaching experience, and will leave with 1 year knowing that I was not wanted or valued.

~Angela Chaffin



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

Sped teacher

1 message

Angela Kan Hai <cn3angel14@hotmail.com>

Wed, Feb 17, 2021 at 8:30 PM

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

I am a special education teacher and I work so hard as do we all ! Please don't take away our differential pay we have worked so hard to deserve this ! Please help keep good and committed teachers !!!

Sent from my iPhone



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

Testimony

1 message

Nicholas Johns <nicholasalexanderjohns@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Feb 17, 2021 at 8:27 PM

RE: BOE Special Meeting Action Item A

To whom it may concern:

My name is Nicholas Johns and I teach special education at Olomana School. This is my 14th year teaching for the Hawaii DOE and my 20th as an educator. I have a master's degree in special education from UH Manoa and I am a literacy specialist.

Just over a year ago, I began receiving two differentials; one for being a special educator, and the other for working at a difficult to staff school. To say that this increase in compensation changed my life would be an understatement. For the first time since moving to Hawaii, my wife and I have a savings account that can withstand an emergency, and we were able to replace her 13 year old car with one that is much safer. Most importantly, we began to see a long-term future in Hawaii as a possibility, and one that included owning a house.

While the financial benefits of the differentials have been great for my amazing coworkers and I, their actual intent was to keep us from leaving the classroom or even the field. To this end, I can unequivocally tell you that they worked. My school had extremely low overall turnover, zero turnover in the special education department, and a much larger field of candidates to choose from for our openings. I personally chose to keep my special education line because of the differential. This consistency was crucial in our ability to hit the ground running in August in light of our major obstacles due to covid. If the differentials are taken away, I cannot say with certainty that we will enjoy this consistency next year, which our students most certainly benefit from and deserve. Please consider continuing these differentials.

Thank you,
Nicholas Johns



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

Testimony

1 message

R. Kalei Bras <kalei.bras@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Feb 17, 2021 at 7:43 PM

Aloha nui mai kākou,

I am 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.

My name is R. Kalei Bras. I am a single mom with two kids, one of whom has deaf-blindness and medical needs. I am a proud Hawaiian born and raised on Maui. I am an educator of 23 years teaching at my middle school alma mater, S.E. Kalama Intermediate. I am a Special Education Kaiapuni teacher who services students with special needs whom have all been neglected in our educational system due to the continued teacher shortage, especially teachers who can speak Hawaiian.

Any respectable teacher will tell you that the kuleana of a good educator is immense. Teaching takes grit, perserverance, passion, dedication, compassion, hard work, and LOTS of sacrafice. It is definitely NOT the profession for everyone. Even so, there are people who still CHOOSE to become a teacher, to shape the minds of our future, who understand the value of an education, and who want to help build a brighter future.

Over the years, living in Hawai'i has become a real struggle, and the high expense of living is hadicapping even for a modest lifestyle. That is why receiving the teaching differential has been a blessing. It has helped lower some of my financial debt and allowed me to put a little more towards my mortgage payment. Most of all, the differential has eased some of my financial stress so I can focus more of my energy on my students and helping them to become successful students now and productive citizens in the future.

Please do NOT discontinue the differentials because investing in education is a positive move forward for EVERYONE.

Mahalo nui,

Kalei



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

testimony

1 message

jdoughnts <jdoughnts@aol.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Feb 17, 2021 at 7:11 PM

Dear Hawaii Board of Education.

My name is Michelle Garofalo and I'm a fully self contained special education teacher at Iroquois Point Elementary School. This is my 19th year of teaching in the Hawaii Department of Education. I love my students and love my job, but last school year I became so burned out with the job demands that are required for a special education teacher, from the extensive time needed to develop, plan and prepare for individual student needs and IEP meetings to the endless amount of energy to create lessons and engage the unique learners I work with on a daily basis. I want to give my students the best opportunity for success and it began weighing heavy that I was failing my students because I was growing tired. Just as I began to seek employment with the private sector of education, I received word that special education teachers would finally be recognized for the hard work and dedication in the form of a salary differential. It was enough to give me the energy to continue with the HDOE. This year has been especially challenging with the pandemic. I have been afraid to teach in person and put myself and my family at risk of contracting covid-19, but I do it for my students everyday because I am recognized for the work I am doing. It doesn't seem fair to be required to teach face to face, have IEP meeting after IEP meeting to determine the impact covid-19 has had on student achievement and develop contingency plans on top of our regular special education teacher duties without any compensation. I saw on the news that police department is recruiting individuals with a high school diploma or GED and the starting salary is \$65,000. I'm almost in my 20th year of teaching and I'm just now making that salary with a masters degree AND the differential. It's time Hawaii puts our keiki, teachers, and students first. It's time Hawaii puts value on education and educators. Please continue with the differentials, as they have been effective with teacher recruitment and retention.

Aloha, thank you for taking the time to read my testimony.



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

Testimony to save differentials

1 message

Joli Johnston <jolijohnston@hotmail.com>

Wed, Feb 17, 2021 at 6:40 PM

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

Aloha kākou,

My name is Joli Johnston and I am a special education teacher in the Windward District of Oahu. I am submitting this testimony in regards to the BOE Special Meeting Action Item A in hopes of preventing Superintendent Christina Kishimoto's discontinuance of extra compensation for special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations and Hawaiian language programs.

The data has shown that even in one year of application, this pay differential has done exactly what it was meant to which is increase the number of teachers transferring in to sped positions and decrease the number of teachers leaving sped positions by 29% and 57%, respectively. This strategy is clearly working and should be held in place for our biggest hour of need.

I urge board members to have the superintendent retract this memo and reverse her intentions to discontinue these differentials. Although we are facing a financial crisis due to COVID-19, the academic needs of our keiki have increased and this is already placing a heavier load on special education teachers. The answer is NOT to remove the supports that are keeping some of our most crucial members in place. The expectations placed on special education teachers is currently at an all-time high and will continue to be so for the upcoming years. Please help to keep this incentive in place or I fear that we will have an even bigger staffing problem on our hands for the most critical years of need.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,
Joli Johnston



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

Testimony

1 message

Nekita Kennedy <nekita@hawaii.edu>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Feb 17, 2021 at 6:15 PM

I am submitting testimony for 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.

Don't cut differentials! I am a college graduate from the University of Hawaii. I am dual licensed for K-6 Special Education and General Education. I am also qualified for Early childhood - Preschool-3rd grade. I am a first-year teacher in a Special Education Preschool class at Mililani Uka Elementary. I am also a parent of two boys aged 9 and 12 years old. I am a parent of a child who once received Special education services for 3 years. I am both teacher and parent with a wide range of perspectives.

There are a lot of things I am, but the truth is what I do, what special education teachers do, and are required to do now because of COVID-19, is a lot to ask for and moreover, now asking to cut our differential pay is ludicrous.

Coming into this career field during this unprecedented time is unique with multiple challenges in and out of the classroom, and I knew that before jumping in head first. However, I came in knowing that I had a pay differential that made coming into this mess of things easier to swallow. Before becoming a Special Education teacher, I have always heard rumors that Special Education teachers have "a lot of extra paperwork" but chose this career path because my passion to help children learn and grow, benefits, pay, job security and having a common schedule with my children were all contributing factors. I didn't mind all the extra paper work because I knew in the back of my mind that I was being compensated for that extra meeting, or that 15 pages of IEP's & PWN's. Not to mention those extra 15 pages of COVID-19 contingency plans, or the 15 extra pages of school closure plans, and that other extra 15 pages of the COVID-Impact meeting documents. With that said, now with COVID-19, you can add over 40 extra pages per child of COVID-19 documents to the pile of "a lot of extra paper work" that a Special Education teacher already has.

The thought of losing this differential pay makes me feel sick, saddened and angry. I ask myself, why wouldn't a Special Education Teacher not get paid more? Teachers get compensated through stipends for the extra training and work they must attend during after school hours; therefore, it only makes sense that Special Education teachers continue to get paid that pay differential. It is clear that Special Education teachers have to dedicate extra time to accommodate the extra work load that is mandated for each child. Not only all the extensive paper work, meetings, data collection, the list of things that a Special Education teacher are required to do can go on and on.

I am wondering why did it take so long for the Department of Education and the Board of Education to give credit and compensate Special Education Teachers all these other years? It's no wonder why there was a shortage in Special Education. And now that the department has "rapidly reduced shortages" the department now wants to take away the pay differential that Special Education teachers deserved for so long? Shame to Schools Superintendent Christina Kishimoto for fighting so hard for what was *pono*, right and then trying to take it away without the Board of Education's approval. Shame to offer a pilot program,

get what you want – reduce shortages and have higher teacher retention rates, then take it away. How do you think current University of Hawaii students feel? Do you think they feel tricked into a college career thinking they would enter the field of Special Education with the incentive of finally having a decent living wage?

I came from Government assistance into this career with a glimpse of hope and motivation to finally get out of the system. Living in Hawaii is hard as is, please do not take away a chunk of my paycheck that supports my family. How am I considered a professional of society, and yet not be awarded a decent living wage to continue to reside in the State of Hawaii?

My question ponders on why would other qualified Special Education teacher choose to remain here in the islands just to struggle and live paycheck to paycheck because the high cost of living? How long do you think the “rapidly reduced shortages” will last? A teacher can only provide so much love and passion without feeling burnt out and used. At the end of the day, it is about the Keiki of Hawaii, a melting pot of diverse backgrounds. They are our future and having qualified Special Education teachers only benefit them. It is important to intervene and provide that individual support needed to ultimately guide our Keiki to become a successful member of society. It is important to look at the reason why Schools Superintendent Christina Kishimoto fought so hard to get this differential for Special Education teachers in the first place. All that I ask is to look at the data, look at the facts of what this pay differential did for our public schools and reconsider this foolish decision before all the repercussions this decision may have upon us. You are not just asking to cut pay differentials, you are asking to cut our Keiki’s future, please do not do that

Thank you.



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

Differential testimony

1 message

Rhonda Comet <rhondacomet@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Feb 17, 2021 at 6:03 PM

Aloha Board members,

I am a credentialed Special Education teacher and credentialed Science teacher. I seriously considered taking a Science position because of the amount of work and dedication it takes to work with students who have greater needs. Special Education teachers have specified training in law, care coordinating, modifying material for learning disabilities, and stay longer before/after school for parent meetings, etc.... My name is Rhonda Comet (co-may), a dedicated teacher on Maui working currently at Lahaina Intermediate School.

When I found out that I would get a greater differential, I stayed in my SpEd position and it felt good and justified to work harder for my school, keiki, and co-teachers, not to mention stay longer hours for services needed.

I live 35 miles away from my school, there are closer schools. I love my principal, which is why I stayed, yet I have considered moving closer to home. The area in which I work is isolated from the rest of the island and teachers do not live on that side, they travel, just like me, to get to school. When it was apparent that teachers were not applying for the schools in these hard-to-reach areas, a differential was put into place to cover the community of keiki that were not getting what they needed. Many long-term subs were in those positions without credentials. Lahaina began gaining traction under our principal who is great at recruiting, yet there is no way she can sustain stability right now if there are no differentials to increase the learning growth of our students. The first year we had the differentials, the students were boosted in their learning and gains were being made. That did not happen accidentally.

If I lose the Special Education differential, I will leave the position for a regular education position because the impact I make there will equal the pay I receive. The impact of working longer hours for less money hurts teachers and reflects in student learning. Overwhelmed teachers are not better teachers.

If I lose the "hard-to-staff" the community of Lahaina will deteriorate as I will not be the only teacher looking for something closer to home. This is unfair to the keiki to ask teachers to be overwhelmed by finances and still do what is right for everyone else.

Both differentials (Special Education and hard-to-staff) made a difference in Lahaina. We now have all of our positions filled by newly arriving teachers from all over. It is up to you to decide what will happen to that community if you take away teacher pay that has been a positive impact on the lives of our keiki. It is a domino effect. It is a joy to be an educator when there are fewer stressors on making a living. Keiki get what they need because teachers get what they need. Everyone feels valued.

Please consider the progress that was made with these differentials in place and its positive impact on reducing the teacher shortage. Please consider the progress that was made with differentials in place as we increased higher quality educators in our hard-to-reach schools. It was never intended that these differentials would go away in 2021. It was established to reinforce growth, not to grow it to tear it down in such a short time.

Thank you for reading my words. Let's keep the momentum going. :)

Rhonda Comet



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

TESTIMONY: SUPPORT Hawaiian Immersion Differentials1 message

Kauka Kaiapuni <kaukakaiapuni@icloud.com>

Wed, Feb 17, 2021 at 5:59 PM

To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Dr. Lilinoe Yong. I have taught Hawaiian Immersion for 30 years. I support the Hawaiian Immersion differential payment increase for the following reasons:

1. Hawaiian is the official language of Hawaii in addition to English.
2. Hawaiian Immersion does not have Language Arts and Math Programs created in the Hawaiian Language like Wonders Reading, iReady Math and iReady Reading Programs that have a complete components of pacing calendars, common core standards-based curriculum, instructional strategies and assessment. There are numerous resources both online and paper-based module for English teachers of the Regular Classroom as well as Special Education.
3. Hawaiian Immersion teachers create or purchase and translate their own curriculum, instructional strategies, and assessment beyond office hours much more than SPECIAL EDUCATION. Hawaiian Immersion often spend after paid hours to create programs or systems to meet the Standards required by the DOE. The Department of Education has not provided any Math and Language Arts Programs in Hawaiian.
4. Hawaiian Immersion is a SPECIAL program designed to REVIVE THE HAWAIIAN LANGUAGE. Where else in the world would the language and culture be perpetuated if not for the Hawaiian Immersion Program?



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

TESTIMONY: SUPPORT HAWAIIAN IMMERSION DIFFERENTIALS1 message

Kauka Kaiapuni <kaukakaiapuni@icloud.com>

Wed, Feb 17, 2021 at 5:51 PM

To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Cc: awright@nahonu.k12.hi.us, lcambonga@nahonu.k12.hi.us, Mahealani Enos <menos@nahonu.k12.hi.us>, nstibbard@nahonu.k12.hi.us, ktaihook@nahonu.k12.hi.us, knesmith@nahonu.k12.hi.us

My name is Dr. Lilinoe Yong. I have taught Hawaiian Immersion for 30 years. I support the Hawaiian Immersion differential payment increase for the following reasons:

1. Hawaiian is the official language of Hawaii in addition to English.
2. Hawaiian Immersion does not have Language Arts and Math Programs created in the Hawaiian Language like Wonders Reading, iReady Math and iReady Reading Programs that have a complete components of pacing calendars, common core standards-based curriculum, instructional strategies and assessment. There are numerous resources both online and paper-based module for English teachers of the Regular Classroom as well as Special Education.
3. Hawaiian Immersion teachers create or purchase and translate their own curriculum, instructional strategies, and assessment beyond office hours much more than SPECIAL EDUCATION. Hawaiian Immersion often spend after paid hours to create programs or systems to meet the Standards required using their personal funds.
4. The Department of Education requires Hawaiian Immersion teachers to provide standards-based instruction (in the medium of the Hawaiian Language); yet the DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION HAS NOT PROVIDED CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS AND ASSESSMENT IN HAWAIIAN for daily classroom use.
5. Hawaiian Immersion is a SPECIAL program designed to REVIVE THE HAWAIIAN LANGUAGE of the State of Hawaii. Where else in the world would the language and culture be perpetuated if not for the Hawaiian Immersion Program?



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

Testimony 2/18/21

1 message

Natalia Gamarra <natgamarra@yahoo.com>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Feb 17, 2021 at 5:25 PM

Aloha e BOE members,

As I leave from an extended faculty meeting and training on Trauma informed practices and Sex trafficking; my mind wonders how are we as teachers supposed to be available to be there for our students and make sure we can meet, not only their academic needs, but all their needs; when we ourselves are undergoing so much uncertainty and stress. As a special education teacher, losing the differentials, as a teacher losing pay, not being able to move steps, not ensuring my livelihood and retirement, facing increasing costs of taxes, shipping, food, health coverage are all factors that put educators in a vulnerable position.

Please consider properly funding educators so that our basic needs can be met; housing, food, health insurance. We are not asking for bonuses or handouts, we are asking for a professional living wage and stable work conditions so we can focus on giving 110% to our students who year after year come with more and more complex needs. Hawai'i is facing a lot of challenges due to this pandemic, our community needs social safety networks more than ever, please do not destabilize our lives and the public education system by cutting our funding.

Respectfully,

Natalia Steinhorst-Soler



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

Testimony

1 message

Cherie <lash.cher@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Feb 17, 2021 at 5:22 PM

Dear Dr. Kishimoto and the Board of Education,

I am a special education teacher for mild to moderate students on the windward side of O'ahu. Since the week after I arrived here in Hawai'i I have been taking professional development class after class in order to make enough money to house and feed myself and my daughter, although I had over 12 years of teaching experience and a Master's degree, before I came to Hawaii

Every year, I reassess my situation to determine if I can make it another year. It has only been by the help of my family and a second job that I have been able to survive financially.

I was thrilled to find out last January that we were finally going to be able to get paid a more livable wage and consulted a mortgage banker to determine if I could get a loan. The special education differential was enough to allow me to qualify for a small place for us to live, which was a dream come true, but if our differential is taken away, I will no longer be able to pay my mortgage and have enough left over to pay my utilities and eat. Home ownership is important for various reasons, but as a teacher, our pay will never keep up with the rate of rental increases and this allows us the ability to have a fixed housing payment, thus financial security to better manage our other expenses with the high cost of living here in Hawaii, but losing this differential will not make it feasible to be able to pull this balancing act off.

Not only is it crucial for us to continue to receive this differential so that we can have a stronger and more consistent teacher base for our students, which will begin to create a more solid educational system here in Hawaii; but also, now that we have the crisis of COVID, I know I will need to spend quite a bit of extra money of my own to buy PPE to keep my medically fragile students safe. And as we know, DOE does not have a strong track record of providing the necessities that we need (i.e. soap and paper towels in student bathrooms, etc), which are necessary to keep my classroom as hygienic as possible.

Please, please, do not balance the education budget on the hard-working, stressed out special education (and other specialty) teachers' back. This is an extremely difficult time for all of us, but especially those of us that will be trying to navigate teaching special needs students during this crisis. **We implore you to look at other areas where the fat can be trimmed and not do so at the expense of the special ed teachers. We need your help and support and hope that you will continue to provide this much needed differential.**

Mahalo for all that you do to support us to do our best for our keiki.



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

Support our Special Education Teachers

1 message

justin reihanifam <justin_reihanifam@yahoo.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Feb 17, 2021 at 4:56 PM

To Whom it May Concern,

I am a family member of a special education teacher in the state of Hawaii and I am testifying in support of Action Item A for the Special Meeting, regarding Superintendent Christina Kishimoto's discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teacher in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language programs. I am writing this letter to inform you that I oppose the budget cuts for special education teachers differential pay. Discontinuing shortage differentials will affect her ability to afford to live and teach in Hawaii. These special education teachers should not struggle to survive after all they have done for their students, especially this year. She has put herself at risk of coming into contact with someone with Covid-19 so that she could service students with special needs since August of 2020. You must realize that this differential pay is vital if you want to maintain the special education teachers that you have, including her. These students deserve to have qualified classroom teachers supporting them. A lack of qualified teachers will only hurt your schools and the students. Students will not receive the proper instruction and interventions they need without the support of these qualified teachers. The knowledge these teachers have provides students safe, encouraging, engaging and educational learning environments/experiences. Please consider the effects of discounting the extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language programs.

Sincerely,

Justin

Justin Reihanifam
Supporter of Education

Sent from my iPhone



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

TESTIMONY

1 message

Kathy Lomont <kathlomont@yahoo.com>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Feb 17, 2021 at 4:51 PM

Kindly see attached testimony.



Testimony 2021.docx
15K

February 17, 2021

REGARDING: 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 program.

Dear Board of Education Members,

My name is Kathleen Lomont and I'm a Special Education Teacher at Honoka'a Elementary School. I have been a state employee for 20 years, first as a Special Ed. Educational Assistant and now as a teacher for the past five and a half years.

Please keep the shortage differentials for Special Education teachers, Hawaiian language programs and hard to staff schools. The need for qualified Special Education teachers is so great and the student population of special needs students is even greater. Just when special education teachers are finally being shown respect and starting to earn the wages of a professional, Ms. Kishimoto wants to yank it away. Does she know that all teachers have to do more work now than before the pandemic began?

I have benefitted from the shortage differential because I was at the point of seriously thinking about leaving my profession that I love, because I just was not making the money for the amount of time and work I put in day in and day out, week after week. Now, for the first time, I feel like I am being recognized and respected as a professional. I can continue to work in education till I retire, or so I thought. If we lose those differentials, we will lose many more teachers, and those remaining will have much larger caseloads to bear. That would be a lose-lose situation. Teachers will suffer, but more importantly, the students will suffer the most.

Hawaii's schools need many more qualified Special Education teachers and by keeping the "extra compensation" for special education teachers, Hawaiian language programs and hard to staff schools, you can help retain experienced teachers and attract more teachers to the profession. Please do not allow Superintendent Christina Kishimoto to take away the earnings that we deserve. Hawaii's keiki deserve to have great teachers!

Aloha,

~Kathleen



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

SPED Testimony

1 message

Tui Stephenson <tui.stephenson@k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Feb 17, 2021 at 4:29 PM

My name is Tui Moe and I was born and raised here in Honolulu, Hawaii. I am a Highly Qualified Special Education Teacher at Kaimuki High School (KHS). I work with students with Severe and Multiple Impairments (SMI). I have worked with special needs students since 2001 and absolutely love my job. I pursued higher education (Master's degree) in Special Education in order to better service the population I work with and continue to seek ways to improve my passion for my students' growth and learning. While I absolutely love my job, I am underpaid.

Hawaii teachers are the lowest paid in the nation when taking into consideration the cost of living. Due to this fact, I have seriously considered moving elsewhere to obtain a higher pay with a lower cost of living so that I can provide for my family. I am a single mother of four children and rent takes up about 66% of my monthly income (this percentage is higher without the differential). This does not include food, utilities, transportation, etc. I live paycheck to paycheck and this is hard.

The differential payments have helped me, The pay still isn't equivalent to what other Special Education Teachers with Master's Degrees and 15+ years of experience make in other areas of the United States but it helps. Discontinuing the differential pay will have a negative impact on my financial situation at home and it will force me to make hard decisions.

Since the pandemic, I have been working in the classroom with in-person students since June 2020. I have used some of my own funds and written requests for grants to pay for PPE and other materials that help my students during this time. I am not alone and know of many other teachers who have donated monies, sacrificed time and hours, and worked hard to try and smooth the transition for students during this unprecedented time.

I am writing this testimony to ask the Board of Education to please direct Superintendent Kishimoto to rescind her February 9, 2021 memorandum and to refrain from taking action on any teacher pay differentials without prior Board approval.



Tui Moe
Kaimuki High School
SPED Teacher (SMI)
(808)425-2284

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

testimony

1 message

Emily Lethlean <elethlean@pahoacomplex.k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Feb 17, 2021 at 4:26 PM

I am testifying in support of Action Item A. for the Special Meeting, regarding discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in Special Ed, hard to staff and Olelo Hawaii language programs.

Pay shortage differentials were only implemented in 2020 and help the district retain highly qualified teachers. We need our Special Ed and other teachers to feel valued so that they stay in Hawaii. Our pay is some of the lowest with the cost of living factor and that affects quality of life. Taking away incentives to stay will make teachers look to other states where the cost of living is more affordable. I have witnessed several teachers choose mainland states to teach in since 2018. We cannot afford to lose any more high quality teachers.

With Respect,
Emily Lethlean
Art Resource
Keonepoko



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

Testimony

1 message

Kristen Faford <kris10faford@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Feb 17, 2021 at 4:19 PM

Aloha Board of Education,

My name is Kristen Faford and I am submitting a testimony for 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.

A little history about me, I was born and raised on the Big Island and come from a family of educators. I have always enjoyed working with the keiki here on the B.I. and have always wanted to make a difference in my community. I believe with my whole heart that Hawai'i is a special place and to give back to the children and community where I grew up means more than just "a lot" to me.

I have worked in the DOE as a special education teacher since 2008 when I first started the teaching program and taught in a hard to fill school in Pahoa on the Big Island. Right when I got my license, the DOE was furloughed, and my starting pay decreased by almost 15-20K. I was very discouraged as a new teacher and single mother with a mortgage. I persevered through it all, had to take out loans but got my masters and took PD courses to help myself get ahead in my career and pay scale. I still continue to seek opportunities to take PD courses, however, living on the Big Island, the options for courses don't come easy. They are very hard to come by and many courses signed up for have been cancelled and I haven't been able to take courses related to my teaching field.

Believe you me, being a special education teacher has been short of glory! I have never had less than 20 students on my caseload until a couple of years ago. I have always taught at least 2 grade levels at a time, because of the shortage of sped teachers at my school and other teachers on leave. I have dedicated my life to teaching which unfortunately has taken a toll on my family and my health. I have many sleepless nights and have even developed chronic aches and pains from being on the computer writing reports and doing paperwork. My health has declined as I have had to sacrifice my time and health to sitting and doing what I hate: sitting at the computer and writing IEPs and other reports. Many sleepless nights and loads of caffeine! I absolutely love making connections and teaching students but due the stresses of the job, I ended up taking leave without pay as I was burned out and needed a mental and physical break. It was leave or quit altogether! I had enough of the demands of the job which weren't compensated for.

Upon returning, I remember the day when we were told that differentials were in discussion and I felt such joy. For the first time I felt like what I wasn't being taken for granted or taken advantage of as a special education teacher. I felt that for once I'm making up for the years of lost pay due to the furloughs. Getting that differential really allowed me to support my family. I have worked so hard for so many years in a rat race and many times I did say I was going to quit and work elsewhere.

Having this differential helps me to know that what I am doing is worth it. Having this differential helps me to be able to afford to pay for my daughter's college tuition. Having this differential allows me to have a little choice in my life to do things that prevent me from getting burnt out. I have a little more that I can now contribute to my retirement! I can have a little extra money instead of living paycheck to paycheck!

Having this differential allows me to do things and take PD classes because I can afford it now with the differential. Having the differential helps to secure my decision as a special education teacher. For the past few years I contemplated getting my general education teaching license just so I wouldn't have to deal with the stresses of IEPs, meetings after work hours, late nights or sleepless nights in front of my computer with non-ergonomic furniture to use. My health condition is getting worse and treatment for it is costly. Teaching in the general education setting would alleviate all of that extra stress! This differential is one of the reasons why I decided to stay in special education. It will retain me. Once it is gone, I will be too.

As you can see, these differentials make a difference in mindset, attitude, and dedication to teaching. It gives special education teachers compensation which they deserve for all the personal time and money spent. It gives incentive to potential special education teachers and encourages them to do what they are called to do. Especially in a state where the cost of living is high and we don't get compensatory time and overtime, having the differential has been the answer we need to keep on doing what we love.

2/19/2021

Dell Marketing LP Mail - Testimony

Board of Directors, I am trusting you to make the right decision in your vote for our Hawai'i special educators! Superintendent Kishimoto, Hawai'i teachers need you to lead with integrity and do what's fair and pono. If you want teachers to respect you, you need to respect us as professionals! Mahalo for your time in reading my testimony!

Sincerely,
Kristen Faford



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

Agenda Item A - Testimony in Opposition

1 message

Kawehi Inaba <kawehiinaba@gmail.com>
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Feb 17, 2021 at 4:01 PM

Welina mai,

I am a business consultant and the mother of keiki (former students of Ke Kula 'o 'Ehunuikaimalino) who are successful adults and major community contributors.

I am writing to provide testimony in opposition to Agenda 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 in the BOE Special Meeting on Feb. 18th. at 11am.

There are three main points for this opposition.

- The BOE already approved Policy 105-8. This policy states that Hawaiian Immersion teachers will be compensated for the extra skill sets they require.
- This new differential has helped to dramatically reduce the vacancies in Kaiapuni schools and special education positions. More qualified teachers lead to increased student achievement and therefore a stronger economy and overall overall.
- The amount of money needed is within the budget allotments with the new federal aid and the state should dig deeper into new and innovative ways to cut costs that don't directly impact student achievement.

Me ka ha'aha'a,

Ms. Kawehi Inaba - CEO

Kūpa'a Business Planners, Inc.

808.937.8907

www.kupaabusinessplanners.com



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

Aloha - Testimony regarding Pay Cuts & Differentials

1 message

Amy Hinton <ahinton@hawaii.edu>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Feb 17, 2021 at 3:13 PM

Aloha,

Thank you for taking the time to read my concerns. My name is Amy Hinton and I am a kindergarten teacher at Ka'u High and Pahala Elementary School. KHPES is one of the most rural and low income schools in our state. Our school has many struggles but a huge struggle is teacher retention. Every year our school loses many teachers but I fear that we will lose even more if the BOE decides to allow these pay cuts and removal of the differentials. Due to it's rural location the differentials have been really helpful in regards to vehicle maintenance and gas mileage. Many of us are driving over 40 miles one way to get to our keiki. The combination of these pay cuts and removing differentials will slash our incomes so low that many teachers will not have a choice but to relocate to another school or even another state. If this happens it will deeply impact an already negatively impacted community.

We have to think of our keiki first and do what will most benefit our keiki. Losing teachers is the last thing that will benefit them. This year has already been extremely challenging due to the Covid Pandemic. Many of us have stepped up and gone above and beyond to ensure that our keiki are getting the support that they need. It would be a major insult to show appreciation for our hardwork by cutting our pay and taking away those differentials that help many of us remain at those hard to employ schools. It is with understanding that we have a deficit in our state but as David Ige stated, that pay cuts should be the last resort. Before we add private tutors and summer school into the budget we should be looking at ensuring their is sufficient pay for our teachers and to maintain those differentials that have become something many of us depend on. If this is the solution the BOE and SOH decide on it will be a severe blow that will impact our keiki, teachers, and the education world for many years to come.

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"The history of progress is written in the blood of men and women who have dared to espouse an unpopular cause, as, for instance, the black man's right to his body, or woman's right to her soul."

-Emma Goldman



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

Testimony

1 message

Beau Shishido <kumubeau@kawaikini.com>
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Feb 17, 2021 at 2:54 PM

February 17, 2021

Beau Shishido
P.O. Box 500
Kilauea, Hawaii 96754

Re: Support for continued public education funding without the decrease in wages or differentials for the upcoming Board of Education contract.

Aloha mai kākou,

I am writing this letter in concern about the proposed budget cuts affecting the Board of Education which would result in massive wage reductions and loss of differentials. I am writing this testimony from the perspective of a new teacher for Kawaikini New Century Public Charter School, that had recently graduated with a Masters Degree in Hawaiian Language.

Currently, I am working on a teaching certificate; therefore, I am hired through an emergency hire permit, which equals to a salary of roughly \$39,000. This is fairly low for someone earning a Master's Degree, however, I am willing to stick it out until I obtain my teaching license in roughly two years. However, if the proposed budget cuts are approved, I will not be able to financially support myself, especially through this pandemic, and throughout the time recovering from the pandemic. The heavy weight of student loans makes these budget cuts even more difficult to face.

I am sure that I am not the only one in this position. If the employees that fall under the Board of Education continue to face constant budget reductions, many of them will reconsider their occupations to find new employment to financially stay afloat with the high cost of living. This exodus will most likely consist of the future generations of teachers that will not be able to financially support themselves and their families.

I kindly ask you to consider other options to balance the budget, as a generation lacking teachers does not look bright for Hawai'i. For years, Hawai'i has been talking about the diversification of the economy. This dream will be even further away when you do not give the proper guidance to the youth of Hawai'i.

Na'u nō,
Beau M. Shishido

2/19/2021

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BOE Testimony.pdf

33K

February 17, 2021

Beau Shishido
P.O. Box 500
Kīlauea, Hawaii 96754

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Na'u nō,
Beau M. Shishido



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

Testimony

1 message

Lori Nelson <lori.nelson@k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Feb 17, 2021 at 2:30 PM

I am submitting testimony for the BOE Special Action Item A: Board Action on ...discontinuance of extra compensation for classroom teachers in special education, hard-to-staff geographical locations, and Hawaiian language programs. All of these, and especially in my opinion, Hawaiian language teachers, are worthy of the extra support, but I am a special ed teacher so will write from that perspective.

My name is Lori Jane Nelson. I have taught special education in Hawaii for nearly 16 years, and prior to that for nine years in Pennsylvania. I have taught students in all grade levels and also taught pre-service teachers (college students) courses in reading remediation and introduction to special education with emphasis on diagnostics. I began my career in Hawaii teaching students with medical conditions that merited a nurse in the room; spent a year on Big Island teaching high school science inclusion classes in Chemistry, Physics, and Biology, and have been at Makaha Elementary since 2011, mostly, and now, teaching inclusion special education PreK students in the Headstart classroom after obtaining PreK special ed and PreK general ed additions to my K-12 special education license.

I have been teaching remotely since March of 2020. I was ready to quit until I realized that the new differentials would allow me to purchase items that would make online teaching far simpler—headphones with noise cancellation on the mike and the ears; a huge whiteboard for my home office that gave me a school-room backdrop and the ability to change what was on it; enhanced bandwidth while we were all teaching from home...and not the least, with careful budgeting and a re-fi that cut our mortgage payment, some extra money to send to a grown son whose home and vehicle were at risk of being taken by the banks when he lost his job to Covid-related shutdown.

Another consideration that has kept me teaching has been that my husband is a substitute teacher (who works 175-180 days/year). Without my job-related health insurance, he would have no insurance. Last year, "my" coverage (which includes him) paid for his aortic root aneurysm repair and replacement heart valve. The differential paid for the considerable amount left after insurance paid its share. He will be Medicare-eligible in three more years.

If I had broken my contract and never come to Hawaii, I would be earning about \$140K per year as a special education teacher in the district of PA that offered me a job shortly after I signed with Leeward District. They offered to start me at \$95K sixteen years ago. I had signed a contract with HDOE, however, and honored it. My first or second year here, we had furlough days and nearly lost the house—I cashed in three retirement accounts to keep us going which have never been restored.

If we do not retain the hardship and geographic differentials, I'm likely out of here. My husband can go on Medicaid if necessary until he ages into Medicare; we own a house outright in PA. With the differentials, I could envision working to make 25 years (nine more). But three more service years at a pay equivalent to my three- or four-years-ago income (with the proposed pay cuts and no differentials) is not worth it. It might even mean we couldn't afford the move. It would certainly mean no more of my income spent on the art projects, science projects, musical instruments, and other enrichment activities that I have typically funded out of my pocket, even before the recent increases. I will be scraping to continue supporting my son, to pay my mortgage, to put gas in the car so I can get from Nanakuli to Makaha every day...all the

extras I have been blessed to be able to provide will go away, and if it gets bad enough, I will go away as well.

Beyond my own situation, I also urge you to consider the financial and psychological impact on new teachers that a drastic reduction in pay will have. When my daughter graduated UH as a special education teacher (and taught for six years in Hawaii, till her soldier husband took her away), her peer graduates who were born and raised in Hawaii nearly all sought jobs on the mainland, knowing that they could find far better pay and far more affordable housing there with which to begin their adult lives, have their children, and experience financial security. Almost none of them looked here, first. Some of them may return eventually to bring up their teens in Hawaii, once they have banked a nest egg that could make that possible. But why lose them for that many years? And many of the newbies from the mainland who are here now, are now scrambling to find jobs "at home." Why should they suffer the uncertainty of wondering if their pay will be enough to keep their rentals, next year? Or the year after? Or whenever the state decides to cut public education again. They intend to get out now while they are not tied to pension concerns or property ownership, and while they can still afford to move back; move to a place that values teachers enough to provide a stable income fed by dedicated funding streams. When one of these young teachers asks me, I tell them to do their research and make their decision. I cannot find it morally justified to urge them to stay, and it breaks my heart. I pray that a time will come, soon, that I can sincerely encourage them to stay.

Aloha,
Lori Jane Nelson

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

Hard to Fill Differential

1 message

Kathleen Hoppe <msjhops@gmail.com>

Wed, Feb 17, 2021 at 2:10 PM

To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha kākou,

HTF differentials are essential to creating an equitable education system for our most vulnerable populations. The positions are hard to fill because they are literally hard to fill with highly Hawai'i Qualified kumu, and our haumāna are the ones who would experience this ongoing revolving door of staff who come and go. Schools are hard to staff for a variety of reasons that will not disappear just because the differentials will. But, the kumu will transition out of those schools that are more challenging, leaving out most vulnerable keiki even more vulnerable.

Taking away HTF differentials will deter kumu from driving the extra miles in traffic to serve the communities that need them the most. It will also influence kumu to look elsewhere where keiki may be "easier" to work with.

HTF is about equity, and about the actual challenge of filling kumu positions in our most challenging areas to work in. I encourage you to ensure they can continue, because our keiki deserve an equitable learning environment.

Mahalo,
Kathleen Hoppe
Sent from my iPhone

Superintendent Kishimoto & Board of Education Members,

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of Action Item A to continue the shortage differentials for Special Education teachers.

My name is Sheri Funasaki I am a Special Education teacher and a National Board Certified Teacher. I have been teaching Special Education in Hawaii for 29 years. Over the years, I have seen the tireless work of my colleagues, the tremendous gains and victories of our students, and cheered on and encouraged Special Education teachers as they entered into the field or struggled to continue to stay in the classroom. I will be speaking on behalf of new teachers and colleagues I have seen struggle to stay in our most honorable but disregarded profession.

When the DOE and the Board of Education approved the shortage, differential pay for Special Education teachers I let out a big “Hallelujah” because I have been advocating for this for years! Whenever the question was asked, “How can we retain our special education teachers?” I said, “you have to pay our special education teachers more”. I cannot tell you how many times I have heard Special Education teachers say 1) I cannot afford to teach and live here without getting another job 2) I’m dual certified so I am going to teach in General Ed for the same pay 3) It’s not worth it with all the paperwork and hoops they make us jump through just to do our job. My response was “but you love your job and you’re such a great teacher don’t give up”.

The differential pay addresses many of these concerns and does help to retain qualified teachers. If the differential pay is not continued , sadly you will see teachers leaving for general education positions or leaving the field entirely. I have seen incredible special education teachers leave their teaching positions because of burn out or they felt they were not valued for the work they were doing. The differential pay helps us to feel recognized and valued! As a Special Education teacher, the love for what I do still exist. The passion for my students, their family and my colleagues keeps me going year after year. If more of our teachers leave it will be a snowball effect. The teachers that remain will have to take on more students, have to “pick up the slack” and make our job increasingly harder. As a result, more teachers will leave and the students will unfortunately pay the price. I urge you to please support the differential pay to keep qualified special education teachers in our classrooms for our students, families and community.

Mahalo,
Sheri Funasaki



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

Testimony

1 message

Sheri Funasaki <sherifunasaki@k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Feb 17, 2021 at 2:05 PM

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14K



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

Testimony

1 message

Amanda Elswick <elswick.amanda@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Feb 17, 2021 at 1:58 PM

Aloha,

I am writing regarding Action Item A.

I am a general education teacher at a hard to staff school and currently receive the shortage differential. My husband is a special education teacher currently receiving the differential also. We are both employed at Keonepoko Elementary. If these differentials were discontinued my family would lose a significant amount of our income. We are currently able to keep up with all of our financial responsibilities, but losing this significant amount will cause some financial strain.

The other concern is Governor Ige's proposal to cut 9.23% from all teacher salaries for the next 4 years. This proposed cut would put even MORE financial strain on our family. I am not sure if we would be able to continue to afford our mortgage, car payment, food and other bills with the cut so high. My family's income would be cut by over 18% each year. We would have to seriously consider our budget and might have to choose to leave Hawaii and move to the mainland. Neither one of us would like to do that. I love my students and their families and I want to continue to work in our community to help our children have the education they deserve.

We both love teaching and cannot imagine another career for ourselves. I hope we do not have to make these difficult decisions about our home and jobs. I hope that funding can be figured out with the Federal aid Hawaii schools will be receiving. I hope that these differentials and our salaries do not get cut.

Thank you for your consideration,
Amanda Elswick



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

TESTIMONY

1 message

Judith Dahl <teacherjd0109@gmail.com>
To: TESTIMONY.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Feb 17, 2021 at 1:45 PM

Cutting funding for teachers when we are already in a teacher shortage is detrimental to our students and community. As a special education teacher, I already do not get funds for classroom supplies which are needed for each student. I am a fully self contained teacher and different items are needed for each student. Having a roster of 28 students in a fully self contained classroom is difficult without proper staffing.

If funds are cut to my salary, I will be forced to leave the profession because without the extra differentials for hard to staff, to be a special education teacher, I would not be able to pay my bills or run my class.

Thankfully student loans have been frozen for now but when it comes back to pay them I am not too sure how I am going to do it if I am just making it by right now paycheck to paycheck. How can the government put a price tag and predetermine how much each child with special needs will cost a school. A student enters mid year and needs a variety of services or even a one to one assistant. We can't provide students at this time with proper support, and if we cut our budget we will have no support and I am sure we will lose more staff. I love my job as a special education teacher, but it really kills my moral to know that "essential workers" who have a big impact on our future are being forced to have cuts like this to our budget and having even less funding when we are already short. The job becomes more difficult then what it already is. We need to invest in our future now.

Judith Dahl



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

Testimony

1 message

Lillian Shaw <lilshaw168@gmail.com>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Feb 17, 2021 at 1:45 PM

Lillian Shaw

Kawananakoa middle school
Sped Math Teacher

Testimony

I am shock to hear our superintendent wants to take off the differential program which attracts more educations and solve the teacher shortage.

I heard some general Ed teachers became special Ed teacher to take advantage of the \$10,000. What are they going to do?

I am highly qualified qualified math teacher. However, I need to work two or three jobs to meet my ends before the program . If the differential incentive gets taking away, I know my quality of life will go back to that situation which I constantly deprive from sleep, exhausted. Is that what superintendent have in mind for teachers?

So I am strongly against cutting the differential for Sped.

Sent from my iPhone



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

Testimony

1 message

Lauren Taketa <LMTAKETA@msn.com>

Wed, Feb 17, 2021 at 1:44 PM

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

Hi my name is Lauren Abe and I am writing to testify for 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 writing to you today and I know that you have had to make some challenging decisions. It has been a year of difficult decision making and I hope that this email finds you well. The decision to discontinue the special education compensation will create a need for me to look outside of my teaching job to make up for the loss in pay. It has been a challenging year thus far shifting with the changes and new ways of teaching online. Looking for work in addition to my teaching job will add more to my plate and I would be disappointed to see it affect my performance as a teacher. This has been also a huge year of change and flexibility for our students and in such a time as this. Right now they need us more than ever. I really hope you will take into consideration the impact this will have on Hawaii's schools, teachers and students. Thank you for taking the time to read my email.

Take care and stay safe,
Lauren Abe

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