

Elizabeth Benson
444B Mauna Iho Place
Hilo, Hawaii 96720

August 18, 2021

RE: School Safety

Members of the Board of Education;

After reading this morning's Tribune-Herald article about clamping down on beach closures and the Ironman Triathlon, and stating that enforcement would be difficult, the county should be focusing on where enforcement CAN be best implemented. It's time to implement the hard decisions. Schools should be utilized as the safety net of our communities and be the center for regular testing, contact tracing and a resource for vaccination numbers on campuses, not a Petrie dish for covid (our current status).

Our community's well-being cannot be negotiated at this point and it's time for mayors to take a stronger stance with the governor where schools are concerned. Schools are where the state should lend its focus. These are our kids and grandkids. This is the fastest growing group that's being hospitalized and on ventilators and are the most vulnerable (especially kids under 12) who will suffer post-covid effects in the weeks, month, and years to come. We are seeing 11-year-olds on ventilators stateside. Is that what it's going to take to reinstate school closures? We don't have weeks to decide on this. Something needs to be done NOW.

Mandatory testing should be first and foremost in schools. We are forcing people on to campuses statewide KNOWING a large number of both staff and, especially students, remain unvaccinated. Schools could serve as the safety net that could help mitigate this crisis. Regular testing, reporting, and tracing could have positive effects in getting a clear picture of the scope of the spread of infection, but until those measures are in place, schools should be locked down until we get a handle on implementation. It's clear we do not have solid, sound plan at this point. The DOE has NO PLAN about how to mitigate the virus at the most fundamental level, classrooms. No one is talking about that on the news.

Students are in small classrooms, oftentimes filled to capacity. They sit shoulder to shoulder for 80 minutes at a time, 4 times a day at the secondary level. Despite the statements made by the Department of Education in implementing safety measures, teachers are unable to mitigate the 3-6 foot distancing protocols set in place by the CDC. If we cannot or will not take action on this fundamental level of safety, closing beaches and parks is just a band aid on an already ruptured artery that no one can mitigate. No one is talking about crowded secondary classrooms, lack of testing, or

contact tracing or being able to share what our vaccination numbers are. If you don't know what percentage of your population in schools is vaccinated, how do you mitigate the problem if you don't know the scope of the spread? What are we waiting for? Isn't anyone following what's happening in Florida schools? Aren't we looking to countries like New Zealand whose death rates are among the lowest in the world? New Zealand's prime minister has made the hard decisions necessary to keep her citizens from death, plain and simple. Citizens are on board to support the interests of the common good for their fellow citizens. We'll adjust to the hard decisions we need at this time, but someone, anyone has to have the courage it's going to take to avoid a more painful and dire outcome when our kids begin to be hospitalized more and more.

On a personal note, I know several young people whose parents don't believe in vaccines. After consulting with their grandparents and discussing how THEY felt, two brothers made appointments at Long's that day as they watched our covid numbers rising weeks ago. The boys are now on a mission now to convince their parents and friends to get vaccinated. This is how schools could play a major role in raising vaccination rates. Israel's population is the largest study group we know of (600,000). They are at an 85% vaccination rate. That should be our magic number. We already know it's working. Places with 85% vaccination rates are not seeing the death rates we are experiencing in the states. Dr. Anthony Fauci has been screaming it from the rooftops since the vaccine was made available. This is something the governor and his advisors are missing...and it's HUGE.

Schools should be at the forefront of mitigating this virus. Sending everyone we know who could be infected into classrooms, having no mandatory testing or real tracing and making them sit shoulder to shoulder for hours at a time in close quarters is criminal. Deceiving the public into believing that schools are safe is a disservice to our community. Use the power of your offices to serve the common good, not some political agenda that serves the economy. Our systems are breaking down. We are already experiencing the effects of our complacency to act and do the hard work it's going to take to keep our communities truly safe. Please act now and advocate for a 3-week lockdown (minimum) of schools until a sound plan that includes regular testing, contact tracing, and vaccination counts that reach 85% on campuses statewide. This is the magic number that WILL allow us to really feel good about having our children in schools again. Until then, we are just part of a bigger problem of political agendas and complacency. Is that what public service has become? I pray not.

Thank you all for your dedication and service to the process.

Godspeed,
Elizabeth Benson



Testimony to BOE - Covid Concerns, Matt Yamashita

1 message

Matt Yamashita <molokaimatt@hotmail.com>

Wed, Aug 18, 2021 at 5:10 PM

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

Aloha. My name is Matt Yamashita. I run my own business here on Molokai, I actively volunteer in various ways in our community including as a middle and high school soccer coach, a board member at Sustainable Molokai, and a former board member for 6 years at the Molokai Community Health Center. My wife and I are parents to 2 high schoolers and one middle schooler.

First of all, I know these have been difficult times with constantly changing variables and challenges. I appreciate our Molokai principals, teachers, and school staff for their ongoing commitment to the quality education of our youth. Last year, when our schools were able to make independent decisions on how to structure in-school, out-of-school, and hybrid models, their decisions were well-thought through, effective in supporting our children's learning, and, most importantly, safe.

I attended a Zoom meeting for parents this Tuesday, hosted by our local schools and the DOH. The Zoom meeting only allowed for 100 attendees, leaving many in our community frustrated because MANY parents in this community are very concerned about the current spike in the Covid Delta variant on Molokai. I learned a lot at the meeting, mainly that our schools and teachers are doing their best to both educate and keep our students safe, but the reality of classroom management and the current outbreak of Covid is clearly putting the effectiveness of mitigation strategies into question. More alarming is the fact that we will not know the degree/impact of in-school transmission for a few weeks, at which point the new cases could further stress the State's already maxed out hospital capacity. The most important takeaway from the meeting was the fact that in-school learning is being pushed forward as the only option, without any plans or preparation for hybrid or distance learning. THIS is most alarming considering the current spike and the alarming number of cases being reported by our schools.

On Molokai, we're at 48 confirmed active cases out of a population of 6,275, so a little less than 1% of our island has confirmed infection. Over the past 14 days there have been 7 reported cases at MHS and 3 reported cases at MMS. There's approx 340 students enrolled in MHS, so the current infection rate among the student body is 2%. This means that there are more than twice as many active cases per capita among MHS student body versus the current per capita of the Molokai general population. In other words, our schools are seeing case numbers more than double that of the general community. This means that the probability of transmission taking place in school is higher than in the general community.

The concern is this, according to DOH data, only 40% of 12-17yr olds in Maui County are vaccinated. If that percentage holds true for Molokai, then approx 200 MHS students are currently unvaccinated. Even if all of those students start getting vaccinated today, it'll take 4 weeks before they are protected. During that time think about how many of our youth and families could get infected, especially considering that even vaccinated individuals can transmit the Delta variant. Meanwhile, the science, the news, and the emerging information about Delta is terrifying. So do we err on the side of caution by putting a pause on in-school learning... or do we err on the side of "MAYBE it won't be that bad, so let's just wait and see?" The latter is clearly a dangerous experiment.

The question is: what is more important, the health and safety of our youth and families or pushing in-school learning as the only option for education? Taking a pause on in-school learning and doing distance learning instead can help slow down a spike of Covid. A pause also gives enough time for the DOH and DOE to determine the actual rate of in-school transmission based on current cases and the resulting caseload 2-3 weeks later. If it is determined that little to no transmission has occurred, that would be great, we'll then know that the mitigation strategies work and our kids can return to the classroom. If transmission is high, however, then we'll know that more has to be done to keep our students safe. Furthermore, a pause gives currently unvaccinated kids the time to get vaccinated and have the protection of the vaccination take effect.

Last year we did almost an entire year of distance and hybrid learning. Why is it not an option right now, during the worst period of infection that our State has ever seen?

I ask the BOE to give principals and local school districts the authority to pause in-school learning when deemed appropriate for their individual schools/communities. A blanket policy of pushing in-school learning as the only option is a huge gamble that puts the health and safety of our communities at stake.

Mahalo!

Matt Yamashita

Owner, [Quazifilms Media](#)

808.442.2740 cell

Subject: NO PERSONAL INFORMATION

Elementary Teacher
Pearl City Elementary School

Agenda Item: VI. A. Presentation on Opening Schools for the 2021-2022 School Year

Position: Oppose

Schools should not remain open with the high case counts and lack of mitigation strategies in place. I urge you to make changes on behalf of our largest unvaccinated population—students in the elementary setting. Close schools and resort to distance learning until case counts drop. Then, slowly bring students back to hybrid learning and in full force once students have had the opportunity to get vaccinated. COVID is no joke. LONG-COVID is no joke! Maybe you're okay with risking student health, but I am not. I am both a parent and a teacher. It is not okay.

Crowded classrooms

With over 20 students in my classroom, there is no room for adequate distancing. The DOE guidance is certainly not protecting students with the “exception” to close contacts. It reads, “In a K-12 indoor classroom setting, where everyone is wearing a mask correctly and consistently, the close contact definition excludes students who were within 3 to 6 feet of an infected student.” Hundreds of viral particles are concentrating in enclosed rooms each and every day, and by the end of the day, students are potentially exposed as masks, alone, are not enough to combat the virus. Many classroom settings are not open to fresh air.

Lack of staff

There is little to no supervision of students. How are we to enforce COVID-19 mitigation strategies with no supervision? In the morning, between 7:15 and 7:45, there is no supervision in the School Courtyard where students are seated in large groups by grade level. Many students are maskless. Today, I witnessed a maskless student spitting in another student's face as I walked by.

Large, in-person meetings

Why are we having large, in-person meetings? Why are we intermingling with other staff members? Why are we talking about science lessons and not COVID-19 mitigation strategies? Why are we told that if we wear our masks, wash our hands, and stay home when we are sick, we won't get COVID?

Protocols ignored, unenforceable

I am constantly asking students to wear their masks correctly and consistently. I get parent complaints about this. “Why are you telling my child to fix his mask?” Then, my principal tells me I should lay off. Lay off? I'm just doing my job to keep everyone safe.

The core mitigation strategies are unenforceable with a the lack of staff we have. And, it is not enough to just enforce the core mitigation strategies. The guidance states that schools should implement additional mitigation strategies to the **greatest extent possible**. So, why are we not keeping kids in cohorts? Why are teachers not opening their doors and windows to fresh air? Why is the cafeteria filled with 100+ maskless, unvaccinated students at lunch, three to a table, and talking allowed.

Lack of notification, inconsistent response and reporting

I know of past cases on my campus, but not a single letter went out to all parents at the school. I also do not see any reporting of cases to the DOE as I have not seen our school on the list yet. This is unethical.

Poor ventilation

Ventilation is my biggest CONCERN as the COVID-19 virus is airborne. If you want schools to remain open, invest your money in tents and foldable tables and chairs for outdoor learning and lunches. Our unvaccinated students are spending way too much time together in enclosed, poorly ventilated classrooms. I have my classroom open to fresh air, and I use a window fan to help with airflow; however, many classrooms are not like mine. Many of my students prefer our open classroom now that they understand how the virus spreads. So, why am I repeatedly being told to close my doors and window and turn my AC on? Why am I being told that dust allergies and rare bacterial infections should be my main concern and not the widespread COVID-19 virus?



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

My child's principal asked me to forward to you.

1 message

Melody <retrol11412@aol.com>

Wed, Aug 18, 2021 at 9:58 PM

Reply-To: Melody <retrol11412@aol.com>

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

The hypercontagious Delta variant is sending teachers and children right back home. With 1 positive, how many get sent home to quarantine? How many outside the classroom are they around that "might not" be told to stay home too.

They now have to isolate or quarantine for a week or more after testing positive themselves or coming into close contact with someone who has. "I now worry that without aggressive mitigations, large outbreaks will sweep through school systems, communities and families.. We can't afford that.

The more COVID they're exposed to, the more of them will get sick or die, or suffer long-term complications. In turn, the unfettered spread of Delta — which can be transmitted by "vaccinated people" and in most parts of the U.S., no longer has to contend with the kind of precautionary measures that slowed down earlier, far less contagious variants — has exposed more kids to the virus than ever before.

The level of positive COVID cases we are seeing in our schools" (1week, after nearly 100 students tested positive for COVID-19 and 1,200 were sent home to quarantine. 2nd week tripled. Constantly having to leave school to quarantine for one or two weeks is bad for kids who are trying to learn. Families with 1 person working having to quarantine because of exposure, no income then. This is not helping anyone get back to any kind of normal. The news mentioning that because of this, we could see 3000 plus daily in October...the type of distance learning for Aiea High School seems not adequate for families to make a choice to keep them or community safe.

Melody Abellanida

[Sent from the all new AOL app for Android](#)



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

For BOE meeting 8/19/21 @ 9:30am

1 message

jlharman@aol.com <jlharman@aol.com>

Thu, Aug 19, 2021 at 5:55 AM

Reply-To: jlharman@aol.com

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

I am a grandparent to a 7 year old who attends Pukalani Elementary and is currently in quarantine due to a COVID-positive student.

I am advocating for rapid testing in all schools. The student with COVID was sent home on Wednesday due to illness and my daughter was notified on Monday to pick my grandson when positive notification was received. From Wednesday through Monday, my grandson visited his cousins for a sleepover and attended tae kwon do classes, possibly exposing others close to him. His activities would have been curtailed if the student who was ill was tested and confirmed positive the same day. My grandson in turn, was told to be tested and now his parents need to juggle their work schedules to take him for testing requiring them to wait in long lines for hours. All this could have been avoided with rapid testing and same-day notification.

Please find the funding to provide rapid testing in all schools with procedures for same-day notification to all parents.

Sincerely,
Kathy Harman
Kihei, Hawaii

Aloha,

I am currently a teacher and I am writing this testimony for the general business meeting, discussion item VI-A: Presentation on opening schools for the 2021-2022 school year.

I am in support of hybrid learning at our schools as it is an opportunity for less spread of COVID. Although there has been mitigation strategies, the amount of students I have seen not properly wearing their masks and not social distancing is an issue. It is difficult to social distance when 6 feet only allows for 15 desks in my classroom. It doesn't make sense to have 6 feet be the normal everywhere outside of school, so why is it that only school it's "social distance to the greatest possible extent". It's also quite hard to track if these students are following the rules put in place by COVID. I have to frequently remind my own students to not touch each other, even if they are just shaking hands or high fiving, if they do that then they are to put on hand sanitizer. However, it gets quite tiring when you have to remind almost every student you see doing that because EVERY STUDENT is ignoring those rules.

In addition, each student is in four classes for a whole hour and 15 minutes, some days even longer. Everyone in their classes is a likely case, symptomatic or asymptomatic, if a student has COVID. This endangers EVERYONE in the class. Students do not have space to themselves any more as it is fully packed.

We must also remember that these students have families; many of them are part of families that live with 3 generations in the household. It affects their whole family if they had come in close contact with a student who had COVID. If they were to get COVID, the chances of their family members getting COVID is quite large. If those family members also get COVID, they must inform the people they had been in close contact with as well. The amount of people that would be involved is not small, but rather large. An island community where everyone knows each other is bound to quickly spread this disease, especially with this Delta variant.

In conclusion, pretending that we can "go back to normalcy" while the pandemic is still fully going (and still hospitalizing people) is outrageous and dangerous. Asymptomatic does not mean they are not carrying the disease and being vaccinated does not mean they are not able to get COVID. We must remember this and take it into consideration when we talk about our mitigation strategies. Safety for all parties involved should be the forefront of what we do.

Schools are not safe—Teachers are unable to enforce social distancing and mask mandates. It is impossible to get students to social distance, especially around their friends and rotating to 7-8 different classes each day. They are constantly hugging each other, licking their fingers and sticking them in snacks which are then shared around their groups of friends. If a student tests positive, we cannot even contact trace correctly to see who they interacted with closely. They go to seven different periods, interact with 20-30 students in each class, then at recess and lunch mingle with whoever they want. The entire school could be considered in close contact with a student who tested positive because they are able to go wherever they please. Teachers are not able to control and enforce social distancing in crowded hallways and students are jam packed together, often times with their masks down. It has been impossible to get students to keep their masks on and wear them properly. The majority of class time is spent reminding students to abide by covid safety measures and to put their masks back on. This takes away a tremendous amount of academic time and because of this, students are not able to complete academic tasks. Some employees at the school continue to refuse to wear masks during staff meetings and on campus. Staff meetings are held in the library with no ventilation or space for social distancing. Teachers cannot even begin to teach content because the majority of our instructional time is wasted pleading with students to wear their masks and to follow covid guidelines. I spend at least 50 minutes out of the 60 minute class period trying to address students not abiding by safety precautions. There is hardly any time to teach academics because so much of that time is used trying to get students to comply with covid 19 guidelines. Masks are pulled down constantly, drinks and snacks are shared between students and they refuse to social distance despite teachers begging for them to follow the rules to keep other students safe. This behavior is rampant in the schools right now in Hawaii and I cannot in good faith say I can protect my students because I know I am unable to do so when the majority of them refuse to follow the covid 19 safety protocols. We are begging for a better system. I have several students out “quarantining” and waiting to test or get their results. I’ve already been exposed to them and so have the other 7 teachers that teach those students. The other students have also been exposed during recess or lunch. This is not working. Delta variant can expose someone within seconds. We need to change the regulations to better fit the aggression of this variant. Please have us go back to distance learning with the ability to stay home! Having us come onto campus and share one bathroom with 50 teachers is not safe either. Until our numbers go down, until all keiki are able to get vaccinated, please let the students and staff distance learn. There is going to be learning loss NATIONWIDE but it is more important to have our students alive then for them to be slightly behind, just like the rest of the world will be, academically. I want to be able to teach my students. Unfortunately, I am unable to do that given the current situation. I urge you to consider having students distance learn so that teachers can actually teach academic content instead of beg for students to follow covid 19 rules a year and a half into a pandemic. We have amazing admin and we are all trying our best but the state is asking the schools to do the impossible in a nationwide pandemic.

December 15, 2020

From: Johnette Maielua, Ph.D. / Kamiloiki Elem. School PCNC

To: Hawaii State Board of Education Members

Re: Your support for the Parent/Community Networking Centers (PCNC) program

Dear BOE Board Member:

My name is Johnette Maielua, the PCNC for Kamiloiki Elementary School. This school year marks my 30th year as a PCNC, having also been at Waikiki Elementary when the program (in its second year) started there in 1987, and with the majority of that time spent at Hahaione Elementary (24 years). Now, you might be wondering why. Why spend all that time doing one thing, helping parents and families?

For me, the answer is simple: I love the fun, the messiness, the happiness, sorrow, problems, and pride that makes up family life. I love the many opportunities to partner with teachers, principals, counselors, and other school employees to increase/improve communication, participation, *engagement* along the “tender geography” (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2004) between home and school. I love helping parents to empower themselves - our students’ first teachers - as they help their children by making contact with and providing community-based resources, answering questions of all kinds, and giving them a safe place (person) to go to when they are in need of extra help. I love, and am so grateful for, the fact that we finally have representation at the state level through Lani Solomona who is continuing the work started back in 1986 by Ken Yamamoto and Vivian Ing.

Ken’s and Vivian’s work supplied the basic premise of the PCNC program, which is simple, too: Relationships first! Did you note the number of relationships, the *pilina* in the paragraph above? Simple, right? Unfortunately, no.

What is not so simple is the expectation that school administrators, staff and teachers are always going to have the time, the commitment, or *the perspective* to see the whole family picture. That picture may include, but is not limited to,

- a multi-generational
- blended
- foster
- adoptive
- divorced, with or without new spouse
- same-gender partners
- raised by grandparents

type of family with one child or more. That picture now includes families trying to cope with distance learning, managing various schedules, and socio-economic constraints. The stress level for parents and families, for us all, has exponentially increased, but the learning and relationship-building still must continue.

The perspective of the whole family picture is unique to each community within our state. My school in East Honolulu is different from Kalihi, from Waimea, from Honoka’a, from Paia, from Wai’anae, and more. For myself and my PCNC colleagues, our common goal is that of supporting parent/family relationships and engagement in education, while helping school personnel to do the same, and is uniquely fundamental to every school setting.

In my years as a PCNC, I have had many opportunities to gain insight into a system run by those who are taxed with the responsibility of delivering “education” to thousands of students. Through various means*, I’ve come to believe that every family and every school has great strengths that may be underrecognized, underutilized, and/or undervalued. And in recognizing those strengths of families and school personnel, I have had amazing opportunities to help educate, nurture, and support everyone. Here are three examples that illustrate these experiences:

- In one of the “Homework Study Helps” parent workshops, a question came up about how to deal with multiple children studying at the same time and how to separate them. I had had that experience with my own kids and resolved it by using cardboard boxes to make a trifold to block out distractions. Much later after sharing that idea with the parent, she told me that she passed on the tip to the classroom teacher who utilized the idea in her classroom for this student and others, too.
- Working with a principal to encourage new and veteran teachers to engage “lead room parents” (one who would then encourage parent participation within a single classroom), I developed and facilitated a “Parent Partnership” course as an option for teachers to come learn ways in which they could utilize the designated lead room parent. Over several years, this became so successful that I didn’t need to continue the course since the teachers helped each other; all that was needed afterwards was to monitor, and then follow up, as needed.
- This past spring, I had to finish teaching the Loving Solutions parent education class virtually, which was hard for the parents because they had bonded with each other so well. One of the best parts of the class was having two former parents from the previous year (who are also Kaiser High School counselors) come and share how their learning has impacted the way they raise their own children, as well as relate to their students.

Again, these examples are but a small portion of the impact that a PCNC can have on a school community. As a Board of Education member, your choice is simple, too: Support the Parent-Community Networking Center program. . . or not. What might be the result if you don’t?

Well, that depends. If a counselor, administrator, SAC, teacher or other faculty member takes on the job of parent/family engagement, what might that person’s level of commitment and time constraints look like? If a school only depends on its parent organization (PTSA, PTO, etc.) to engage parents and families, how might that change over time when children leave the school? Would goals stated in academic plans be met/implemented? Finally, would it even be possible to meet the overarching goals as outlined in Nā Hopena A’o?

These questions may or may not have answers; the scenarios may or may not occur. Schools that have, support, and utilize their PCNCs *correctly* are more likely to have positive and frequent opportunities to improve home-school communication, collaborate/sustain home-school relationships with improved outcomes for students. That said, these objectives and the questions above “highlight the need for a larger discussion [dialogue] on different levels” (Maielua, 2011). And, in the final analysis, PCNCs can serve as the “relationship builders and the bridge” (personal communication, J. Smith, November 9, 2020) between home and school *if they are given the opportunity to do so*.

Mālama pono,

Johnette.Maielua, Ph.D.
Kamilo’iki Elementary
johnette.maielua@k12.hi.us

(see next page for * from above paragraph)

*"various means" refers to the different experiences I have had when working with parents, families, school administrators, faculty and staff. These experiences include or have included the following items in recent years:

Student success - Curriculum fairs; art education; tutoring; International Baccalaureate (IB) supports/resources/training; small group learning supports; parent/child curriculum nights (see specifics below in parent/family section).

Parents/families - PTO/PTSA volunteer training and support; Loving Solutions (Parent Project Jr) parent education series; SEL ("SEA Level") parent education series; campus visits; new student/family orientation; resource information; curricular activities (Literacy Sleepovers, Math Nights, STEM, etc.); partnership activities (Hardware Science, Bishop Museum, Reading 4 America, SOEST at UH Mānoa, Hawaiian Humane Society, etc.); organizing book fairs with parent volunteers, and more.

School Admin, Faculty, Staff - Curriculum and safety committees; fundraising events (Keiki Carnival, Cougar Cub Challenge, etc.); parent ed referrals from teachers/SSC; parent/family engagement training for new teachers; room parent training; IB Exhibition community resources (Hawaiian Humane Society, Hanauma Bay/Oceanic Institute, AHA, Mele Murals, Pow WOW, SOEST, Institute for Human Services, Hawaii FoodBank, etc.); helping with "Packet Pickup" days; office staff help, as needed.

PD - Adaptive Schools Seminars with Carolyn McKanders; No Bully Solution Coach training with Kathy Grey; Center for Resilience Institute, two-part workshop; 'Ohana Engagement Conference; International Baccalaureate, Session 1 training; monthly/quarterly PCNC district meetings.

Citations

Lawrence-Lightfoot, S. (2004). Building bridges from school to home. *Instructor* 114(1), 24-48.

Maielua, J. K. (2011). Kuleana and parent involvement in the middle schools.

(<http://hdl.handle.net/10125/101743>) [Ph.D. dissertation, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa]. Scholarspace at University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.

Name: Joanne Imada
School: Niu Valley Middle School
Subject: PCNC Testimonial
Date: December 14, 2020

My name is Joanne Imada and I am the PCNC at Niu Valley Middle School. I am going on 12 years at this school in the capacity of a Parent Community Coordinator. Prior to my joining the Niu Valley ohana, I've been a part of the PCNC program at various levels:

- I started in the Honolulu District Office supporting the 55 PCNCs in the district with basic training and resource development for four years. Our objective was to help each PCNC understand their respective roles at their schools, based on their Principal's priorities. The main focus being to help their families feel welcome and supported at their schools.
- Then I worked with the McKinley Complex resource team, providing parent support to the Micronesian families, for a year. I hired and trained multilingual part-time teachers who were tasked with reaching out to the Micronesian families whose children were having attendance and homework challenges. The PTT's would coordinate the parent workshops, and as I presented the material, the PTT's would translate. It was impressive to see many families taking advantage of these learning opportunities, participating and asking relevant questions.
- And finally, I worked in the State Family Support Office for two years before the office was slowly downsized to just an Education Specialist. We organized workshops for PCNC District Meetings in various districts. We also coordinated the VISTA volunteers program, helping the volunteers with their respective elementary school reading programs.

This combined 18 years of experience, supporting our families and building community partnerships, has helped me to understand the needs of families and their desire to support their children at home so that they can perform better in school. Parents rarely know who to call when they are having challenges with their children's school progress or behavior. Having a PCNC to reach out to eliminates the confusion and reassures parents that the school is there to guide them through their child's educational experience.

- The past 11 years I worked closely with our parent group, helping them fundraise so that students and teachers would have access to activities and events that the school could not justify funding. This culminated in a school-wide celebration of food trucks, student performances, and family connections which we called "Fam Jam". This took place annually for several years. It came to a halt when school construction began for a new World Language Center.
- I have held parenting classes that addressed difficulties parents may be having with their strong-willed children. These series of 10 sessions were held once a semester.

I still run into parents from years ago who express their gratitude that they were able to take this class and learn how to help their child make better choices in a safe and loving household. Fortunately, all four Principals that I have worked with were supportive of offering this class to our families.

- I also developed partnerships with rotarians and faith groups who have helped beautify our campus and who provided learning opportunities for our families. Partnerships and active communication within our Complex has also been advantageous for our families because all the PCNCs in our area were aware of what the other schools were doing.
- Through the years I have had the privilege of working with Principals who believed in families and their influence over their children to help them excel in school. Parent communication has been a major priority. We conducted several parent night events including Transitioning to Middle School, Cyber and Internet Safety, Consider Niu Valley Night, Book Fair, etc. We also provided Coffee Hours with the Principal where parents could share any questions or concerns they may be having regarding their child's school experience.
- Along the lines of active communication, our school's Innovation and Technology Coordinator helped to find a platform for our family email blasts. This Mailchimp platform has helped our school efficiently send out weekly notices, announcements, and reminders. And now, during the Pandemic, I spend a great part of the day responding to the questions and concerns of anxious parents.

These past few years, having a state office representative support the PCNC program, has been incredibly helpful. Mrs. Solomona listens to our concerns, provides resources and training sessions, and manages to keep us connected by organizing and coordinating quarterly meetings. Her presence has solidified our individual school PCNC programs as it allows for collaboration and much-needed support.



UNIVERSITY
of HAWAII®
MĀNOA

Lani Solomona
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4680 Kalanianaʻole Hwy, TB1A
Honolulu, HI 96821

December 22, 2020

Dear Lani Solomona,

As the Project Director of Hawai'i Statewide Family Engagement Center (SFEC), I am writing to express strong support of the tireless efforts of the Parent-Community Networking Centers (PCNC) to support students and their families statewide. Our Center is an ongoing statewide structure funded by the U. S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary & Secondary Education. Its mission is to promote and implement high impact activities and policies that build powerful partnerships among family, school, and community in order to enhance child development and student achievement. Since the establishment of our Center (October 2018), we have worked closely with the PCNCs across the state, and the role of the PCNC is critical to building effective and meaningful home-school partnerships.

At the Hawaii SFEC, we promote family engagement as a learning and equity strategy to improve students' learning outcomes. We understand that family engagement is an especially crucial step in the process of reducing academic achievement gaps, disproportionate rates of chronic absenteeism, office discipline referrals, suspensions, and special education placements for culturally and linguistically diverse students and their families. PCNCs are precisely the kind of family engagement infrastructure we need to effectively embed culturally-responsive family engagement strategies within the existing school improvement models (e.g., HMTSS, school design) implemented throughout the state. Supporting and sustaining PCNCs will be critical to expanding our collective capacity to equitably scale-up effective family engagement strategies through our public school system.

Hawaii SFEC supports schools, educators, and families through training, technical assistance, and resource development. We are currently working with 16 schools on the islands of Kauai and Hawaii to support their family outreach and engagement efforts. Schools assemble a family engagement action team that is charged with implementing family engagement as a strategy to improve student learning and school improvement. Utilizing a comprehensive understanding of their families, the PCNCs are leaders within their school teams. Their experience facilitating the participation of parents, families, and community members provided their teams with invaluable knowledge. We know how important it is



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for schools to work in partnership with families, especially during the pandemic. PCNCs are an essential role that schools and, most importantly families, cannot afford to lose. PCNCs establish and maintain positive relationships with children's families and community partners. This work is now more important than ever.

The Hawaii Statewide Family Engagement Center supports the Parent-Community Networking Centers. We stand ready and committed with PCNCs to see that family engagement is a full, equal, and equitable partnership among families, educators and community partners to promote children's learning and development from birth through college and career.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Chuan Chinn".

Chuan Chinn, Ph.D.

Project Director

Hawaii Statewide Family Engagement Center

Center on Disability Studies

University of Hawaii at Manoa

808.956.5379

chuanc@hawaii.edu

To Whom it May Concern:

I write this letter in my capacity as the Parent Community Network Center (PCNC) for Ke Kula Kaiapuni 'o Ānuenue ("Ānuenue"), the only Hawaiian immersion K-12 public school on O'ahu. By way of background, I have been the PCNC for Ānuenue since the start of this 2019-2020 school year. My daughter is a first grader at Ānuenue. Due to changes in moving to distance-learning, I have since been told to file for unemployment. I write this letter to illustrate the need for PCNC role statewide at all Hawai'i Department of Education (DOE) public and charter schools, and especially for kula kaiapuni or Hawaiian immersion schools.

It is critical to understand the background and history of Hawai'i in addition to kula kaiapuni to demonstrate the need for the PCNC for 'ohana and haumāna who attend kula kaiapuni. Additionally, it is part of the DOE's strategic plan to ensure equity for kula kaiapuni. It is also important to understand the lack of equity that already existed even before the most recent changes as a result of COVID-19. As 'ohana kaiapuni, there are unique challenges that we've faced and continue to face. 'Ohana kaiapuni are families who have decided to enroll their keiki in a kula kaiapuni, and therefore is also part of their keiki's education experience in kula kaiapuni. Unfortunately, the changes that we've seen have not come on their own. Instead, 'ohana kaiapuni have had to advocate for these changes every step of the way, despite laws and policies in favor of kula kaiapuni.

The need for the PCNC is not only prevalent during a typical school year, but this need has been exacerbated as we are experiencing changes occurring as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Not only has there been a transition made to distance learning and the support needed for 'ohana in that alone, but also, there are additional needs as an 'ohana kaiapuni. On a volunteer basis, I sent a survey to our 'ohana to assess their needs. Their needs ranged from what are common among other DOE 'ohana to include support with transitioning to distance learning—meals, acquiring a device to be able to participate in distance learning, childcare—but additional needs were also expressed that I believe are unique to 'ohana kaiapuni. 'Ohana expressed needed assistance to further their 'ōlelo Hawai'i learning for themselves as parents and also for their keiki. Due to the lack of existing educational resources in 'ōlelo Hawai'i, such as age appropriate textbooks or other learning materials, we have relied on private entities to provide these educational resources. The resources created by private entities, typically for profit, are often great resources but they are not necessarily aligned with the school curriculum and there is a lack of resources available for all grade levels.

Looking at the demographics of those that attend Ānuenue, and our designation as a Title I school, this also demonstrates the increased needs and need for the PCNC. By looking at the trending data and demographics of Ānuenue, there are known risk factors for public health concern ranging from domestic violence, educational achievement, to many different health diseases that are influenced by socioeconomic status. As shared by the other PCNCs, a critical role that the PCNC has been playing in these chaotic and stressful times, is to simply check-in with 'ohana to see how they are doing. Simply reaching out to 'ohana to check-in and support one another is a critical role to prevent additional stress or an 'ohana feeling stranded.

Also done on a volunteer basis, due to the high need for ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i resources needed for our ‘ohana kaiapuni, and the lack of this type of support provided elsewhere, the following resource library was created by myself in coordination with our mākuā representatives network:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1XJfeMImgDPgl1FuAVrXRRpbfyxi5LjWgRaE9NVjakVs/edit?usp=sharing>

The resources provided in this library also responds to the responses received from the survey that I sent to ‘ohana to assess their needs and support needed.

Health experts indicate that they do not anticipate COVID-19 ever going away. In preparation for our current situation to be the new “normal,” and also in preparation for being more prepared for additional changes with the anticipated economic collapse, there needs to be consistent and long-standing support for the PCNC at all schools, and especially kula kaiapuni. The PCNC is a critical keystone to maintaining a best effort at upholding some sort of normalcy and much needed support. With all of that said, I urge you to support sustaining PCNCs at all Hawai‘i DOE schools, and especially at kula kaiapuni.

Mahalo,

Sharde Freitas, J.D., M.P.H.
anuenue_pcnc@anuenue.org

Testimonial for PCNC (Parent Community Networking Center) Program for the State of Hawaii Hawaii DOE Public School Facilitator 2020-2021

To Whom it May Concern:

As you have read in the JOB DESCRIPTION:

PCNC Facilitators are designed to help schools and families build student/group esteem and achievement by creating a sense of community and partnerships among students, parents, teachers, and the community.

Major duties and responsibilities are clearly stated on the job description, although different in every school on what those responsibilities are depending on their administration. We have our experiences and involvement in the schools, and personnel time given not only by the facilitator themselves, but also of their families, staff and communities.

It is a team effort, for no school can truly be a success unless all components work together.

It is repetitive in all statements that you will hear or read from all PCNC Facilitators, because they are passionate about their schools, community and districts. The commitment to serve is there, and not because their child is in school, but because they are truly committed to all children of our state. But all stories are personal and varies by their feelings, emotions, depth of work and sacrifices they have made.

I have been a PCNC for 25 years. On my evaluations the statement you read on the top of some of them:

“Continue to be there when emergency situations arise”.

I have been through many administrators, and have many days where I cried in silence due to the immense alterations and changes that one must go through in order to work with a new faculty and staff.

Which brings up the statement “You cannot please everyone all of the time, but you can please some of the people, some of the time.” We have been judged, asked to do things over, called names for which we are not because of the ignorance of some who were not in the school when they had nothing in place and several programs transpired:

- Graffiti on the buildings, instead of nicely painted buildings.
- No steps to walk safely down to the school grounds
- Bulletin boards on buildings covered with helpful and inspirational messages.
- Staff being appreciated for their work
- Junior Police Program that was voted the best in the County
- The school that raised the most for Jump for Heart and Food Bank
- Winning Art Contest in different programs for county and state
- Special Programs that lasted for years
- Performing Arts
- Basketball
- Robotics
- Awards Luncheons with Parents and Students
- Bazaars

- Art4Kids-Martin Luther King
- Panda's Chinese New Year
- Presentations for self esteem and motivations from several Nationwide and state speakers
- Book Trust Manager that acquired 100% participation by teachers
- Awards for students who made achievements by the community
- Needs for students and wishes for teachers where the PCNC has been coordinator
- Rotary
- Lions Club
- Wishing Well
- Keiki Cupboard
- Speaker and presenter for Book Trust
- And I personally have bought shoes, uniforms, school supplies, lunches, clothes, and special baskets for our needy and left only enough to buy groceries and minimum payments to my bills.

Now with a new administration, I serve lunch also following guidelines to keep the children safe. And I have underlying conditions. Do I have a choice?, no. For all I have done, and I want to continue to do for the state of Hawaii, children and families. I need to do whatever it takes on top of my other responsibilities and accept change. It will benefit no one not to

Before the shut down and because of all my experiences and years, I answered those questions about my concern to the department of health, doe, and state legislators etc. for the people of Hawaii and I believe it made the difference for what has transpired this year on how we moved forward to assist the people of Hawaii.

Past Recognitions even though many:

State Representative for Hawaii PTSA

Maui Representative

PTSA President

Special Programs

DARE Educator of the Year Hawaii (Twice)

American Heart Association Board - Maui

American Heart Association - Coordinator of the Year (Several different Years)

Raised over 2000 pounds of Food (Several years) Coordinator

Read Across America (Coordinator)

Do not mean a thing, unless it made a difference in the lives of people and children in the state of Hawaii. In helping students become a contributing member of their community and reaching, fulfilling the goals of the standards put forth by our state and nation.

That ladies and gentlemen is why schools should have a PCNC-Facilitator who is officially employed under the state Department of Education with their guidance and with open communications, training and transparency.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosa Stone, PCNC Facilitator Lihikai Elementary School



HAWAII GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION
AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO

RANDY PERREIRA, Executive Director • Tel: 808,543,0011 • Fax: 808,528,0922

State of Hawaii
Board of Education

Testimony by
Hawaii Government Employees Association

August 19, 2021

Relating to Reopening of Schools for SY 2021-22

The Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO (HGEA) supports the Department of Education's goal to reopen schools as safely as possible for the 2021-22 school year. The HGEA represents over 7,700 employees in the DOE and the Public Charter Schools in bargaining units 2, 3, 4, 6, 9, and 13.

As the Board of Education considers the issues related to the safe reopening of schools, we want to remind the Board that all DOE employees are equally important and should be treated fairly and equitably. Therefore, if the DOE engages in any impact bargaining with one union, they need to engage with all unions to identify and negotiate any changes, exemptions, or modifications to the respective collective bargaining agreements of all DOE employees as deemed necessary to meet with policies, directives and objectives related to the reopening of schools.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Perreira
Executive Director

To: The Honorable Catherine Payne, BOE Chair & Members

From: Beatrice DeRego-Coffield, Kahuku High & Intermediate

Date: August 18, 2021

Subject: General Meeting Item V-C: Board Action on Finance and Infrastructure Committee recommendation concerning priority allocation of federal funds in ESSER II and ESSER ARP

To Chair Payne, Interim Sup. Hayashi and Members of the Board:

I am Bea DeRego-Coffield, Test Coordinator at Kahuku High and Intermediate, and I would like to address the Department's 3-1-1 Plan. For me, it is more of a 9-1-1 plan since everything we are doing is more of an emergency than a calm alert regarding information or services. I am focusing on the first #1 of the plan: Staff Well Being and the metrics that will be used to collect this data. I suggest that the teachers have loudly and clearly articulated the fact that teacher well-being is currently ignored in the rush to bring every student back to in person learning in a flawed belief that there is an allowable amount of collateral damage from illness, long-term impairment, or the possible death of students and/or teachers. There are 2 ways to immediately improve teacher well-being:

1. **Ensure the safety of everyone in the school community.** The employer MUST return to the bargaining table to finalize an MOU that clearly stipulates how this pandemic will be handled, including metrics for pivoting learning for the safety of school communities. Their refusal to communicate is a slap in the face of teachers who have spent 18 grueling months connecting and teaching students at the expense of their own and their families' health.
2. **The pay cut imposed on teachers in direct defiance of federal stipulations to keep salaries whole must be removed.** The 21 hours of professional development provided in past contracts was more than a simple dollar figure in a salary chart. The removal represents 2 years of pay cuts and a removal of the professional development credits teachers received for completing the myriad of mandates enforced by the DOE. These allowed teachers to reclassify to a higher pay scale, the only method a teacher controls to try to survive in Hawaii. Thus, the cut impacts teachers' future pay, a reality many are considering as they decide whether to move to a teacher-friendly state or retire. The DOE has also refused to address the compression issue in our pay scale, sending an additional message that teachers are expendable.

Equally important is the additional time the 21 hours gave to schools in order to address the infinite number of tasks necessary to continue learning, especially in the pandemic. While the idea of "working to the rules" or contracted hours may be extreme, teachers are not going to volunteer to spend additional time after scheduled school hours in meetings to determine how to meet the needs of their students under the 3-1-1 plan. We are martyred out! Administrations' only recourse will be to offer stipends or to provide recall pay for mandatory meetings, or to go it alone in direct opposition to all the requirements for stakeholder involvement.

I implore you to send a strong message to teachers that the DOE recognizes the fact that a teacher's relationship with students is the single most important factor in student performance by reinstating our 21 hours immediately.

Mahalo for your consideration and concern,
Bea DeRego



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

covid testing/disclosure/vaccine info for teachers

1 message

mariadonell_thomas@lahaina.k12.hi.us <mariadonell_thomas@lahaina.k12.hi.us>
To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Thu, Aug 19, 2021 at 11:15 AM

I oppose this illegal and unconstitutional mandate.

Mandatory reporting, testing, bullying and threatening livelihood re: covid status/covid vaccine is a violation to the 9th and 14th amendments to the Constitution of the USA.

Remove the mandate.

Prepare better for schools. The DOE and BOE failed the students of Hawaii and are now trying a failed remedy.

Teachers are quitting. Teachers are over stressed.

Bring back distance learning options for kids and telework options for teachers.

Mahalo,

Maria Thomas

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

State of Hawai'i
Board of Education
General Business Meeting
August 19, 2021

Testimony of Christine Belcaid, Esq.

Agenda Item: VI.A. Presentation on opening schools for the 2021-2022 school year

I am a mother of three unvaccinated children under the age of 12 in two different Hawai'i public elementary schools, and I am a fully vaccinated attorney practicing law in this state.

I am in full support of keeping the public schools open during the pandemic for in-person learning. I believe that the principals, teachers, and other staff are doing their best at moving education forward at the same time as keeping our keiki safe at school. However, I believe there are two relatively simple adjustments that should be made to further ensure the safety of our keiki.

The first is mandating that all public school students eat breakfast and lunch outdoors. *My three children are all eating lunch indoors, unmasked at school.* One of my children (who is in kindergarten) is doing so in the cafeteria of his elementary school with the entire kindergarten (4 classes), the entire 1st grade, and the entire 2nd grade. We live in Hawai'i where the weather is good year round. These unvaccinated children should not be forced to eat their meals indoors when they could be eating outdoors, just as they already do their snacks. The schools are doing their best to space the children out in the indoor cafeterias, have them face forward, and open the windows and doors while they eat their meals. That is better than having them eat crowded together with the windows and doors shut – but that is not enough to prevent the spread of the highly contagious Delta variant which is infecting children at a much higher rate than COVID-19 was last year.

It may take a bit of logistical work by the schools to set up an outdoor eating space, but how can we stand by ethically as a community while the CDC has advised ALL people (even those vaccinated) to wear a mask in public indoor settings in areas of substantial or high transmission, which now includes the City and County of Honolulu? I am fully vaccinated and there is no way I would feel comfortable eating inside a room with other people outside my immediate family right now. Yet, here we are having our unvaccinated children doing just that.

It would be nice to provide the schools with outdoor canopy tents, tables, and chairs for an outdoor eating set-up – and it is my belief that the PTAs could raise the funds to provide these. However, this is not necessary. Each child could bring their own towel to sit on in the grass and eat there 6 feet apart. Flags attached to a metal stake could be inserted in the grass every six feet to mark each child's space. This is a relatively easy fix which will help reduce the spread of the highly contagious Delta Variant. **What is the point of going to such great lengths to keep the students masked and distanced throughout the day when we are then putting them in danger at meal time by enclosing them indoors without masks?**

The second adjustment relates to the information parents and guardians receive when there is a positive COVID-19 case in the schools. Right now, the only information we receive is (1) there was a positive case; (2) whether it was a student or employee; and (3) what day the person was last on campus. If our child is not deemed a close contact (the definition of which seems to vary by school), then we basically have NO information to make an informed decision about whether to send our child to school in the coming days. As an attorney, I understand there are privacy concerns for the infected individual. However, in the United States, school officials are responsible for providing a safe learning environment. The Hawai'i State Department of Education website recognizes this, stating, "Students need to feel and be safe at school. Research demonstrates a strong correlations between academic achievement and a safe school environment." Parents and guardians have a right to send their children to safe public schools and to be informed if they are not safe. At the very least, even if our child is not deemed a close contact, we should be made aware of whether the positive case was in our child's grade so that we can

evaluate whether we think it is safe to send our child to school in the coming days until we find out whether the virus has spread at the school.

Please help us protect our vulnerable keiki with these relatively simple adjustments that will have a very large, positive impact on our schools and our community as a whole.

Thank you,
Christine Belcaid



Testimony @ 8/19 GBM

1 message

HM <hnmoselle@gmail.com>

Thu, Aug 19, 2021 at 12:15 PM

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

Heather Moselle; public school parent; GBM; Agenda Item VI. A. Presentation on opening schools for the 2021-2022 school year; Support and Comment.

I humbly ask the Board to consider this scenario: **If two parents who work in the tourism industry have to go to work on Monday to feed their family and pay their rent, but they have children whose schools have shut down due to the pandemic, where do those kids go?** Do they stay home alone or with siblings? Do the parents have to scramble to find a childcare provider? Can they afford one? Will those kids have to help each other with distance learning? Do they have access to internet? Devices? Breakfast? The "haves" will. They will have parents who can take all the steps to help them transition to full distance learning as smoothly as possible if the schools shut down. They will hire nannies, tutors or stay home, or quit their jobs. I know this because I am a "have".

But I am writing this testimony because there are "have nots" and they will suffer if our DOE, HSTA and government officials are unable to find a way to facilitate safe, in-person learning for these students through a negotiated agreement. Teachers have clearly said that they need adequate ventilation in classrooms. Please give it to them. Buy the required equipment, build outdoor classrooms, start putting up tents. I have a hard time understanding why this did not already happen; this feels like 2020 2.0. How we are reliving this nightmare, I cannot understand. **How is it we welcome tourists in droves, waterparks and restaurants are packed-full with hundreds of maskless strangers, but parents and teachers still have unanswered safety concerns about adequate ventilation, PPE, efficient contact tracing, and clear health/safety protocols for our schools?**

Next to hospitals, **schools are arguably the most vital institution in our society**. Please prioritize our teachers and students' safety and well-being. **Create together an MOU which facilitates safe in-person learning, and for those at high-risk/unable to be vaccinated, pair distance learning teachers with distance learning students**. Some parents want a Hawaii teacher-led distance learning option amid the pandemic. Yet in-person teachers cannot be expected to teach in multiple formats at the same time. Please pair distance students with distance teachers. Use funds to create teacher slots specifically for this purpose to keep families and teachers safe. Thank you for considering my testimony.

Respectfully,

Heather Moselle



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

superintendent

1 message

John Shim <johnshim13@gmail.com>

Thu, Aug 19, 2021 at 7:29 PM

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

Aloha,

As a parent of 2 children in Elementary schools who aren't eligible for COVID vaccine, I do not want Keith Hayashi to continue as the future full superintendent of HDOE due to poor public communication and a lack of proactive policies to deal with the delta variant spreading throughout our state with no plan to deal with hybrid/distance learning in the event of out of control COVID community spread. Mahalo.



concerns from teacher- READ please

1 message

Alisa Hamasaki <alisa.hamasaki@k12.hi.us>

Sat, Aug 21, 2021 at 4:47 PM

To: "cchang@hsta.org" <cchang@hsta.org>, "enagamine@hsta.org" <enagamine@hsta.org>, "tlau@hsta.org" <tlau@hsta.org>, "jleibowitz@hsta.org" <jleibowitz@hsta.org>, "doeinfo@k12.hi.us" <doeinfo@k12.hi.us>, "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>, kathleen.dimino@k12.hi.us, info@ehawaii.gov, Mayors.office@co.maui.hi.us

Hello,

I wrote an email sharing my concerns (see below) and did not receive any reply. I am going to continue to reach out to voice my concerns.

As mentioned below, I will like to stay compliant to the recent mandate and will take a test each week, but I would like the choice of taking a saliva test and having this more available to our Hawaii residents. I also feel strongly that those trying to stay compliant should have the weekly tests covered by the DOE- money and time. Teachers already work outside of their working paid hours to provide, plan, create the classroom materials and use their own money to purchase classroom supplies, class activities, and improve the classroom environment, that paying for and going outside of working hours to attain these mandated Covid tests should not be added to this lengthy list. I have been in education for 14 years and never was told to spend my own money and time to be a teacher and to work! I did those things because I WANTED to out of the kindness of my heart and the love I have for my students, school, and learning.

Look at the vaccine studies, look at the recall, listen to all voices, think about the repercussions that this could have, research & learn about what is happening in other countries- is that what we want for our islands? Is that what we want for our economy?

All teachers need your support! Where is the Aloha spirit that our state stands by? All the websites- HSTA, BOE, State sites are not updated, it does not have the procedures in place for the state and city and county did not think all this through. Strongly think about this mandate and what you are asking us to do on our own time and our own dime. I feel like education will lose many teachers and then this will lead to the fall in our education system, as well as the negative impact on our own keiki.

Think of Hawaii.

A teacher's thoughts,
Alisa Hamasaki

On Wednesday, August 18, 2021, Alisa Hamasaki <alisa.hamasaki@k12.hi.us> wrote:

Hi,

I called HSTA today to voice my concerns and wanted to reach out to you all.

I am grateful to have HSTA support teachers and would appreciate you voicing these concerns and finding ways to problem solve and create safe options for all parties involved.

I do want to stay compliant but request that the saliva test is offered at testing sites. Would these weekly mandated covid tests be covered by DOE or our insurance, even if not ordered by the doctor? Will there be more sites available and open to teachers throughout the day to complete the covid test weekly?

I will be more inclined to take a test weekly if it is a saliva test instead of the nasal swab. The saliva test is already set up at kamehameha school and has been proven that it is as effective without being intrusive to the body.

I'm glad there is an extension but please take this additional week to make and set procedures in place to make this testing mandate as easy as possible to allow teachers and all educators compliant each week.

HSTA is there to be the teachers support system & voice to help us figure out our next steps and to provide guidance. Please continue to share out our feelings and situations with the government, principals, and all entities, in hopes that it will continue to make changes. We should all have our own choice and be provided with safe options.

Thank you,

--

Alisa Hamasaki
Pōmaika`i Elementary School
Second Grade Teacher
[Peanuts Class Site](#)

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Alisa Hamasaki
Pōmaika`i Elementary School
Second Grade Teacher
[Peanuts Class Site](#)

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An Open Letter from *Hawaii for a Safe Return to Schools*

August 18, 2021

An open letter* to:

Hawaii Governor David Y. Ige
Hawaii State Department of Education Interim Superintendent Keith T. Hayashi
State of Hawaii Board of Education Chairperson Catherine Payne
Members of the State of Hawaii Board of Education

From: Members of the Hawaii for Safe Return to Schools group

Subject: The Safe and Healthy Schools Hawaii Deserves

* Adapted in part from 'The Safety Our Students Deserve' open letter from the Hawaii State Teachers Association, August 12, 2021

The first weeks of the 2021–22 school year have been extraordinarily alarming as COVID-19 cases soar to record levels. Our total cases have doubled in Hawaii approximately every 10 to 11 days, and our hospitals are already overwhelmed. Unless bold steps are taken immediately, this trend will continue. Continued inaction by our state government will soon be seen as morally, socially, and politically disastrous. **To put it bluntly, your current Covid policies are untenable.**

The Hawaii Department of Health (DOH) has acknowledged that Covid transmission will happen in schools. We are aware of hundreds of reports of health and safety guidelines, including proper masking and social distancing, not being enforced in our schools since the school year began. Reporting and notification from schools remains inconsistent. Furthermore, a lack of personal protective equipment, improper ventilation, and other outstanding issues have not been addressed, nor are there apparent plans to address them.

The frequent, seemingly across-the-board, failures by schools to adhere to DOH protocols for COVID-19 ultimately hurt the education we all believe is essential for our keiki, but it will also, inevitably, contribute to increased community spread of the disease. A scientific study in the journal *Science* estimated that in-person school opening “is indirectly associated with a 26% increase in SARS-CoV-2 transmission”.¹

Among the immediate steps that need to be taken, we express our strong support for the Hawaii State Teachers Association (HSTA) and the Hawaii State Department of Education (HIDOE) to negotiate a new memorandum of understanding (MOU) that will ensure safer practices in public school classrooms. Because teachers are on the “front lines,” monitoring student health and safety protocols, we believe they must be empowered to fight for the health and safety of our keiki. And because schools are a likely source of disease transmission, by extension, teachers are also critical guardians of the health of our wider community. The previous MOU that expired on June 30, 2021, provided critical protections that helped ensure safer classrooms in the first COVID-19 wave during school years 2019-2020 and 2020-2021. We are dismayed that the State has refused to bargain a renewal and update of this MOU for the 2021-22 school

¹ M. Monod et al., *Science* 371, eabe8372 (2021). DOI : 10.1126/science.abe8372

year. We call upon our state leaders to direct DOE to meet HSTA, without preconditions, to renegotiate the document and address these urgent concerns.

Parents and educators know that our schools are not safe

In a recent survey conducted by HSTA, over 80% of responses by educators expressed “serious concerns” about how unsafe conditions were and continue to be in public schools. Parents have also echoed the same concerns about the lack of safety protocols in the public schools, especially with the removal of previous mitigation strategies like 6 ft. of distancing or the previous thresholds for when the schools should move to an alternative learning mode (namely Hybrid or full Distance Learning). These thresholds, with the same metrics, should be reinstated immediately.

Further, we are aware of numerous pleas from teachers and parents about inadequate PPE supplies in our schools, despite the fact that Major General Kenneth Hara of the Hawaii Emergency Management Authority (HIEMA) has said that nearly \$100 million has been spent on PPE, and that they have ample supplies. It is both inexplicable and unconscionable that those PPE have not yet been allocated and distributed to our schools.

We are also aware of hundreds of parents who are extremely frustrated with the scarce number of Distance Learning slots that are available--only 390 initially allocated for a population of over 175,000 students enrolled in HIDOE. These are often working parents who don't want to put their children's or family's lives at risk by sending them to in-person classes, and yet they don't wish to undermine our public school system by withdrawing their children from enrollment to homeschool them. However, an increasing number of parents are left with no other choice than to submit Form 4140 to their schools and stay at home with their children in order to keep them safe. **How is it that Distance Learning options that existed from March 2020 to May 2021, when the pandemic was less serious and threatening than it is today, are even less available now?** This failure to provide a safe option for families is outrageous and completely unacceptable.

Governor Ige must order HIDOE to immediately offer Distance Learning options to any parent who wishes it for their child. Anything less is unacceptable, and a violation of equitable access to educational opportunities funded by taxpayers.

Guidelines for social distancing, masking, and sanitation are not followed

We are particularly dismayed by DOE's lack of leadership and clear guidelines with regards to safety protocols. Each principal is essentially forced to make his or her own decisions, which may or may not adhere to DOH recommendations. This has created numerous examples of staff, teachers, and students not all being on the same page with those DOH protocols. Safely opening schools requires a unified message about what procedures are required of ALL classrooms and ALL students.

Unsafe cafeterias and classrooms

An example of how the safety of students is endangered is the lack of DOE guidance for how schools must devise and adhere to safe protocols for meal times, which are often held in inadequately ventilated cafeteria spaces when students are by definition maskless and often unable to socially distance themselves from others. This violates every known mitigation protocol to prevent the spread of this disease.

Another common complaint from teachers and parents is the fact that social distancing is often impossible under current mandates. From classroom arrangements where students have no choice but to sit shoulder to shoulder at the same table to crowded cafeterias and impromptu gatherings to socialize with friends, the potential for transmission has risen significantly with all students back on campuses. Returning to hybrid or blended learning models, while imperfect, would at least allow less classroom density (and thus a modest mitigation of transmission risks).

Uneven adherence to mask wearing is another critical problem. There are numerous reports of students who repeatedly refuse to wear them correctly (or at all). There are even a few anecdotal reports of teachers who refuse to wear masks, and when students and their parents protest, the principal simply reassigns them to another class. This is obviously completely unacceptable.

There are also many reports of students coming to school with symptoms consistent with Covid, yet when teachers report it to their school administration they are told that “the student had a doctor’s note for allergies from last year, so it’s fine”. In other cases, nurse aides are given the sole authority to either send a student who is ill home or to make them return to the classroom, simply because their parents requested it. Further, students who are ill have reported that they were asked by their parents to lie in order to pass the morning wellness check. **Just saying that “schools are safe” does not make it so.**

Lack of notification, inconsistent response and reporting

As cases in Hawaii rise, so too are the cases being discovered in our schools. Yet we are seeing inconsistent responses when these cases occur. For example, one school might quarantine an entire class while another school might only quarantine a tight radius of students, even though both sets of students may have had multiple interactions inside and outside the classroom during the school day. One parent said:

“Yesterday our school let one of the siblings of a Quarantine child come to school. I thought this made no sense. They live in the same Household they should both be quarantine.[sic.] I feel like there are not a lot of guidelines in school keeping our kids safe. What is there [sic.] Definition of close contact???”

Numerous parents and educators have also pointed out that known positive cases in their schools (as confirmed by individual principal’s letters or voicemails) are not accurately reflected in the weekly reporting of cases on the HDOE website, as is now required by law.

Poor ventilation

Despite DOE’s empty assurances that classrooms are adequately ventilated, there is ample evidence that this is not even close to being an honest or factual assessment. There are countless reports of classrooms being stifling spaces with poor airflow. Moreover there is little guidance from school administrators, who often leave ventilation at the discretion of teachers, but without any resources to do so. Given that most students are not wearing N-95 grade masks but only cloth or surgical masks that do not provide adequate protection, the **poor ventilation and lack of HEPA-grade filtration in our classrooms is a guaranteed recipe for classroom transmission of Covid.** We understand that major capital improvements would be required to fully comply with improved airflow for all classrooms, but **without at minimum providing MERV-13 (or higher) filtration units for every classroom**, Covid spread via classrooms is absolutely inevitable.

We ignore the flashing warning signs at our peril

When COVID-19 first hit Hawaii's public schools, former Superintendent Christina Kishimoto signed a letter of commitment with HSTA to ensure continuity of education through the crisis by addressing the changed working conditions. This agreement was later extended for the 2020–21 school year. Perhaps thinking that the Covid epidemic would soon wane, Kishimoto declined to allow a renewal of this MOU for 2021-22.

We understand the optimistic thinking that COVID would disappear in the second half of 2021, but that optimistic stance was based on a poor and uninformed understanding of the nature of pandemics. More to the point, it was extremely ill-advised for DOE to decline to renew and update the MOU for the 2021–22 school year. Superintendent Kishimoto made it clear in the Spring of 2021 that she expected all students to return to in-person learning for 2021-22 and insisted that safety concerns would be addressed through the HIDOE's own health and safety guidance. ***This was a dreadfully poor decision.***

The Delta variant is now spreading like wildfire in Hawaii. The Delta variant is two to three times more contagious than the original COVID virus, and doctors and nurses are noting that Delta is creating “younger, sicker, and quicker” patients, because it hits younger people, makes them sicker, and makes them sick more quickly than the original virus. Infections among children have also grown and a recent study published in JAMA Pediatrics shows that younger children are more likely to spread COVID within the household.² Even people who are fully vaccinated are susceptible to breakthrough infections. Children under 12 years old still have no access to vaccinations, and some percentage of them who get Covid will go on to develop “Long Covid.” Director of the National Institute of Health, Dr. Francis Collins, recently cited a study suggesting that perhaps as many as 11-15% of children who are infected may “end up with this long-term consequence, which can be pretty devastating in terms of things like school performance.”³ Children under 12 years old still have no access to vaccinations, and so **in what moral universe is it sensible to subject our under-12 children to such possible risks?**

Furthermore, the HIDOE and the Department of Health have removed the learning mode thresholds and any contingencies that would be triggered by an explosion of cases, helping to mitigate the rocketing spread of this disease.

The current lack of guidance and enforcement of DOH health protocols in our schools is a recipe for a public health disaster of epic proportions. DOH has acknowledged that COVID will spread in schools. Given DOE's poor enforcement of DOH directives, it seems very likely that they are seriously underestimating how widespread the amount of transmission will be. Current DOE policies will have lethal consequences on individuals and their families, as well as immediate and lasting impacts on our health care system, our economy, and social and political institutions. We ignore the flashing signs at our individual and collective peril.

We need leadership, not wishful thinking

It is time for us to come together to make smart and moral decisions that will help keep our communities safe and healthy. But this requires your political leadership and the moral courage to do the right thing. We

² Paul LA, Daneman N, Schwartz KL, et al. Association of Age and Pediatric Household Transmission of SARS-CoV-2 Infection. *JAMA Pediatric*. Published online August 16, 2021. doi:10.1001/jamapediatrics.2021.2770

³ ‘This Is Really Scary’: Kids Struggle With Long Covid, By Pam Belluck, New York Times, August 8, 2021.

implore you to take immediate, proactive steps, as suggested in this letter, including working with HSTA to renegotiate their MOU, and to direct HDOE to require schools to follow health protocols, and for DOE to immediately offer distance learning options to all parents.

We need practical decisions, and without delay. Our current emergency won't be solved by wishful thinking; if we remain on our current path, things will get worse, quickly. We call upon you to act now and display the leadership and courage we know you are capable of showing in order to protect the health and safety of our keiki and our fellow citizens. The loss of even one *keiki*, one teacher, one parent, or one more *kupuna* - when those deaths could have been prevented with better leadership - is one too many.

Sincerely,

Burke Burnett	Renesmee Cheng	Joanne Robinson
Dianne Tam	Maha Weeks	Lisa Johnson
Lynn Otaguro	Katie Robinson	Monica Nakahashi
Brandon Cha	Anita Silva	Brandi Perez
Piper Selden	Diane Favreau-Chung	V Kulesa
Mireille Ellsworth	Dakota Lee (student)	Michael Ng
GB Hajim	Chris Obedoza	Kehauonalani Moncriffe
Laurel Haserot	Joni Kamiya	Cleora Logan
Faith Carter	Aleshanee Lee	Enriques
Melissa Kreutner	Keoni Dunn	Leslie Okoji
Lauren Selden	Brian Selden	Rhea Olsen
Clarice Smart	Carrie Demott	Frederick Nakama
Chelsea Cohen	Anastasiya Burnett	Dayle Liu
Jamie-Sue West	Hayden Lee (student)	Suzanne Braun
Jaimie Yonemoto	Trisha Pimenta	Cabreira
Dr Bruce Oatway	Yvonne Watarai	Elizabeth Baclayon
Salena Lee	Johanna Kaupu	Ilima Long
Valerie Robinett	Shirley Yamauchi	Kanaele
Delaney de la Barra	Traci M. Kanoa	Katie Minkus
Johnny Rivera	Jenny Nakagawa	Julie Anne Lewis
Barbara Kauwalu	Tanya Park	Shannon Tanabe-Clark
Jennifer Baltero	Avian Hill	Duchess Aranaydo
Lela Joseph	Owen Nakagawa (student)	Sloane Kealalio
Bridget Hogan	Christopher castillo	Audrey Wolz
Desiree Gomez	Jennifer M. Stefko	Emi Takeuchi
Robyn Trivette	Janice Eala	Lynn Byrnes
Cassie Favreau-Chung	Maelan Azevedo	Cara Flores
Christopher Howard	Chasity-Lynne DeVera	Katherine Alarcio
Maxine Broad	Deanne Cha	Allison Jackson
Marshall Lum	Yardley Roberts	Jacob Jackson
Sheela Castro	Caitlin Amatore	Ryley Jackson
Cheyenne Chavez	Juliana Romero	Max Jackson
Shanae Hatchell	Wesley Lum	Calvin Jackson
Kayla Lim-Tam	Denise Grayzell	Allan Lowe
Michael Press	Lisa Lessing	Marie Jackson
Valerie Maluchnik	Rudy Lee	Cheryl Goethe
Aaliyah Castro-Abrojina (student)	John Johnson	Justin Delos Reyes
Dennis Castro-Abrojina (student)	Nathan Amatore	Laura Tomasello
Kira Cheng	Nicole Grove	Jessica Horiuchi
Iris Ruan	Melody Murata	Kalelani Ogata

Heidi Soriano
Jeremy Soriano
Dr. Sheri Yasuna
David Barry
Teresita Fuentes
Jasmine Mathew
Chanel kaeo
Candice Aoki
Kelly E. Duell
Sarah K. Hofstadter
Catherine Fernandez
Kristi Dabin-Moniz
Dreena Baisa
Bobbie Seguerre
Kolina Paaluhi
Marvie Fernandez
Ryan Ishizu
Eric Schrager
Kris Shirota-Hong
Kai Duponte
Stacey Schrager
Lucie Schrager
Leah O'Brien
Brandy Domingo-Naehu
Ronald Ryan
Jaynie Moon
Taylor Ryan
Judith Ryan
K Arakaki
Jenny Shimabukuro
Carl David Wright Jr. (Teacher)
Ann Hassler
Tami Sego
Z. Tintim
Terez Amato
Daryl Hiwatashi
Jessica McFall
Shanelle Pagan
Lorraine Yuen
Mayumi Fukuoka
Lisa Rafanan
Dez Akau
Callie Doan
Pono Nui
Maile Murphy
Raschell Kahele
Nichole Aea
Michelle Ito
Rhonda Ferrer
Robyn De Leon
Nomi Carmona
Lisa Thomas

Danielle De Longe
Donna Yamamoto
Jayne Bush
Connor Piper
Taraiah Collins
Leslie Rosehill
Lindsey Borg
Tara Geiman
Carrie Staiget
Tiffany Copperfield
Gisele Prescott
Alyssa Balderas Silva
Jenni Clear
Donna Walker
Wendy Dagdag
Del Dagdag
Trystan Saron
Gail Takushi
Jessica Lee Loy
Tyla Woods
Claudia Lockerby
Janice Avellana
Tina Taniguchi
Jen Magoon
Kandice Kartchner
William Butler
Sharlene Teraoka
Stefanie Serrao - Rezentes
Andrew Carter
Dennis Robinson
Kirstie Campbell
Casey Awai
Laurice Panaligan
Leilani Koshimizu
Chablis Kekua
Mike Brown
Heiki K Wolf
Matthew Souza
Jaime Tateyama
Alyssa Masuda
Daniela White
Crystal Gayle P Asuncion
Jennifer Corpion
Christine Cosio
Ania Wood
Caranthia White
Denise Cady
Mike Landes
Mahana Kaawa
Gail Norris
Anastasia Olsen
Justin Hughey

Jolynn Grimes
Reynolds
Antonio Reynolds
Robin Hammett
Saundra Moriyasu
Gina Kim
Vanessa Humphreys
Emily Vacchelli
Holly San Miguel
Gladys Baisa
Stepen O'Neal
Jacie Miyashiro
Jason Toya
Bonnie Palos
Lorrie Smith
Kevin Morita
Ashley Chang
Jennifer Ueno
Brettlyn Jameson
Melinda Fasel
C Navarro
Kelli Nakama
Paige Javier
Candy Mendoza Soria
Kaliko Amona
C. Kuroiwa
CB
David Baugh
Elicery Baugh
Rebecca Hadley-Schlosser
Erika Sakamoto
Teresa Bennett
Jocelyn Mira
Erin Trask
Mauna Kea Trask
Kim Kaili
Glendaile Llamelo
Grace Tan
Elizabeth Frisbie
Nicole Ames
Amy Zolotow
Jason Zolotow
Austin Ames
Bonnie Ames
Roger Ames
Jason Ames
Ashley Pieklo
Jennifer Bailey
Danielle Delise M.Ed.
Brooke Trotter
J. Chung
Angel Oasay

Phill Russell
Amber Drake
Stacy Miyashiro
Susan A. Pcola-Davis
Charissa Duff
Jane Marie
Dee Dee
Mitsue Okamura Eldredge
Julie Morioka
Danny Morioka
Ashley Soares
Rachel Velez
Karly Kanehiro
Tina Fukumoto
Kristin Kealoha
Jamie Listman
Keala Nordmeier
Mark Prazoff
Eliberta Harbottle
Leilani Blankenship
Shane Blankenship
Rhian Campbell
Maria Llamido
Belinda Dolor
Catherine Sophian
Carrie Keike
Gary Hultquist
Douglas Moises
Vanessa Duterte
Roy Asher
Katherine Barthels
Kanani Elaban
Michele Nakama
Cheryl Orallo
Kimi Ramos-Valdovinos
Triana Baclayon
Charmaine Moises
Angeli Peneyra
Susan Rubenstein
Ronson Sahut
Melissa Alfiler
Gloria Bandsma
Christine Bandsma
Serina Souza
Russ Josephson
Tiffany Reynolds
Tammie Pacek
Melissa McCormick
Ivee Yamada
William Showalter, MD
David Settlow
Jocelyn Mira

Tiffany Reynolds
Ta'Niyah Reynolds (Student)
Antonio Reynolds Jr. (Student)
Thomas Croly
Anastasiya Kamaletdinova
James Torres
Lynette Troutner
Darin Ujimori
Emi Sakamoto
Juliana Higa
Mary Medeiros
Akiko Fujimoto
Joey Delima
Marina Gamatero
Duane Dantiago
Doris Dantiago
Sage Santiago
Trudilynn Contrades
Melissa Fletcher
Kourtney Pfoor
Kristen Young
Pamela Walton
V Shimamura
Kevin Johnson
Kamuela Kalai
Michelle DuBach
Laura Smith
Teri Wilkinson
Christian K Christophersen
Melody Hall
Natasha Arquines
Yiping Hashimoto
Teri Horiuchi
Cori Webb
Ku'ulei Ka-ne
Jennifer Nill
Kimberly Lauzon
Matthew Lauzon
Valerie Harjo
Corinne Mokiao
Susan Ryan
Amanda Kaahanui
Tia Moeai
Cheryl Caffrey
Dayna Mann
Brianna Enriquez-Cabalis
Carrie Sutherland
Jane Torricer
Wendy Kagawa
Maile Freitas
Summer Holwegner
Kelli Bolger

Jennifer Ann Morrison
Hermenigildo Tesoro, Jr.
Yvonne B. Banogon
Patrick O'Reilly
Natalie Haneberg
Tsesume Ocana
Nichelle Obar
Marie Domingo
Richard Harder
Doris Kenui
Ryan Haneberg
Robyn Kalauli
Rick Kalauli
Richard Fernandez
Kristel Wilkinson
Ileana Carreno
Joy Kaaz
Claudia Imperato
Barbara Goodman
T Engleman
Joyce Lazaro
L. Quisano
Adele Johnasen
Colleen Yago
Althea Shiotsugu
Kanani Dutro
Lorraine Keohuloa
Jonelle Davis
Dolly Andrade
June Norris
Ashley Matsuno
Dulcie Yano
Shannon A. Martinez
Sharyl Seino
Sabrina A. Martínez (student)
Keoni E. Martinez
Zoe M. Martinez (student)
Janet Banasihan
Mrs. Judy Ann Vegas
Lesley Rabot
Marie Gonsalves
Stephanie Block
David Contreras
Sarah Glendon
Mary M Horwitz
Paula Ninio
Tanya Figueroa
Wade Hashimoto
Lisa Fernandez
Tiffaney Brooke
Holly Kristiansen
Linzy Hashimoto

Rene M. Muraoka
Mara Hanson
Ihilani Buffett
Shelly Marcello-Vina
Cruz Vina III
Jennifer Lynn (Primary Health Care
Provider & Parent)
Pam Lake
Denise Robinson
Dionisia Robinson
Valerie Janikowski
Brandi Chanthathap
Maile Hayashida
Philbert Seguerre

Doug Seelig
Mary Sullo
Nicole Souza
Kristen Schiffman
Reynold Marcello
Ken Farm
Rianna Castro
Kathy Kawabata
Alex Oasay
Euclid A. LoGiudice
Kiyomi Abut
Teresa Evangelista
Jeffrey C. Goodman, M.D.

Jamie Yabes
Amanda Contreras
Helena K Costa
Shelby Furtado
Malia Vasallo

**TOTAL: 463 signatures as of
Wednesday 18 August 2021 at
11:59am. We will be accepting
signatures until Friday 20
August.**

Cc: Hawaii State Public Charter School Commission Interim Executive Director Yvonne Lau
Hawaii Senate President Ronald D. Kouchi
Hawaii Speaker of the House Scott K. Saiki
Hawaii House Education Committee Chairperson Justin H. Woodson
Hawaii Senate Education Committee Chairperson Michelle N. Kidani
Hawaii Senate Special Committee on COVID-19 Chairperson Donovan Dela Cruz
Hawaii Senate Special Committee on COVID-19 Senator Jarrett Keohokalole
Hawaii Senate Special Committee on COVID-19 Senator Michelle N. Kidani
Hawaii Senate Special Committee on COVID-19 Senator Donna Mercado Kim
Hawaii Senate Special Committee on COVID-19 Senator Sharon Moriwaki
Hawaii Senate Special Committee on COVID-19 Senator Kurt Fevella



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

"Oppose Restirctions & Vaccine Requirements, please""

1 message

apurvolove@gmail.com <apurvolove@gmail.com>

Sun, Aug 22, 2021 at 12:13 PM

To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

to the board of education members,

i ask you to please have a conscience and oppose these experimental shots on our precious keikis!

Children have a 99.99% survival rate for COVID-19 and are not a significant source of COVID-19 transmission. Furthermore, asymptomatic spread is not a proven source of transmission. Masking and social distancing are not only unnecessary, but are harmful to children. Masks are ineffective at preventing viral spread and are damaging to children's physical and psychological health. Social distancing and masking negatively affect children's development and distance learning is causing children to fall behind academically, as evidenced by the increased rates of academic failure observed this past school year. It is time to stop these horrendous mandates and restrictions and truly advocate for the well-being of Hawaii's keiki.

Finally, the COVID-19 "vaccines" are still in phase III clinical trials and have not been proven safe or effective. Alarming reports of adverse events and deaths are being documented daily, including those in children: The VAERS reporting system, which requires the reporter to be a health care provider, has now documented over 4,000 deaths in the US alone. and it is estimated that only 1% of adverse affects are reported....is Furthermore, these experimental injections have not been proven to prevent infection or spread of COVID-19. It is unconscionable to encourage experimentation on children with injections that have NOT been proven safe nor effective. There is no way of knowing how these shots will affect children's developing bodies in the years ahead. Studies on the effects of the vaccines on fertility are still being conducted. Children are not at high risk with this virus and there are already safe and effective treatments available. Not one healthy child has died of COVID-19. Not one. And yet several deaths of children have been reported from the COVID "vaccines."

Put simply: Medical experimentation on children is a crime.

Please stand up for our children. Do not push these experimental injections on them.

not for the money

not for the pressure

not for anything

for our very humanity please stand up for these children and give them their god given right to not be experimented on!

thank you,

taryn sutherland



Testimony

1 message

goo he <goohe12@gmail.com>
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Thu, Aug 19, 2021 at 12:13 PM

Aloha,

For General Business Meeting on 8/19/21 @1:30pm

I would like to comment on how safe the school is for in person learning. I am a parent of an 11 years old who is currently attending one of the Hawaii public middle schools and he is un vaccinated due to his age under 12. My son currently has to be in quarantine for 10 days because he was in close contact with one of his classmates who is COVID positive. This is the 4th COVID case in this school. It is very hard for a kid to be in quarantine and can't go to school to learn. We don't want him to fall behind at school because he has to be in quarantine with no fault of his own. The school only tells me to have him email his teachers and see what he needs to do. He will miss all of the learning at school because of this quarantine. The school doesn't offer online classes. The online classes that DOE offers is not really a class, an adult has to be there to teach the kid and the teacher only grades the student. That's not an online class at all. I really don't feel safe to send my kid to school in person. What if another student has COVID again and he has to be in quarantine again? He has only been in school for less than 2 weeks and there are 4 cases already and have affected lots of students also. It is not fair to make the kids go through all of these when they are supposed to be SAFE (according to DOH) at school to learn. I think the charter schools that made the choice to switch to online learning are very protecting their students. The public schools are not SAFE and they are not protecting our students at all. I would like the DOE and DOH to re-think their decision to switch the public school to be online like last year. It is especially very hard for middle schools to have their students in a bubble. All the students change classrooms everyday. More than 500 kids out at the same time on lunch break - what happened to the mandate on gathering? Please help me to address this concern to the DOE and DOH before most kids get affected by it. WE NEED ONLINE DISTANCE LEARNING AVAILABLE!!! It is not beneficial to kids if they are keep having to be quarantine. Thank you, Remain Anonymous



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

Opening of School year Covid-19

1 message

Kalaniakea Wilson <kupaaialoha@gmail.com>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Thu, Aug 19, 2021 at 7:58 AM

The Governor's mandate to force an experimental drug into children is a violation of the nuremberg code which is a violation of human rights, genocide and a war crime.

This shouldn't be called a vaccine 45,000 people died and hundreds of children died within 72 hours of taking the experimental drug which we have no data to determine long term effects.

Placing tourism in a higher priority than the lives of residents and children in schools in Hawaii is insane. The Governor and Mayor Blangiardi are insane.

Furthermore, schools in Hawaii are not equipped to safely return. Tourism continues to make a profit and Ehunuikaimalino has two classes of students in a cafeteria. Bubbles are being broken all day because of insufficient space and mandatory mandates by the DOE that prioritize tourism over lives. We are in a crisis. Please visit Ehunuikaimalino to see how spread of Covid-19 is exacerbated by a century of institutional discrimination with a severe lack of space on the only public DOE K-12 Hawaiian immersion school on the Big Island which already had two outbreaks since the beginning of the school year.

Mahalo nui for the inhumane treatment of Hawaiian children at the only public Hawaiian immersion school on the Big island.

Kalaniakea
Social Studies teacher



Testimony

1 message

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

Wed, Aug 18, 2021 at 7:53 PM

I am a teacher who works at a Intermediate school and it seems like kids are going home every single day, more than one kid every single day with Covid or to quarantine. This is very dangerous to our students and also to educators who have underlying conditions or family members with underlying conditions. I have a child who is 11 years old she can't be vaccinated yet, she has an underlying condition and I am scared to death that she is going to catch it. I do not believe we should be back in school the way that we are now it's just too dangerous. As a teacher I am not able to teach all my students because so many of them are out quarantining. There is nothing in place for students who catch Covid or who have to stay home because they were exposed. Right now we are in a very very critical point our numbers are increasingly high and they are going to continue to grow with tourism and the holiday season coming. I urge you to do something about it governor, the governor and the department of education need to make a decision that's best for students, families, educators and the communities health. Something needs to be done and quickly at my school it seems that kids are dropping like flies having to quarantine and also from catching Covid. Teachers are in the rooms with students who have had Covid and not known and even though we are vaccinated we could be carriers. What if I was a carrier and I gave it to my daughter who has an underlying condition. That would be horrible and devastating. I would also have to stay home and take care of her and then get a substitute to teach my class. That's not right. Please help us keep our students and educators safe and do something because what the governor and the DOE are doing now is not working. Sincerely Michelle. Murphy

Sent from my iPhone



Testimony- COVID and schools- No personal information please

1 message

Kristin Wolfgang <miskriswolf@gmail.com>
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Aug 18, 2021 at 3:00 PM

Aloha e esteemed Board members,

We understand that HSTA has requested an MOU about COVID for the school year 2021-2022. We support this proposal so that we teachers have some expectation of when (or if) we will be shifting to and back from distance learning. The MOU for the last school year clearly defined the expectations for in person school and what teachers should and should not be responsible for. It clearly defined nearly everything that schools had questions about. The BOE cannot expect all schools uniformly to "do the right thing" in these difficult pandemic days. We must have clear guidelines that can be followed by schools and the MOU is what provided that last year.

That being said, we wanted to give some positive words about how things are going at the school where we work. We agree that we want to be in person and to that end we need to follow COVID mitigation strategies. We have strong COVID-19 mitigation strategies at our school. We all wear masks at all places on campus and require masks on our students. They cheerfully wear them as well, since they know we must do what we can to protect our entire 'ohana. We maintain small one class size bubbles as much as possible. We keep the windows and doors open and use our fans and air purifiers. We physically distance 6' across class bubbles and to the extent possible within bubbles.

We wash our hands and make time for students to wash before eating. We utilize outdoor spaces whenever possible. We have meetings on zoom so we don't have to worry about physical distancing at meetings. We don't know if it will be enough, but we do know we remain diligently persistent with Covid mitigation protocols, and we haven't had any positive cases.

From what we experienced last school year, we believe the risk to many of our students' health and well-being is equally significant if they are not able to attend school full-time.

Please create an MOU with HSTA that follows the Hawai'i Department of Health Guidance for Schools requiring schools to follow all Core Strategies and allowing schools to apply a formula for implementing Mitigation Strategies that work best with each school's unique situation.

Mahalo nui for all you do,

Kristin Wolfgang, Barbara Sarbin, Hoku Keli'ikuli, Star Carlin, Taj Gunter, David Wells, Erica Jensen, Davina Pomai Ka'aihue, Anna Aoki, Karen Costales, Tamara Morrison, Lisa Barnard, Joan Patton, Kim Miller, Aziani Ismail, Matt Warholc, Michelle Chambers, Mara Saltzman, Laura Warner, Lydia Menses