



## Kamehameha Schools®

Date: September 16, 2021  
To: Board of Education, Finance and Infrastructure Committee  
When: 10:30 a.m.  
Testifier: Wai‘ale‘ale Sarsona, EdD  
Agenda Item: III. B. Committee Action on recommendation to rename the school currently known as Central Middle School to Princess Ruth Ke‘elikōlani Middle School

E ka Luna Ho‘omalua Voss, ka Hope Luna Ho‘omalua Fallin, a me nā Lālā o ka Papa Ho‘ona‘auao, aloha mai! My name is Wai‘ale‘ale Sarsona, the Vice President of Hi‘ialo at Kamehameha Schools.

We offer our **support** to agenda item IV. D., which calls on the Board to take action on the renaming of the school currently known as Central Middle School to Princess Ruth Ke‘elikōlani Middle School. Princess Ruth Luka Keanolani Kanāhoahoa Ke‘elikōlani is not only a key figure in Hawai‘i’s history but is also intimately connected to our organization’s founder, Ke Ali‘i Pauahi, and her legacy. Recognized as a kua‘ana or older sister to Ke Ali‘i Pauahi, Princess Ruth Ke‘elikōlani cared for her kaikaina or younger sister in life and bequeathed all of her land holdings—over three hundred and fifty thousand acres—to her before passing.

Princess Ruth Ke‘elikōlani is revered as an ali‘i leader who continued to elevate and advance both the Hawaiian language and culture throughout her lifetime. She also built a grand home named Keōua Hale that many say rivaled ‘Iolani Palace in its splendor. Following her passing, the Keōua Hale property, which is the site of the middle school, was purchased by the Board of Education and has educated many generations in that community. We applaud and commend the Central Middle School leadership for researching the rich history of their community, engaging their school community, and recommending this significant name change to the Board. We urge the Board of Education to approve this name change and revive the memories of our beloved Princess Ruth Ke‘elikōlani, where her legacy may continue to inspire this school community and all of Hawai‘i.

Founded in 1887, Kamehameha Schools is an organization striving to advance a thriving Lāhui where all Native Hawaiians are successful, grounded in traditional values, and leading in the local and global communities. We believe that community success is individual success, Hawaiian culture-based education leads to academic success and local leadership drives global leadership.

‘A‘ohe ‘ulu e loa‘a i ka pōkole o ka lou. There is no success without preparation. Mahalo nui.

Finance and Infrastructure Committee and General Business Meeting

September 16, 2021

Dear Chair Payne and Members of the Board,

Regarding:

Finance and Infrastructure Committee

III. A. Committee action on recommendation concerning priority allocation of federal funds in the second round of the Education Stabilization Fund's Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief ("ESSER II") and in the third round of ESSER funds authorized under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 ("ESSER ARP") to fund: Department budget shortfalls

General Business Meeting

IV. A Action Item E. Board action on Finance and Infrastructure committee recommendations concerning priority allocation of federal funds in the second round of the ESSER II and in the third round of ESSER ARTP to fund: Department budget shortfalls

As a long-time educator in the DOE, I truly appreciate this opportunity to provide my comments and hope they help provide another perspective. First, like many others, I do not dispute the importance and value of in-person learning AND the value and potential of distance learning and a shift to doing more (similar to teleworking for companies and organizations worldwide).

The Delta variant "wasn't supposed to happen" once people received vaccinations, and everyone prepared for and looked forward to a return to in-person learning and the start of a new school year--- but it did, and while we cannot control the wind, we can and must adjust our sails and continue to do so. Our responsibility to our students means that we can also follow five steps of design thinking: Empathize, Define, Ideate, Prototype and Test. Innovation is perhaps even more necessary in the "worst of times" and though change may be hard to imagine when everything seems so unpredictable and we yearn for once was, we will continue to navigate uncharted waters "for the sake of the children" whether we are parents and families, teachers, community leaders, or "just" everyday caring citizens. As one saying reminds us, "fall down seven times, get up eight."

Based on Attachment B Stabilization for General Fund Shortfalls and the proposed conversion of positions from general to federal funding which includes the targeting of positions in OSIP's Community Engagement Branch, **I support the contention that the functions performed by these programs are critical** to maintain a needed pipeline of tri-level leaders and core functions for the public school system. More importantly, , we are in unprecedented times where what we may have overlooked in the past, not figured out, or lacked the resources to support, is certainly exacerbated now.

More specifically, however, I wish to point out one concern that deserves your consideration:

1. **What is the Department's statewide and long-term PLAN to enable parents/families to provide input and receive dedicated resources and support to assist their children to continue learning?** The return on this long-overdue investment would be significant.

Rather than marginalizing those who already are working toward this end, why aren't we building upon the work that has already been done?

Yes, students are far more likely to recover learning losses or benefit from a "learning acceleration plan" when their broader needs are met. Despite best efforts and 50 years of research, parents/families still struggle to provide the at-home academic support that has become an increasing feature of pandemic schooling. Family engagement is more critical than ever. As some experts have put it, "last year was a wakeup call." Yet parents/families have received little consistent guidance for managing the increased online activity that is required for their children in remote school settings. Currently, there are 9000+ students who, by DOE accounts, are **not** learning in-person in school and are participating in a distance learning option whether at the school, complex area, or State program. Even as these numbers may fluctuate over time for any number of reasons, what is the established standard of practice for schools so families receive consistent and timely information about choices and the personalized support they need?

2. Where in the plan is the Department's commitment and **financial INVESTMENT OF SUPPORT** for the critical infrastructure and tri-level system personnel to directly increase the capacity of families to easily and quickly transition from learning in-person in the classroom to the home and to ensure students are supported academically, socially, and emotionally? Learning options or extended learning opportunities (as defined by BOE policy 101-8) held after school, during intersessions, and summer have always been offered, just like school lunches. This is not family engagement. Temporary funding that covers costs is greatly appreciated by families but ultimately may not be sustainable on a long-term basis.

Students may be safe and thrive in schools, but they do not live in that bubble 24/7. They are also part of a larger community that includes their families, many of whom are multi-generational households, and often bilingual or multi-lingual. Building and sustaining the relationships that allow students to thrive requires school-wide systems and genuine engagement with families and local communities and the resources to support what is needed. How does the DOE propose to support families in their diverse contexts and build trust to support student learning? What is the **consistent protocol** to advise and guide students and their families on how to stay connected to schools and classwork while under quarantine or for any duration? Is the DOE tracking the duration and frequency of absences due to required quarantining because of exposure to someone who is COVID positive, whether at school or at home? Do we also know anything about the number of students and teachers who have been vaccinated but are testing positive and also having to miss school? One variable can affect attendance, academics, and social emotional learning for even those who wanted to be learning or teaching in-person on a daily basis.

Shouldn't we be attentive to our families with respect to their **choices**, their **voices**, and their responsibility for their children's **future**?



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## Testimony

1 message

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**Nam Collins** <nam@contourspahawaii.com>  
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Thu, Sep 16, 2021 at 12:28 PM

I am writing to give my testimony regarding the recommendation concerning priority of allocation of federal funds.

III. A. Committee Action on recommendation concerning priority allocation of federal funds in the second round of the Education Stabilization Fund's Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief ("ESSER II") and in the third round of ESSER funds authorized under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 ("ESSER ARP") to fund: Department budget shortfalls

I believe that the board of education is tasked with a very difficult task on how to best serve our children during a pandemic. I ask the board, as board member Kili Namau'u had stated to look at what other states and other schools are already doing. I believe that it will be extremely damaging to our children to isolate them again and keep them away from their peers. There are technologies available, which have been FDA approved and are currently used in public schools in the Mainland which allows an additional layer of protection for the students and faculty. I am a distributor of these devices which has recently been installed in the Chaminade University and is being used in hospitals, the Pentagon and the Ground Zero Museum in New York City. I ask that our company be allowed to speak to the board with a proposal to help not only provide the technology but to also allow our experts to perform a needs assessment for the schools. I hope that you will consider this as a viable option to help kids to be in school and get on with learning. Thank you.

Respectfully,

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***Nam Collins***

Chief Financial Officer

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