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hawaiikidsan.org

David Miyashiro  
Executive Director

July 15, 2021

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

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

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

As an organization that has consistently testified to the Board of Education through the duration of the pandemic, HawaiiKidsCAN has advocated for transparency and clarity of data, communications, and planning.

**1) HawaiiKidsCAN supports Action Item G: Board Action on resolution on opening of schools for the 2021-2022 School Year.**

With rising vaccination rates and changing health guidance for in-person gatherings, the months ahead are expected to be a time of gradual transition. As such, families will have to determine their own comfort level with a return to in-person instruction, and major school districts in Los Angeles, Las Vegas, Miami, and Houston have all said they intend to continue offering a fully virtual option this fall.

As we testified at the June 3 special meeting and June 17 general business meeting, we believe a centralized public option for distance learning at the state level is incredibly important in this period of transition. While in-person instruction is best for most students, a quality centralized distance option would be both cost effective and responsive to family needs. With the significant investment this past year in devices and connectivity for students and training for educators, distance learning shouldn't be the

hurdle it was at the beginning of 2020. One thing we have learned from this pandemic is that for a number of families, virtual education is the better option. “There’s also a group of kids who, whether because of bullying, mental health issues or simple overscheduling and pressure, struggled at school in a way that’s been made undeniable by the way they’re thriving at home amid the pandemic,” writes Joanna Schroeder for the [New York Times](#).

Especially noteworthy is that parents of color’s interest in virtual schooling eclipses that of white parents by a sizeable margin; USA Today, covering a report from AEI on the differential, [writes](#): “Polls show parents of color consistently prefer remote-only instruction for their students, with gaps between white parents and parents of color ranging from 15-30 percentage points between November and March.”

Rather than leaving it up to individual schools and complex areas to figure out distance offerings on their own, a centralized program could be developed thoughtfully to ensure quality control, 1:1 student and educator support, and intentionality around social-emotional considerations. Learning happens everywhere, and flexibility is critical as we make sure students don’t sustain further learning loss.

The Hawaii DOE has already convened [Digital Transformation Workgroups](#) since March 2021 to “explore different e-learning options for flexible delivery models to meet the ever-changing needs of our students and families.” What are the findings from these groups? What are best practices from this last year we can utilize? With significant federal funding available through ESSER, this is an opportune time to operationalize a platform that shows the power and promise of public education in Hawaii.

**2) HawaiiKidsCAN opposes Action Item M: Board Action on general waiver to allow reduction of the 180 day school year and 1,080 student instructional hours pursuant to Hawaii Revised Statutes Section 302A-251, consistent with revisions to the Department of Education's 2020-2021 school calendar.**

At both the February 18 student achievement committee meeting and June 17 general business meeting, HawaiiKidsCAN strongly opposed the waiving of bare minimum school days and instructional hours. We found it deeply disappointing that the Hawaii DOE would seriously consider abandoning 9 days of vital instruction time, as it is irrefutable that students have been suffering unprecedented learning loss and social emotional challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In fact, HawaiiKidsCAN has testified going back to July 2020 that the Hawaii DOE should take a proactive approach in planning and negotiations, including but not limited

to making up for lost instructional days by eliminating the spring break and institute days, or extending the school year by three weeks. There may be other creative approaches to deploy, including partnerships with community organizations to help make up lost learning by using evenings, breaks, and weekends.

It has never been clear why all options to make up for the lost instructional time were not pursued over the course of the school year. With the influx of ESSER funds, was the lengthening of the 2020-2021 school year ever considered?

As Board Member Voss noted in at the June 17 general business meeting, the Board's understanding was that the Hawaii DOE promised to renegotiate with HSTA and HGEA unions to restore instructional days last school year, yet this did not happen. The Board asked for further guidance from the Attorney General regarding the legality of a mass waiver for the entire school system regarding instructional hours. Although "the Board's attorney has advised that the Board has the authority to grant a general waiver of instructional hours and days to a single school or group of schools," we urge the Board to seriously consider the dangerous precedent that would be set by such an action.

The intent of the law in question appears to be to set minimum level safeguards and assurances to families in the wake of the debacle of Furlough Fridays a decade ago. As a Hawaii DOE teacher during that time, I remember the helplessness and frustration of my families, and the social emotional and academic losses for students. The silver lining from that experience seemed to be establishing a common understanding moving forward that we couldn't and shouldn't balance the budget on the backs of our kids and families, no matter how daunting our state's financial situation appeared.

While we recognize that the COVID-19 pandemic was a highly extreme and unusual circumstance, we also believe that there will be future crises ahead that will challenge our schools, and that our tourism-centric economy is often at the mercy of disruptions to foreign and domestic markets outside of our control. Much like how distance learning has enabled mainland districts this year to continue instruction through "snow days" and other weather disruption, the Hawaii DOE should view the disruption from the pandemic as an opportunity to innovate and rethink how learning is delivered.

Mahalo for your consideration,

David Miyashiro  
Founding Executive Director  
HawaiiKidsCAN



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

## Testimony

1 message

**Jessie Makainai** <mrs.makainai@gmail.com>

Tue, Jul 13, 2021 at 9:21 AM

To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Cc: senkeohokalole@capitol.hawaii.gov, "repkitagawa@Capitol.hawaii.gov" &lt;repkitagawa@capitol.hawaii.gov&gt;, htsuneyoshi@honolulu.gov, tommy.waters@honolulu.gov

**Name:** Jessie Makainai; Concerned Mother**Meeting:** Special Meeting; July 15, 2021; 9:00 a.m.

### Agenda Item: IV; G. [Board Action on resolution on opening of schools for the 2021-2022 School Year](#)

#### "I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Department of Education ("Department"), education stakeholders, and the public are anticipating opening schools at the start of the 2021-2022 school year.
- The proposed resolution is a way for the Board of Education ("Board") to provide "big picture" guidance to the Department of its expectations for the reopening of public schools in the 2021-2022 school year.
- The proposed resolution focuses on four issues: (1) encouraging vaccination, (2) communication with families on school safety measures, (3) distance learning options, (4) continuing the designation of the Hawaii State Department of Health as the authority for advice and guidance on all COVID-19-related health matters."

**Position:** Oppose and Comment on: Agenda Item IV; G. I. Sub-Point 3(1) &(4): (1) encouraging vaccination & (4) continuing the designation of the Hawaii State Department of Health as the authority for advice and guidance on all COVID-19-related health matters.

#### **Aloha Board Of Education Chair, Members, and Superintendent,**

I would ask that you please read and heavily consider the information provided in the articles below, and consider what is pono when determining HIDOE standards for our keiki. I know you have a difficult job to do, but I ask that you do what is in the best interest of our keiki, and I do not believe the current standards are it. As a concerned mother, I am begging you to take these masks off our keiki so that they can breathe without condition, especially at recess. 200 people can gather at a wedding without a mask on, but our keiki have to run in 90 + degree weather with their noses and mouths covered? Most HIDOE classrooms do not have air conditioning. Have you ever worn a mask for 6 hours straight in a non-ac room? Young keiki are not as capable as adults when it comes to taking the mask on and off hygienically. The amount of bacteria they are introducing to their bodies is exponential with this standard in place.

[A Group Of Parents Sent Their Kids' Face Masks to A Lab for Analysis. Here's What They Found by Scott Morefield \(townhall.com\)](#)

I would like to remind the Board that encouraging an experimental mRNA therapy with an EUA that is not FDA Approved for young children is, at the bare minimum, negligence. Please consider the weight and responsibility you carry with these "encouragements" for the potential lifelong health consequences Hawai'i's Keiki may have to bare. Please reference Maddie De Garay and her family's plight for the real consequences you are "encouraging" Hawai'i's families to endure.

[Mom details 12-year-old daughter's extreme reactions to COVID vaccine, says she's now in wheelchair | Fox News](#)

We all were more than happy to do our part to stop the spread in March 2020 and through the majority of the year to follow. We stayed home unless we had to go out. We wore masks when in contact with those outside our circle. We ate healthy, we exercised, and all the good things that strengthen our immune systems, but we have too much information on the ineffectiveness and dangers of child mask wearing at this point to ignore, as well as, more than enough questionable responses to the therapy in VAERS to discontinue the use of the mRNA therapy on children. Please copy and paste the following into your browser if you are unable to follow the links :

[Facemasks in the COVID-19 era: A health hypothesis \(nih.gov\)](#)

[New Stanford NIH Study Proves Masks are Worthless Against COVID - California Globe](#)

[AMA Journal: Masks Are Bad For Kids. Quit Forcing Them To Mask Up \(thefederalist.com\)](#)

[The WHO Says Children Should Not Receive COVID-19 Vaccines — Precision Vaccinations](#)

I ask that you consider the mental health of our keiki as well. Constant isolation and face covering is dehumanizing and very detrimental to the soul.

[Facemasks in the COVID-19 era: A health hypothesis \(nih.gov\)](#)

Lastly, I would like to thank you for your time in ensuring a truly healthy future for our keiki. I am aware that you align with the DOH guidance on these measures, and have submitted a shortened version of this email to the DOH via their fillable portal. Please let me know if you would like to discuss more positive health guidance for the upcoming school year. I would love to kokua the Board as a real parent with real keiki living through these tides.

[Does Diet Make a Difference in the Fight Against COVID-19? - Ka Wai Ola](#)

Mahalo,  
Jessie Makainai



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**Testimony - General Business Meeting**

1 message

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**Shane** <masa5758@gmail.com>  
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Jul 13, 2021 at 8:11 AM

Testimony  
General Business MeetingAction Items G: [Board Action on resolution on opening of schools for the 2021-2022 School Year](#)

Comment: I would like to request that parents have the option to have remote learning for our students. At the current time, the State of Hawaii has not opened up due to Governor Ige's 70% vaccination threshold yet the DOE students will be expected to go to school and sit within a few feet of each other which we can't even do today in restaurants or venues. I would have no problem with in person learning once the vaccine is available for 5yr + as this would give everyone at schools from elementary up through high school the access to get vaccinated. Until that is available, I would appreciate and highly recommend that the DOE allow remote learning for students.

Shane Arakaki



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

## Testimony

1 message

**Hiiaka J** <hiiakaj@gmail.com>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Jul 13, 2021 at 11:32 AM

**Name:** Hi'iaka Jardine; Concerned Mother & Community Member

**Meeting:** Special Meeting; July 15, 2021; 9:00 a.m.

**Agenda Item:** IV; G. [Board Action on resolution on opening of schools for the 2021-2022 School Year](#)

### "I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Department of Education ("Department"), education stakeholders, and the public are anticipating opening schools at the start of the 2021-2022 school year.
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- The proposed resolution focuses on four issues: (1) encouraging vaccination, (2) communication with families on school safety measures, (3) distance learning options, (4) continuing the designation of the Hawaii State Department of Health as the authority for advice and guidance on all COVID-19-related health matters."

**Position:** Oppose and Comment on: Agenda Item IV; G. I. Sub-Point 3(1) &(4): (1) encouraging vaccination & (4) continuing the designation of the Hawaii State Department of Health as the authority for advice and guidance on all COVID-19-related health matters.

### **Aloha Board Of Education Chair, Members, and Superintendent,**

I would ask that you please read and heavily consider the information provided in the articles below, and consider what is pono when determining HIDOE standards for our keiki. I know you have a difficult job to do, but I ask that you do what is in the best interest of our keiki, and I do not believe the current standards are it. As a concerned mother, I am begging you to take these masks off our keiki so that they can breathe without condition, especially at recess. 200 people can gather at a wedding without a mask on, but our keiki have to run in 90 + degree weather with their noses and mouths covered? Most HIDOE classrooms do not have air conditioning. Have you ever worn a mask for 6 hours straight in a non-ac room? Young keiki are not as capable as adults when it comes to taking the mask on and off hygienically. The amount of bacteria they are introducing to their bodies is exponential with this standard in place.

[A Group Of Parents Sent Their Kids' Face Masks to A Lab for Analysis. Here's What They Found by Scott Morefield \(townhall.com\)](#)

I would like to remind the Board that encouraging an experimental mRNA therapy with an EUA that is not FDA Approved for young children is, at the bare minimum, negligence. Please consider the weight and responsibility you carry with these "encouragements" for the potential lifelong health consequences Hawai'i's Keiki may have to bare. Please reference Maddie De Garay and her family's plight for the real consequences you are "encouraging" Hawai'i's families to endure.

[Mom details 12-year-old daughter's extreme reactions to COVID vaccine, says she's now in wheelchair | Fox News](#)

We all were more than happy to do our part to stop the spread in March 2020 and through the majority of the year to follow. We stayed home unless we had to go out. We wore masks when in contact with those outside our circle. We ate healthy, we exercised, and all the good things that strengthen our immune systems, but we have too much information on the ineffectiveness and dangers of child mask wearing at this point to ignore, as well as, more than enough questionable responses to the therapy in VAERS to discontinue the use of the mRNA therapy on children. Please copy and paste the following into your browser if you are unable to follow the links :

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[AMA Journal: Masks Are Bad For Kids. Quit Forcing Them To Mask Up \(thefederalist.com\)](#)

[The WHO Says Children Should Not Receive COVID-19 Vaccines — Precision Vaccinations](#)

I ask that you consider the mental health of our keiki as well. Constant isolation and face covering is dehumanizing and very detrimental to the soul.

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Lastly, I would like to thank you for your time in ensuring a truly healthy future for our keiki. I am aware that you align with the DOH guidance on these measures, and have submitted a shortened version of this email to the DOH via their fillable portal. Please let me know if you would like to discuss more positive health guidance for the upcoming school year. I would love to kokua the Board as a real parent with real keiki living through these tides.

[Does Diet Make a Difference in the Fight Against COVID-19? - Ka Wai Ola](#)

Mahalo,  
Hi'iaka Jardine





Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**School Year 2021-2022 Option for DISTANCE LEARNING**

1 message

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**jenniegomes** <islandblossombookkeeping@gmail.com>  
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Jul 13, 2021 at 4:38 PM

To Whom it may Concern,

I would like to offer my concerns and have them taken into consideration regarding this upcoming school year, and whether there will be an option for distance learning. I have two children, one in high school(Keaau High 10<sup>th</sup> Grade), & one in middle school (Keaau Middle 8<sup>th</sup>). I have reached out to both schools administration for instruction on distance learning options and was told there was none as of yet. I was told my only option is to "homeschool" and as Hawaii doesn't recognize homeschool credits I will have to homeschool my children until graduation or if they return to public school they will have to return at the grade level they left! This is not even an option really and I don't think it's quite fair.

I am not comfortable sending my children back to public school yet for face to face learning for many reasons, there are so many unknowns yet with the virus, and the vaccines, and my children are not capable of going long hours with a mask on. My children both have asthma and my daughter has a heart condition, both which are high risk factors for not only the VIRUS but the VACCINE as well. Please consider that every Child is different, has different health concerns, and though many are perfectly well with having a mask or vaccine and being in school, most are not.

In America, our children should have the right to be a part of the public school system and during a PANDEMIC as we are in now and will be indefinitely, they should also be given the opportunity to be a part of it through distance learning. I and my children don't want them to be homeschooled until they graduate, they want to experience public school like they've done all their lives, but right now it is safer and the best overall decision for their wellbeing to do it through distance learning. Sending them to school physically when they do not feel safe, or comfortable because they are breathing through a mask for many hours or feeling scared when they are in the cafeteria because everyone is unmasked will not help them excel academically.

My children have done well on distance learning, and I know many others and parents have not, and just like those who have the option to send their children back to school, we should have the option to have our children learn through distance learning so they may succeed as well.

I realize everyone wants everything to go back to "NORMAL" but the fact of the matter is we are still in a FEDERALLY DECLARED PANDEMIC, there is nothing normal about that, and I feel as long as we are in this PANDEMIC we should be offered distance learning.

If the school cannot provide the teacher assisted Distance learning because they are physically teaching in school, programs like Acellus should be offered in its place so our children still have their education and they are still tied to their public school so when we are no longer in this pandemic state they may return with their credits from an accredited program and stay on track till graduation.

I am simply asking that you consider all venues of situations and understand that not everyone will prosper from pretending that any of this pandemic situation is or can be BACK to NORMAL but understand that we need to adjust to

move forward and we need to accommodate the changes and make a NEW NORMAL where everyone has an option to succeed.

Public school is a hard place to be in any era, and now more than ever these kids are under so much stress and pressures that are not taken into consideration. This pandemic has brought so many obstacles into the homes of our children that directly affect their everyday lives, especially learning when they are already so overwhelmed by all the changes. Forcing them to be in school physically will not only be physically taxing but emotionally, & mentally as well, and I just don't see how a child can grow and flourish under those conditions when they do not feel comfortable or safe.

Again, please consider that everyone matters, and that we should be given options so our children can succeed too.

Sincerely,

Jennie Gomes



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

**testimony for BOE special meeting, July 15, 2021 at 9:00 a.m., on Item IV.G.**

1 message

Lynn Otaguro &lt;lmotaguro@yahoo.com&gt;

Tue, Jul 13, 2021 at 8:23 PM

To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

July 13, 2021

Board of Education  
State of Hawaii**Regarding July 15, 2021****BOE Special Meeting at 9:00 a.m., Item IV. G. Board action on resolution on opening of schools for the 2021-2022 School Year**

Honorable Chair Payne and members of the Board:

I previously wrote to this Board in June about the proposed resolution. My testimony remains largely the same. I would, however, like to add the following with regard to requiring masks at school.

While the CDC issued guidance that vaccinated teachers and students are able to go maskless indoors, it also provided that the decision be left to schools and local and state authorities, and it allowed that schools may continue to require universal masking for several reasons. See <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-guidance.html> I urge the Board to continue to require the wearing of masks indoors, and outdoors when people are in close proximity.

The variants now found in our state are more transmissible and dangerous, and there remain many in our state who are still unvaccinated, among them students below the age of 12 years. While the science may hold that unvaccinated people are less at risk, the community as a whole remains at risk. Mask wearing, particularly when ventilation is hard to address, is the cheapest, easiest way to make schools safer.

In addition, having been a teacher, a policy which would allow some in a class or school to go without masks while others would need to wear a mask would make it more difficult to enforce mask wearing and to create the kind of culture that most would aspire to in a classroom or school. To create an inclusive and caring environment, it is better to have a rule where we all come together and wear a mask to protect everyone in the classroom and community. And it is better to provide circumstances where everyone can feel safer.

Thank you. I am providing the contents of my last testimony for your consideration as well:

I am writing as a former teacher, parent, and deputy attorney general, and as someone who has followed the issues involving our schools for the last year. As this Board sets guidelines for the opening of schools for the 2021-2022 school year, I ask that the Board continue to require implementation of health and safety protocols and support the Board's recommendations in its resolution as follows.

**Continuation of health and safety protocols, including the wearing of masks.** For the 2021-2022 school year, continued implementation and work on health and safety protocols are needed, particularly as children under 12 and other parts of our population remain unvaccinated and the risk of variants loom.

These measures include the consistent use of masks, cleaning and hand washing, and the maintenance of social distancing (so that our classrooms are not overcrowded and the density within our schools is lower). Because work on ventilation in school facilities needs to be continued and the DOE acknowledges that it is difficult to fix, the use of masks and other mitigation measures are critical as part of the layering of protocols to improve safety.

**Encouraging vaccinations.** The Board's proposal to encourage vaccinations to help increase health and safety in schools and communities is a good one. Schools are an important source of information and access to resources and increasing the level of vaccinations in our communities improves health and safety for all.

**Communication and education on COVID-19 issues.** Communication with and the education of school staff, students, families, and communities can strengthen the COVID-19 response. Beginning of the year videos on COVID-19 and mitigation measures (including the implementation and use of the box fans) would help school staff to effectively deal with issues. Transparency about conditions and concerns can help build trust with stakeholders and allow them to support solutions. Communication about the steps being taken by schools and their importance can serve to support the implementation of health and safety measures and to assure parents worried about their children's health and safety.

**Offering a distance learning alternative.** Because we are still in transition in dealing with COVID-19, it would be most fair, equitable, and compassionate to offer a distance learning alternative for families who still harbor concerns about the safety of in person learning. During the past year, schools and teachers have worked hard on distance learning, and hopefully, the progress made can be utilized to enhance options for those students who need them. Having a teacher do both distance and in person instruction simultaneously is extremely hard, is not as productive, and should not be pursued. However, it would be helpful for the DOE to explore and work on alternatives that might allow a distance learning option in other ways. Continued work on distance learning can be used to help students who cannot attend school for health or disciplinary reasons, even in non-pandemic circumstances, and can be helpful should we later face another pandemic in the future.

**Consistent approach and messaging on health and safety.** Finally, in dealing with health and safety issues such as the COVID-19 response, please consider implementing statewide protocols and consistent messaging across our statewide system. While schools and students benefit from flexibility on other matters, on questions of health and safety with COVID-19, a consistent approach, where individual schools and complexes are not left to fend for themselves, makes sense.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Lynn Otaguro  
Oahu, Hawaii

Dear Ms. Payne and Members of the School Board,

I am a home owner, tax payer, and parent of two children currently enrolled at Kainalu Elementary in the Windward School District, Kailua-Kalaheo Complex, and I have severe concerns about the mandatory mask mandate for students in the 2021-22 school year; I request that you prioritize both the mental and physical health of our children and make masks optional for students without the need for vaccinations.

As elected officials, you have a duty to represent the people. I have a petition with 150+ signatures, supporting making masks optional in Hawaii public schools; another concerned parent also started a petition to unmask our keiki. Together these petitions have nearly 750 signatures and over 250 comments (see petitions below). Additionally, nearly 200 parents and community members gathered on Tuesday, July 13 to protest to the Hawaii Department of Health, asking for the right for parents to decide how to protect their children. **We are not asking for a mandate...we are asking for a choice.**

- <https://www.ipetitions.com/petition/make-masks-optional-in-hawaii-public-schools>
- <https://www.ipetitions.com/petition/unmask-our-keiki>

The number of COVID-19 cases in Hawaii has fallen precipitously and the number of hospitalizations is exponentially lower. All teachers and staff members have had the opportunity to get vaccinated. At this point, it is reasonable for our children to attend school without the burden of wearing a mask. The act of wearing a mask has been portrayed as a minor inconvenience, but I don't think it is reasonable or rational to consider covering one's face minor. While mask wearing may have been necessary a year ago, we have reached the point where masks are more detrimental than protective to our children.

1. On an academic level, wearing a face mask is impairing both verbal and non-verbal communication between students and teachers, as well as between students and peers.
  - Speech transmission is impaired and can often lead to misunderstanding. This is especially detrimental to our youngest learners that are dependent on the ability to detect the sounds in words as they are acquiring reading skills.
  - Students on all grade levels can become frustrated when trying to speak through their mask and are likely to participate less in classroom discussions.
2. Wearing a face mask also has harmful effects on the social and emotional health of our children. Our children have spent 1.5 years without being able to see each other's smiles and facial expressions.
  - In my daughter's class, the children had the opportunity to celebrate a classmate's birthday by recording a video message. One afternoon this winter I was in my kitchen and heard my daughter listening to the messages her classmates had recorded for the birthday girl. After about ten minutes, I realized that she was listening to the messages over and over again. I sat down with her and asked why she was listening to the messages repeatedly and she told me that she missed seeing her friend's faces.
  - Our children are more withdrawn and depressed and need social interaction that includes seeing each other's faces.
3. From a health perspective, our children are being forced to wear face masks all day that are moist and filled with bacteria, e.coli and fungi.

- Children do not follow mask wearing protocol (nor are they capable of doing so) and so their developing respiratory tracts are continuously exposed to harmful contagions.
  - The extended oxygen deprivation, particularly when required to wear masks in the summer heat while playing outdoors, has led to increased headaches, difficulty concentrating, drowsiness, and sleep issues.
4. Finally, [New Zealand has recently reported on an “immunity debt” phenomenon](#),
- The data shows an active and harmful suppression of our children’s immune systems “because of measures like lockdowns, hand-washing, social distancing and masks are not only effective at controlling Covid-19. They also suppress the spread of other illnesses that transmit in a similar way, including the flu, common cold, and lesser-known respiratory illnesses like RSV...But in the long term, it can create problems of its own: **if bacterial and viral infections aren’t circulating among children, they don’t develop immunity, which leads to larger outbreaks down the line.**”
  - We are actively suppressing the development of our children’s immune systems and are not actively considering unintended consequences of these decisions.

Since the inception of this pandemic, children have been asked to make sacrifices that are disproportionate to the level of risk that COVID-19 presents to them. Children that are infected are mostly asymptomatic or have extremely mild symptoms. More children die each year from the seasonal flu than have died from COVID-19. In fact, [according to the CDC](#), “for young children, especially children younger than 5 years old, the risk of serious complications is higher for flu compared with COVID-19.”

At the start of the pandemic, there was a concern that children were spreaders of COVID-19, but this has proven to be demonstrably false. Any lingering concerns should be diminished by the vaccination levels in Hawaii, particularly amongst educators.

As such, I am asking that you advocate for our children and put the decisions back in the hands of the parents, make masks optional in Hawaii public schools.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Mahalo Nui Loa,

Katelyn Shelly

Additional resources: <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/04/opinion/covid-vaccine-kids-risks.html>

July 13, 2021

Dear Chairperson Payne and Members of the Board of Education,

I am a mother of two children who are currently enrolled at our local elementary school. As a parent who chose distance learning options for my children last year, I would like to offer my comments on the upcoming 2021-2022 plan for in-person and distance learning.

First, I would like to explain why we would like to choose distance learning for my children this year. Simply put, the current guidance for the reopening of schools (specifically, to separate students 3 feet apart or less if necessary) appears to be based on the original COVID-19 virus last year and does not seem to address the increased contagiousness of the Delta variant. In addition, we recognize that children eating together in close proximity without masks on, is another situation where transmission of the virus could easily occur. While I understand that for many children, the benefits of in-person learning easily outweigh the risks of getting infected by COVID-19 -- this is not true for us. My children's learning progress has not suffered to the extent that we feel that we need to send them back to school in-person immediately and jeopardize their health for a virus with documented side effects that could greatly affect their future well-being. Furthermore, given that there are enough studies demonstrating how effective vaccines are in reducing the severity of a COVID-19 infection and the likelihood that a vaccination for children 11 years and under should be available in 2-3 months, we feel that there are greater benefits to waiting before we send our children back to school for in-person learning.

I understand that the BOE is considering a commitment to provide a distance learning option for parents like myself and appreciate your consideration. However, I would like to comment on how the current proposed form of distance learning will affect my children. As distance learning students last year, my children were able to learn alongside their classmates with a teacher who is a part of the school. This arrangement provided the social contact that they needed to feel that they are still a part of their elementary school community and ensured that they are still learning the same things that their classmates are learning.

As I understand it, the proposed form of distance learning, if offered, could possibly take place at the complex area level, meaning that my children will no longer have the benefit of learning with and from other students and teachers at their school. In addition, I find it disconcerting that there is now language in the resolution that appears to encourage greater use of the software alone for the instruction

of content, if resources are scarce. This would unfairly punish students whose parents chose to prioritize health and safety. As parents, we could have easily opted to send our children to private schools but made a conscious and deliberate decision to enroll them in public school because we felt that it was important to support our public school and teachers in our community. While I understand that the resources of a public school education system are necessarily limited compared to those of a private school, it is truly disappointing to see how our heartfelt commitment to supporting public schools may cause harm to our children, because we are now being given a choice of putting our children's well-being at risk or obtaining instruction through the use of software.

Given that the reopening of schools is imminent, I only ask that the BOE and the DOE reconsider other ways in which they could offer a better and more engaging form of distance learning for students who have legitimate reasons for opting out of the risks of in-person learning and who still wish to believe that their education matters in the eyes of their public school community.

Thank you for your time and consideration.





Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**Testimony: July 15 BOE meeting**

1 message

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**Blaine Stuart** <findbgs@gmail.com>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Jul 14, 2021 at 5:54 AM

Testimony:

A full return to in-person, classroom education is critical for the children in the state. Organizations like HSTA and the social media group "Hawaii for a safe return to schools" have caused irreparable harm to children over the course of the past year and a half. This has been compounded by a leadership vacuum at DOE, and in many of the CAS.

It is not necessary for DOE to offer a distance learning option to fearful parents and students. Teachers need to focus on teaching in the classroom. A student that requires or needs a distance learning option can and should obtain a 504 plan. Or, the parents may opt to homeschool. Funds and resources should not be diverted from classroom education to offer a distance option for all students. It's well past time to get the majority of students back into full time classroom based education where they belong.

Blaine Stuart  
Hilo, Hawaii

Sent from my iPad



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**Testimony regarding Distance Learning for School Year 2021-2022**1 message

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**Marika Bertram** <marika.butler@gmail.com>

Wed, Jul 14, 2021 at 7:41 AM

To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Dear Board of Education-

I strongly encourage you to offer a distance learning option for our keiki for this upcoming school year. I have two children in the Hawaii public school system and while I would love for them to be in person learning it is impossible for us given the current pandemic. My oldest son (age 7 years old) was born extremely prematurely at only 23 weeks and as a result of his early birth he is immune-compromised and has chronic lung disease and chronic kidney disease. In the past few years he has been hospitalized in the ICU 9 times with various respiratory illnesses and that was before the pandemic. His doctors have been adamant that he and his sister cannot attend school in person until they are vaccinated. Unfortunately children under age 12 aren't yet eligible for the COVID19 vaccine and that leaves a large swath of our community without protection. As a family we are having to make difficult choices regarding our children's education in order to keep our son safe. We desperately want a distance learning option so that my son can keep his IEP and school related services and we don't have to pull him out to homeschool as this would jeopardize his eligibility. Please think about the families throughout Hawaii that are making difficult and potentially life-savings choices to keep their kids home during this pandemic. Please provide those children with a distance learning option.

Mahalo,

Marika Bertram

(mom of a 7 year old and 5 year old in the Kailua-Kalaheo Complex)

[1532 Ulupii Street Kailua HI 96734](#)



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**Testimony for BOE Meeting 7.15.2021**

1 message

**Laura Paet-Tambo** <laurapaettambo@gmail.com>

Wed, Jul 14, 2021 at 8:11 AM

To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Attn: Board of Education

From: Concerned Parent of Elementary school Twins

Meeting: General (Full Board)

Agenda: Board Resolution on Opening of Schools form 2021-2022 School Year

Position: Comment

As a concerned parent for the safety of two elementary twins that cannot be vaccinated I would like to provide recommendations for DOE of Hawaii to assist parents with feeling comfortable with sending their kids back to in-person learning. This is now more important than ever due to the most transmissible Covid-19 variant (Delta Variant) that we have seen during this once in a lifetime pandemic. See Following:

1. Elementary schools need to be consistent and be MANDATORY that if a school cannot provide a minimum of 3 feet distance between desks in the classroom to have plexi-glass surrounding student's desk.
2. DOE should be transparent of the % of adults in Elementary schools that are 100% fully vaccinated. This is needed because Elementary schools from Pre-K to 5th grade- all students are not able to get vaccinated.
3. Communicate and be transparent on how air conditioned classrooms will be ventilated in regards to the active shooter policy- classroom doors to remain closed due to active shooter.
4. Elementary schools provide FREE WEEKLY Covid-19 testing on campus prior to entry.
5. Parents of twins should be allowed to decide that they be placed in the same cohort/classroom to provide a safer environment not the Principals and Complex Area Superintendents. This is especially important for multi-generational families, immune compromised families, and asthmatic/respiratory problem families.
6. A minimum of 24 hour notice to parents regarding Covid-19 positive exposure on campus. Last school year, 2020-2021 did not receive a phone call/letter from school until 7-10+ days fo Covid exposure on the campus. UNACCEPTABLE!!!
7. Classroom Cohort Procedures/Policies:
  - Communication of Procedures/Polices from School (Consistent with all Public schools on Oahu)
  - Communicate what is consider exposure (distance/timeframe)
  - What will be quarantine timeline for parents because parents will have to miss work to care for child.
  - Provide Covid-19 testing on campus for exposed cohort/classroom.

Sent from my iPad



2850 Kahawai Street  
Honolulu, HI 96822

808 988 5505  
www.ppsHI.org

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Deborah Bond-Upson

July 14, 2021

Chair Catherine Payne and the Hawai'i Board of Education

Email: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Re: Support and Comment for July 15, 2021 Special Meeting, Action Item IV. G., Board  
Action on Board Resolution on opening of schools for the 2021-2022 School Year.

Dear Chair Payne and Hawai'i Board of Education Members,

I am submitting this testimony on behalf of Parents for Public Schools of Hawai'i, a non-profit organization of family and community members with children in Hawai'i public schools. PPS Hawai'i has over 1,200 members across the State. Our volunteer organization focuses on providing the perspectives of families to support and improve public education.

PPS Hawai'i supports the Board Action to reopen Hawai'i schools this fall for in-person instruction, as many students missed their teachers and peers. We know that face-to-face instruction optimizes children's learning. However, given the ongoing health and safety concerns, including unavailability of a vaccine for children under 12, **we feel strongly that families should have a distance learning or hybrid option to provide the best educational opportunities for all students.**

Further, **any distance learning curricula and instruction provided must be validated and sufficiently monitored.** This is a lesson we learned last year, when the DOE contracted Acellus Academy for curricula that clearly did not meet adequate educational standards.

**We also urge the Board and DOE to solicit input from families, not only about health and safety, but also regarding distance or hybrid options.** Communication between families and educators will lead to the best solutions during these difficult times. Our experiences during the pandemic underscore the importance of communicating with families *early and throughout the process* about curriculum and learning.

Finally, as we transition back to face-to-face instruction, **we encourage policies that will leverage elements of remote instruction that promote learning.** These include increased online family-teacher communications, asynchronous projects, and supplemental software that has been effective.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Aloha,

Lois A. Yamauchi, PhD

President, Parents for Public Schools of Hawai'i

*Parents for Public Schools Hawaii (PPSHI) is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) volunteer organization of parents, community members, and educators working to improve and support public education through family engagement. We are committed to ensuring all children in Hawai'i have access to a quality public education.*



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**testimony for BOE meeting on July 15, 2021**

1 message

**Amy Ogasawara** <amyeof@yahoo.com>

Wed, Jul 14, 2021 at 8:59 AM

To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

Dear BOE Members,

I implore you to not force classroom teachers to teach synchronously as they did last year. It's an injustice to the students at home as well as to the students in the classroom. I think our CAS was very out of touch to force our teachers to do this. They are completely burnt out. As shared by our HSTA President, Tui Osa, there should be teachers who only teach the students on-line. That's all they would do all year. Allow the classroom teachers to teach only in person to be fair to them and the students. Our teachers never complained because of their love and care of our students, so they continued to teach synchronously all year. All year you ask? Yes, we had children on our campus since August 2020. These were the students who needed the most help because they need assistance with diapering, eating, and having hand over "nub" writing assistance. Yes, we have one child who does have hands/fingers.

Please also ask the DOE what happened to the teacher surveys that we answered at the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year. Ask Asst. Supt. Rodney Luke what he did with it all that data. Oh, that's right, he just retired as of July 1st, but the blame needs to be placed on him and not his replacement. Tell the DOE not to waste our time with surveys if the data just sits on someone's computer all year. We all have enough to do without answering surveys which are pointless.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Amy Ogasawara-Fukumoto, M.Ed.  
Kaimuki Middle School SSC  
Public School Education since 1992.



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

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## In support of giving parents a option

1 message

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**Crissy Mahiai** <crissymahiai@gmail.com>

Wed, Jul 14, 2021 at 9:01 AM

To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

I'm writing as a parent and educator. Please give the ppl of Hawaii a choice to send their kids to school or continue distance learning. Thank you!



July 15, 2021  
Special Meeting

Dear Chair Payne and Members of the Committee,

We would like to support Action Item IV. G., Board Action on Board Resolution on opening of schools for the 2021-2022 School Year.

We ask the BOE to refer to our testimony in support of the Board Resolution submitted on June 17, 2021, which we have attached.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Cheri Nakamura  
HE'E Coalition Director



June 17, 2021  
General Business Meeting

Dear Chair Payne and Members of the Committee,

We would like to comment on Items IV. A. and V. A.

For Item IV. A., we thank the BOE for the discussion on a proposed resolution regarding the opening of schools for the 2021-2022 school year. We support the tenets of the resolution, which are to encourage vaccination, direct the DOE to communicate with families on school safety measures, offer distance learning for the 2021-2022 school year, and rely on DOH for advice and guidance on all COVID-19 related health matters.

We are particularly pleased with the BOE's approach with respect to distance learning, as we believe that technology is an effective way of delivering instruction and that the lessons we have learned during the pandemic on distance learning should be leveraged. Distance learning can be extremely effective for certain students and can be a great strategic tool for rural areas where resources are limited.

While we agree that we should encourage in-person learning as much as possible, we think that the Superintendent's school reopening directive fails to sufficiently provide for distance learning. We strongly support the proposed resolution directing the DOE to work with families who want distance learning for their children and to provide sufficient information on distance learning so that families can know where and how to access it. We also think that considering the offer of distance learning through the state or complex to use resources more efficiently is extremely strategic. Finally, we agree with the Board Chair's remarks about taking this opportunity to incorporate the knowledge we have learned about distance learning into our system, and we support the directive to have the DOE create a report about the cost and benefits of offering distance learning as a long-term option, which can be used to examine possible policy changes.

For Item V.A., as our June 3, 2021 testimony states, we support the Board Transition Committee's recommendation to appoint Principal Keith Hayashi as the Interim Superintendent.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Cheri Nakamura



HE'E Coalition Director

HE'E Coalition Members and Participants

Academy 21

Alliance for Place Based Learning

American Civil Liberties Union

\*Castle Complex Community Council

\*Castle-Kahuku Principal and CAS

\*Education Institute of Hawai'i

\*Faith Action for Community Equity

Fresh Leadership LLC

Girl Scouts Hawai'i

Harold K.L. Castle Foundation

\*HawaiiKidsCAN

\*Hawai'i Afterschool Alliance

\*Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and  
Economic Justice

\*Hawai'i Association of School Psychologists

Hawai'i Athletic League of Scholars

\*Hawai'i Children's Action Network

Hawai'i Education Association

Hawai'i Nutrition and Physical Activity  
Coalition

\* Hawai'i State PTSA

Hawai'i State Student Council

Hawai'i State Teachers Association

Hawai'i P-20

Hawai'i 3Rs

Head Start Collaboration Office

It's All About Kids

\*INPEACE

Joint Venture Education Forum

Junior Achievement of Hawaii

Kamehameha Schools

Kanu Hawai'i

\*Kaua'i Ho'okele Council

Keiki to Career Kaua'i

Kupu A'e

\*Leaders for the Next Generation

Learning First

McREL's Pacific Center for Changing the  
Odds

Native Hawaiian Education Council

Our Public School

\*Pacific Resources for Education and  
Learning

\*Parents and Children Together

\*Parents for Public Schools Hawai'i

Special Education Provider Alliance

\*Teach for America

The Learning Coalition

US PACOM

University of Hawai'i College of Education

\*Youth Service Hawai'i

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



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**Distance Learning**

1 message

**Susan Young** <soooie3@icloud.com>

Wed, Jul 14, 2021 at 9:16 AM

To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

I support distance learning in public schools, for children under the age of 12, who are not eligible to receive the COVID vaccine.

I am a grandparent of a 5-year-old boy, whom I have homeschooled, since March 2020, and a 3-year-old girl. I also have parents, who are 88 and 91 years old.

I am very afraid that my grandchildren will be exposed to the virus, by my grandson attending school in person. I am also fearful of my parents being inadvertently exposed by community spread (me), as I see my grandchildren every day, and I visit my parents, weekly.

My parents have received the covid vaccination, but I am afraid that they are still able to contract the virus.

We have been very careful about keeping our family safe. We limit our outings to essential shopping, and we wear masks everywhere we go. We have not traveled since March 2020 and have no plans to travel in the foreseeable future.

If distance learning is not offered in the public schools, my daughter will have no choice, but to send her son to a private school, where distance learning is an option.

Sincerely,  
Susan Young

Sent from my iPhone



**S E A C**  
**Special Education Advisory Council**  
**1010 Richards Street Honolulu, HI 96813**  
**Phone: 586-8126 Fax: 586-8129**  
**email: [spin@doh.hawaii.gov](mailto:spin@doh.hawaii.gov)**  
July 15, 2021

**Special Education  
Advisory Council**

Ms. Martha Guinan, *Chair*  
Ms. Susan Wood, *Vice Chair*

Ms. Andrea Alexander  
Ms. Sara Alimoot  
Ms. Brendelyn Ancheta  
Ms. Virginia Beringer  
Ms. Mary Brogan  
Ms. Deborah Cheeseman  
Ms. Annette Cooper  
Mr. Mark Disher  
Dr. Kurt Humphrey  
Ms. Tina King  
Ms. Bernadette Lane  
Ms. Sarah Man  
Ms. Dale Matsuura  
Ms. Cheryl Matthews  
Ms. Kaili Murbach  
Ms. Kiele Pennington  
Ms. Carrie Pisciotto  
Ms. Kau'i Rezendes  
Ms. Rosie Rowe  
Dr. David Royer  
Ms. Ivalee Sinclair  
Mr. James Street  
Mr. Francis Taele  
Mr. Steven Vannatta  
Ms. Lisa Vegas  
Ms. Paula Whitaker  
Ms. Jasmine Williams

Ms. Annie Kalama, *liaison to  
the Superintendent*  
Dr. Bob Campbell, *liaison to  
the military community*

Amanda Kaahanui, Staff  
Susan Rocco, Staff

Catherine Payne, Chairperson  
Hawaii State Board of Education  
P. O. Box 2360  
Honolulu, HI 96814

RE: IV. G. Board Action on resolution on reopening of schools for the  
2021-2022 School Year

Dear Chair Payne and Members of the Board,

The Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) supports the Board's proposed resolution regarding "encouraging vaccination, directing the Department of Education to communicate with families on school safety measures, to offer distance learning for the 2021-2022 school year and to rely on the Department of Health for advice and guidance on all COVID-19-related health matters." We reiterate our comments of June 17, 2021 that are specific to the issue of distance learning:

While SEAC believes that in-person learning offers the best benefit to a majority of students with disabilities today, we also hold that some students with disabilities actually performed better over the past year with access to quality distance learning. The reasons for their success are varied and may include:

- The ability to select the most convenient and preferred time of learning;
- The ability to select the pace of learning;
- Reduced anxiety for students with social and emotional issues related to attending school in-person;
- The ability to revisit material whenever they happen to forget something and the ability to re-take quizzes and tests; and
- Better attendance for students who face barriers related to health, transportation or caring for family members at home.



Testimony to the Board of Education

July 15, 2021

Page 2

Quality distance learning for students with disabilities must include oversight by a special education teacher who is able to monitor progress and ensure that the program selected is meeting the individualized needs of the student.

Given that this modality may be the most appropriate way to provide FAPE to a number of students with disabilities, it should not be left to chance as to whether a particular school is willing or able to offer this instructional mode. Rather, SEAC strongly suggests that the complex area or the state offer access to quality distance learning to students who need that option to benefit from their education.

Beyond providing an individualized and appropriate education to students with disabilities, SEAC believes that all students should be prepared for living and working in a digitalized world as well as a world subject to future health and climate challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic forced an unplanned and rapid move to online learning at the beginning of last school year with very little advanced training, insufficient bandwidth, a shortage of devices and little time to prepare. The Department should build upon the expertise they have gained in the last year to offer enhanced and more diverse instructional experiences to its students.

Mahalo for this opportunity to express our views. SEAC stands ready to work collaboratively with the Department and the Board to find creative solutions to the delivery of quality educational services to students with disabilities.

Respectfully,

  
Martha Guinan  
Chair

  
Ivalee Sinclair  
Legislative Committee Chair



Osa Tui, Jr.  
President

Logan Okita.  
Vice President

Lisa Morrison  
Secretary-Treasurer

Wilbert Holck  
Executive Director

## TESTIMONY BEFORE THE BOARD OF EDUCATION SPECIAL MEETING

**RE: AGENDA ITEM IV. G. BOARD ACTION ON RESOLUTION ON OPENING OF  
SCHOOLS FOR THE 2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR**

**THURSDAY, JULY 15, 2021**

**OSA TUI, JR., PRESIDENT  
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION**

Chair Payne and Members of the Board:

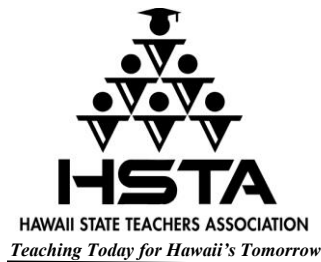
The **Hawaii State Teachers Association supports** the encouragement of all staff, students, and their families to get vaccinated from COVID-19 in order to get all students back to in-person learning quickly and safely. The most effective method for instructing students is in-person and teachers look forward to when all students can return without risk.

However, until vaccines are made available to students younger than 12 years old, parents are rightfully concerned that it may be premature to be sending their children back to full classrooms. This is especially true considering the difficulties in being able to maintain social distancing in small classrooms with the more virulent Delta variant continuing to spread.

If the only two options parents have are to either send their unvaccinated children to crowded classrooms or remove them from the public school system, parents may very well opt for the latter with devastating repercussions. Schools, already facing tight budgets, could see an even further reduction in their operating budgets when the first enrollment count is taken on August 16, 2021. Personnel could lose their positions after the school year has already begun if there isn't enough of a cushion to withstand an additional loss of funding. Students will also sustain setbacks when removed for homeschooling, especially when parents are not in a situation to provide quality homeschooling instruction. It is a terrible dilemma for parents to face.

Consequently, the **Hawaii State Teachers Association supports** directing the Department to work with families who want their children in a full distance learning program. This should be the case, at a minimum, until such time that school communities can reach herd immunity and all students have adequate access to vaccinations.

The **Hawaii State Teachers Association opposes** simply directing the Superintendent to consider the feasibility and viability of offering distance learning at the state or complex area levels. This is not enough as efforts should have been made months ago to take the burden off of schools having to solve these problems in isolation. Going into the summer of 2020, families were surveyed about their preferences, but none of that was done going into the summer of 2021. Simply running out the clock cannot be a reason to not right that wrong.



1200 Ala Kapuna Street ♦ Honolulu, Hawaii 96819  
Tel: (808) 833-2711 ♦ Fax: (808) 839-7106 ♦ Web: [www.hsta.org](http://www.hsta.org)

Osa Tui, Jr.  
President

Logan Okita  
Vice President

Lisa Morrison  
Secretary-Treasurer

Wilbert Holck  
Executive Director

There are a number of problems with schools having to come up with their own distance options. Foremost would be the expectation that teachers would have to teach students concurrently online and in-person. This teaching model is less than effective for students and unnecessarily burdensome for classroom teachers. Effective lessons can be developed for students who are completely online or completely in-person, but developing lessons to be effective simultaneously for both situations is challenging. Schools might also opt to make their distance option stand-alone and effectively deprive those students from highly qualified, Hawaii based teachers.

Public statements that there are no funds to allocate teachers for a fully distance learning model could be considered disingenuous. If students are reallocated within the public school system rather than leaving the public school system, the requisite funds for that student would also be reallocated as is the purpose of the weighted student formula. Any shortfall could also be addressed with federal stimulus funding should there be additional needs to get the ball rolling.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.



Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Special Meeting Testimony

1 message

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**Susan Pcola-Davis** <Supcola@hawaii.rr.com>  
To: testimony\_boe <Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Wed, Jul 14, 2021 at 1:17 PM

Board of Education

Special Meeting

July 15, 2021

9:00 am

From: Susan Pcola-Davis

Testimonies for Action Items C, E, and G

Action Item: C

### **Comment only**

C. Board Action on election of Board Vice Chairperson

**Bruce Voss** I strongly recommend Board Member Bruce Voss as the Board Vice Chairperson. His experience in the private sector brings a lot of talent and perspective of the Hawaii State Public School System. He has no issue with raising important questions and thoughts. Mr. Voss is a strong member of the BOE and we need that in a Vice Chairperson. I find him open minded and willing to listen to other perspectives. He also is willing to change his mind if given enough substance. It is important that the Vice Chairperson contributes to discussions and decisions. Mr. Voss will ensure that when he speaks we know what he is saying. That is a true attribute of someone that can successfully hold this position. This school year isn't going to be any easier than last year, the state needs a person that will openly and honestly share information. He is decisive and maintains a poise needed during these difficult times. I am sure his is ready, willing and able to be the next Vice Chairperson.

Action Item E:

### **Comment Only**

E. Board Action on election of committee chairperson and committee vice chairperson for Student Achievement Committee, Finance and Infrastructure Committee, and Human Resources Committee

Student Achievement Committee: Chair: Kili Namau'u; Vice Chair: Shanty Asher

Finance and Infrastructure Committee: Chair: Bruce Voss; Vice Chair: Lynn Fallin

Human Resources Committee: Chair: Kaimana Barcarse; Vice Chair: Bill Arakaki

Action Item G:

**STRONGLY SUPPORT with specific items identified**

G. Board Action on resolution on opening of schools for the 2021-2022 School Year

1. Communication must be open and frequent regarding Health and Safety. Since our Legislature accomplished a veto-over ride, COVID case weekly reports by schools will be posted on the DOE website. This will further strengthen the family confidence. (Lines 64-68)

2. Instructional Learning Models need to include a CLEAR understanding and roll out of Distance Learning for Public School students and teachers. (Lines 70-84, 86-92)

June 3 BOE Meeting:

From the minutes

**Kishimoto** noted that distance learning opportunities will be available in the event that the Department needs to close schools to address health concerns through Blackboard Learn, Google Classroom, K12/STRIDE; and school selected online programs.

**Board Member Voss** "... he asked what kinds of distance learning options will be available for elementary school



parents who are concerned about sending their students back to school because vaccines are not available to them?”

**Kishimoto** “...that each school has different levels of capacity and some schools are already stretched with current staff and are struggling to have a teacher-led learning approach. She stated that if schools are considering providing a full distance learning option, then the school needs to contact the parent and make it clear that if the child is not successful with distance learning, the school will need to ask the student to come to the school campus for in-person learning.”

**Kishimoto** “... schools with sufficient capacity can provide teacher-led instruction for distance learning and parents need to work with schools because each school has different capacities.”

**Kishimoto** “...the Department will accommodate distance learning to the extent possible.”

**Board Member Voss** “...asked if there is a deadline for schools to notify parents whether they will offer a full distance learning option.” **Question not answered.**

**Kishimoto** “...each school principal has communicated to parents that schools will be fully reopening **and** if the school will have other options on what is available through their schools.” **All schools have not communicated reopening guidance.**

“...that complex areas will look at the number of parents from schools asking for alternatives to see whether there can be planning at the complex level...”  
“...parents will be directed back to their schools to find out about the options available to them.”

3. Listing of Schools that offer Distance Learning Programs, a description of the program, and if they are accepting geographic exceptions. (Lines 94-98). **Is there a deadline?**

4. Feasibility of offering distance learning at state or complex level rather than individual schools. (Lines 100-103). **Is there a deadline?**
5. Plans to offer Distance Learning for SY2021-2022. (Lines 105-108). **Strongly Support**
6. Develop a cost/benefit analysis of Distance Learning Options (Lines 110-113). **When will the Student Achievement Committee meet to have this reported to them?**

*Susan A. Pcola-Davis*

- Name/title: Owen Chan, MD, PhD / Pathologist
- Meeting: July 15, 2021 Special Meeting
- Agenda item: [Board Action on resolution on opening of schools for the 2021-2022 School Year](#)
- Position: Oppose

To Chairperson Payne and the members of the Board of Education:

I am writing as a concerned parent of two children at one of our local elementary schools. Also, as a practicing physician in our community, I would like to submit testimony to OPPOSE the reopening of in-person learning ONLY in the first half of the 2021-2022 school year.

I would like to offer some background information first:

- 1) In addition to the risk of death ("mortality"), COVID-19 infection can lead to serious adverse effects ("morbidity"). Adults and children can experience symptoms for weeks or months after an initial SARS-CoV-2 infection. This is known as "**post-acute sequelae of SARS-CoV-2 infection (PASC)**" or commonly referred to as "**long COVID**."

Symptoms include:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| • Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath                                 | • Joint or muscle pain                    |
| • Tiredness or fatigue  | • Pins-and-needles feeling                |
| • Symptoms that get worse after physical or mental activities                 | • Diarrhea                                |
| • Difficulty thinking or concentrating (sometimes referred to as "brain fog") | • Sleep problems                          |
| • Cough   | • Fever                                   |
| • Chest or stomach pain   | • Dizziness on standing (lightheadedness) |
| • Headache  | • Rash                                    |
| • Fast-beating or pounding heart (also known as heart palpitations)           | • Mood changes                            |
|   | • Change in smell or taste                |
|   | • Changes in period cycles                |

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/long-term-effects.html>

- 2) Vaccinations against SARS-CoV-2 are effective in preventing most cases of severe disease and likely also reduce asymptomatic infection and transmission.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/science/science-briefs/fully-vaccinated-people.html>

- 3) At this writing, vaccinations have FDA emergency use authorization (EUA) for persons aged 12 years and older only. Pfizer-BioNTech hopes to submit for an FDA EUA for children 2-11 years of age in **September 2021**.

[https://s21.q4cdn.com/317678438/files/doc\\_financials/2021/q1/Q1-2021-Earnings-Conference-Call-Prepared-Remarks-FINAL.pdf](https://s21.q4cdn.com/317678438/files/doc_financials/2021/q1/Q1-2021-Earnings-Conference-Call-Prepared-Remarks-FINAL.pdf)

***Contention: The re-opening of schools for 100% in-person learning should be opposed out of safety concerns, and I argue to maintain the previous system of allowing distance learning for families that choose this method until vaccinations are available to ALL students.***

Proposal:

- 1) Continue last year's school options of in-person, hybrid, and distance learning.
- 2) For distance learning, continue instruction with a teacher (as last year), so that in-person and distance learners both have comparable educational opportunities (instead of imposing software-only teaching for distance learners).
- 3) Continue the distance learning option until everyone has the opportunity to be vaccinated, should they choose it. If the vaccination EUA for children under 12 years of age is granted in September

2021, distance learning may not need to extend beyond that time frame (essentially, distance learning only needs to be in the first one or two quarters of the school year).

With this proposal, I humbly submit that:

- 1) Giving families the option to choose in-person or distance learning allows the BOE to address the needs of the diverse families in our state. Please note that I am NOT suggesting to remove in-person learning. I am proposing to have in-person AND distance learning until vaccinations are available.
- 2) The infrastructure for distance learning is already in place, as it already existed in the last school year.
- 3) Distance learning could be promoted only until vaccinations are offered to those under age 12. With the mandate that ALL students attend in-person learning only, students who desire vaccinations have no protection yet and are put at risk for the morbidity and mortality of COVID-19. I am using this letter to advocate for the families that wish to have vaccinations to additionally protect their children in school.
- 4) If there is financial concern with offering distance learning using teachers, this proposal is a compromise to offer distance learning for only the first half of the year (and not the whole school year), until vaccinations are available to elementary school children.

As every household situation is unique, the current system of offering both in-person and distance learning strikes the right balance for the different families of our public schools. Please allow families to assess their individual risks of SARS-CoV-2 infection and maintain a family's choice to participate in distance learning until they are offered the ability to vaccinate their children.

Respectfully,

Owen Chan, MD, PhD