



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

Agenda Item Central Middle School Name Change

1 message

dee green <deegreen15@gmail.com>

Mon, Sep 13, 2021 at 6:12 PM

To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

I support changing the school name of Central Middle School to Princess Ruth Ke'elikōlani Middle School. The address there at 1302 Queen Emma Street was her residence and would be a fitting tribute to a most honorable woman.

Thank you for your time

Dee Green

III. Recommendation for Action

NOTE: Testimony relevant to each agenda item will be taken before the Board considers the item.

STRONGLY OPPOSE

- 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 am concerned that information from last month's FIC meeting and this month's memo are not congruent.

As a member of the public and a staunch supporter of our Public School System and the work of the Board of Education, it never surprises me when I read memos from the Department.

My short take on this agenda item is "IF YOU DO NOT APPROVE THIS REQUEST, WE WILL START CUTTING PROGRAMS AND PERSONNEL." This is an insult.

Time and time again, the Department presents a suitcase full of information, wastes the Committee's time by answering yes or no questions with 10 minutes of justification. When asked an open ended question the committee's time gets burned up due to an inability to be concise. It feels like if I keep on talking, they'll lose me and forget their question and not know that I didn't answer it.

As a matter of fact, at the recent House Committee on Education, Representative Woodson (Chair) specifically asked a question and stated, "Answer in 10 seconds or less" to DS Unabasami. The Department's inability to be concise in answering questions speak for themselves.

Where do I start?

The DOEs continuous one-sided belief that the ESSER funds, as stabilization funds, to address funding gaps.

1. DOE memos provided for attachment to the meeting agenda: 73 Pages

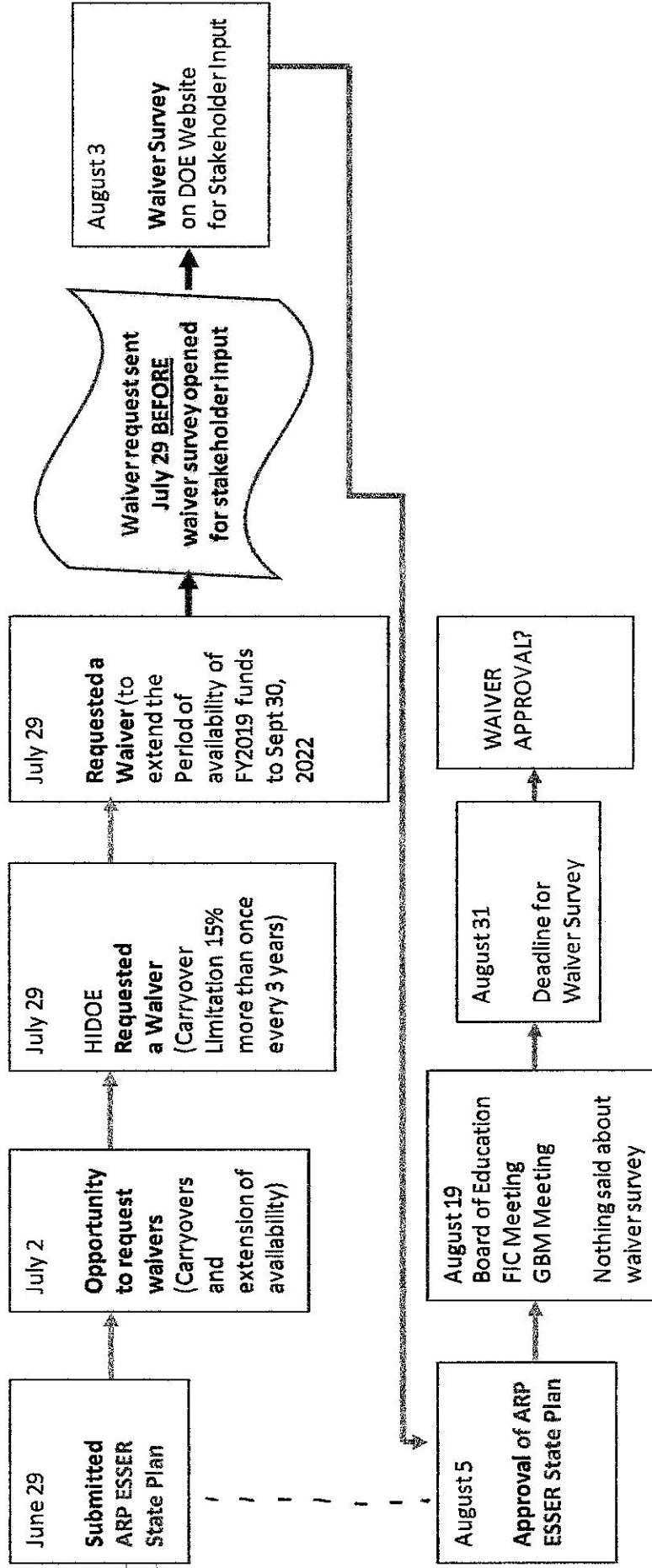
- a. The DOE August 19, 2021 memo states that the Department has funding to maintain existing staffing levels because there have been considerable improvements.
- b. Further down, the memo states that conceptual metrics that will be used can be found in Section J, even the DOE is confused by their memo, those metrics are actually in Section I.

- c. Carry over funds and budget deficit. Carry over funds cannot exceed 5%. I wonder whether these are planned into the budget by not assigning 5% during the year, in order to carry over that money to the beginning of the new FY.
- d. It was stated that the Department used \$19.2M in Impact Aid funds to return funds to the schools at the end of the current FY.
- e. When asked how the Department generates credit to have carry over funds. The explanation from AS Hallett was not answering the question.
- f. Impact Aid funds is generated from Title VIII monies for military or federally housed children. Impact Aid funds were used to help fund the budget cuts last year and were to be rebalanced after July this year. Reason: If the Department had delayed the fund transfer there was a risk of losing \$125M due to lapse. Where is the planning for Impact Aid funds during the Budget Cycle so that there isn't a concern of funding lapsing.
- g. Other carry over funds:
 - 1) EDN150 \$21.05M
 - 2) EDN200
 - 3) EDN100 \$140M and -\$40M
 - 4) Carry Over funds are secured for schools retuning at the beginning of the year but before the FY closes, in order to have start up money available.
- h. When will the academic and financial plans be ready for the Board to review?
- i. Hallett explained that if the Department's plan is approved by the Committee it will help reduce uncertainty and allow the Department to move ahead with shovel ready projects, which are referenced in sections A-G of the memorandum.
 - 1) These "shovel ready" projects were on the agenda for this morning's Student Achievement Committee: Departments educational plan which should include approved budgets for Items 2.03, 2.04, and 2.05. "Shovel Ready" means no discussion or approval necessary.
- j. Board Member Uemura requested that the Department provide a budget for 5, 6, and 7. These are NOT included in today's memo.

My opposition stems from the Department providing pages and pages of information for the Board and the public to digest.

Pages and pages of words and links. The Department needs to check these links prior to publishing, some do not link to anything and others say "access denied, request access."

I have been around for a while and for me this is a snow job.



Testimony for September 16, 2021

Finance and Infrastructure, Agenda Item III.A.

Support for the Parent/Community Networking Centers (PCNC) program

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

To: The Honorable Bruce Voss and Board of Education Members

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.

Testimony for September 16, 2021

Finance and Infrastructure, Human Resources

Agenda Item: III.A.

Regarding the importance of funding Family Engagement Initiatives in all schools and Support for the Parent-Community Networking Centers "PCNC" Program

Name: Joanne Imada

School: Niu Valley Middle School

Subject: PCNC Testimonial

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.

Testimony for September 16, 2021

Finance and Infrastructure, Human Resources

Agenda Item: III.A.

Regarding the importance of funding Family Engagement Initiatives in all schools and Support for the Parent-Community Networking Centers "PCNC" program

Ke Kula Kaiapuni 'o Ānuenue ("Ānuenue") School

Parent-Community Networking Centers

Name: Sharde Freitas, J.D., M.P.H.

The Honorable Bruce Voss:

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

Testimony for September 16, 2021
General Board Meeting - Agenda Item IV. E

Supporting Parent-Community Networking Centers "PCNC" with ESSER funding for Family Engagement

To: the Honorable Bruce Voss and Board of Education Members

From: Lani Solomona, Community Relations Program Assistant, Office of Strategy, Innovation and Performance, Community Engagement Branch, Parent- Community Networking Centers "PCNC"

Aloha:

It has been gratifying and challenging to oversee and guide the Parent-Community Networking Centers "PCNC" family engagement initiatives and strategies executed by part-time para-professional educators employed at approximately 220 public and public charter schools. When the PCNC program first transferred to our Branch, there were fewer than 100 Centers statewide. Now, four years later, we boast 220 staff situated in our schools statewide. Our Ohana also includes School Liaison Officers supporting military initiatives for our students from service families and Transition Center Coordinators situated in schools with high counts of military-impacted students and families.

PCNCs are guided by the Board of Education Family and Community Engagement/Partnership Policy 101-14 and are tasked with strengthening and increasing engagement interactions with families. The intended outcome is to make families aware of how their participation in their child's education is so critical to the success and total well-being of their child and to empower them with tools and knowledge that affect their child's emotional wellness, educational experience and academic achievement. As part of the family focus team that created the former policy 2403 in 2001, I supported the 2015 revision renaming the policy and replacing "involvement" with engagement.

We are all painfully aware that COVID-19 has turned our communities upside down. As such, PCNC staff have transitioned their delivery of services and continue support families and students at their schools. The concern was that communication with families would suffer. Interestingly enough, family engagement has increased through the adaptation and increased applications of virtual platforms and good old fashioned telephone calls. Events such as Open House, New Student Registration, Literacy Nights, Resource Fairs, College and Career Nights, and even social-emotional wellness learning opportunities experienced an increase in attendance through online offerings.

The growth the PCNC program has experienced would not have been possible if it were not for the efforts of many partners, both internal to and external to the Department of Education "DOE". With the impending September 30, 2021 elimination of my position due to "budgetary constraints" I am concerned that all of the accomplishments we have made these past four years will slowly run their course and eventually fade away as a result of the lack of dedicated leadership and interest. I am concerned that without a plan for family engagement the PCNC program will suffer and families and students will experience an increase in anxiety and stress due to a reduction in resources. Additionally, PCNC staff are part-time employees paid for up to 19-hours of work per week. The energy these staff dedicate to their families often exceeds 19-hours and has the potential to cause stress resulting in less than positive impacts for their own families and lives.

As others before me have provided in their testimonies, I would like to emphasize the importance of supporting our families as they navigate with their children through our school system during these uncertain months ahead. Please consider encouraging DOE leadership to address family engagement

initiatives that support the needs of our families such as funding for programs and even online applications that increase communication and personal interaction between schools and their families while also acknowledging, respecting, and supporting the efforts of PCNC staff who strive daily to provide for the educational needs of our students and their families.

Surely family engagement initiatives could be considered and supported?

Mahalo.

PCNC Testimonial

Testimony for September 16, 2021

Finance and Infrastructure, Human Resources - Agenda Item: III.A.

Regarding the importance of funding Family Engagement Initiatives in all schools and Support for the Parent-Community Networking Centers Program "PCNC"

Name: Diana Baldwin

Job Title: PCNC at Kailua High School

My name is Diana Baldwin and I have been serving as the school's Parent-Community Networking Centers "PCNC" since the 2009-2010 school year. I "fell into the job" in the June of the prior school year when I volunteered to help the then current PCNC (Stephanie Manley) folding her parent newsletter she was readying for mailing as I was passing through to drop off my substitute teacher attendance folder. Little did I know at the time, but she was leaving the island and a replacement had not been found. After a few hours, the newsletters were all folded, bundled for the bulk mailing and put into the trays. Stephanie told me I'd be a perfect fit to be the next PCNC since I knew many of the students from the classroom and have a "can do" attitude. I agreed to take over her PCNC duties and have enjoyed the job tremendously!

Our principal at the time was Francine Honda and she had been our Principal at Kailua High School for 6 years. She shared with me her vision for what the PCNC at Kailua High School should focus on and it was a structured, repetitive, planned set of activities that I was to plan, support and attend. Over the next 10- ½ years, I did just that--establishing and building relationships at the school as well as the community in the course serving as the school's PCNC. The school activities were pretty much on "auto pilot" and it became a matter of maintaining the relationships. Then on December 31, 2019, Francine retired after serving as our beloved Principal for 17 years.

Our new Principal, Stacey Oshiro took the reins in January 2020 and shared her vision of what she saw the PCNC at Kailua High doing. Stacey wanted to be one of the first schools in the state of Hawaii to have a Family Resource Center (FRC) serving as a welcoming place for all families to find resources, ask questions, meet each other, share knowledge, skills/talents with others. Then COVID hit and that vision was put on the back burner to focus on student learning and pivoting to distance learning. Classrooms were disinfected and reconfigured for social distancing leaving my shared classroom PCNC office space non-existent. Family Engagement turned to online/virtual in an attempt to keep families updated on the most recent information and providing resources. That approach was maintained until the end of the 2019-2020 school year.

Summer 2020 was the perfect time to begin building the foundation for the Family Resource Center at Kailua High. Kathleen O'Dell spearheaded the virtual training, webinars and support. Several PCNCs (including myself) were certified by the National Family Support Network's Standard of Quality for Family Strengthening & Support training in an effort to build a solid, unified foundation for our families.

Since then, a parent survey was developed, administered and analyzed to determine parent needs and areas of support. As a result, we have established bi-monthly virtual “Parent Support Groups” conducted by Windward Intern Abi Monroe addressing the voiced needs of our families. The topics include:

- The Impact of COVID-19 Stress on Students and Families
- Motivating Students to Learn
- Juggling Work and Assisting Students
- Anxiety, Depression and Mental Health
- Positive Parenting and Discipline
- Self-Care for Self and Family

A Family Resource Center Google Site was also developed with the help of Kathleen O'Dell.. Our vision and mission statements can be found here as well as many resources for families and recordings of our Parent Support Groups. Perhaps in the future we could have further breakout groups with topics suggested at our current virtual Parent Support Groups. We are hoping to have a physical space on campus next school year enabling us to welcome families to our Family Resource Center. The establishment of a Parent Advisory Council would also be beneficial in getting the word out as well as generating greater participation in our planned activities, steer/develop the future direction of the FRC.

As I have outlined, the PCNC's role at Kailua High has not only evolved into one of Family Engagement but also one of listening to our families and developing programs around what is beneficial to them. Our relationships with our families, students and community are valued and we continue to adapt to meet the needs of our families through the work of the PCNC. COVID has brought a new set of challenges but with new challenges come new opportunities. Kailua High School has embraced and is adapting to our “new normal” and the PCNC with guidance from our Principal are a vital part of this evolution and will continue to be in the future.

Mahalo.



September 16, 2021

Finance and Infrastructure Committee

Dear Chair Voss and Members of the Committee,

We would like to comment on Discussion Item 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.

Per the BOE's request, the DOE in its memo provided more information about the proposed allocation of the \$137 million for "Stabilization for General Fund Shortfalls." The information clarifies more specifically what line items 4.01, 4.02 and 4.03 consist of. We are still waiting for a clear, comprehensive strategic plan on how the DOE will use funds in the best way to ensure a safe and equitable education for our students and to address learning loss. But in lieu of this, we think that it would be prudent for the DOE to use the federal funds to cover these shortfalls now. The main reason is that it is extremely difficult to expend funds of this magnitude in a short time. In addition, these deficits need to be addressed so it makes sense to pay these bills now.

However, going forward, we believe that the BOE, in its new role as creating a strategic vision, and the DOE need to be thinking more strategically on how to optimally use its funds. We would like to see a comprehensive plan to enable the DOE to be more efficient and effective with their resources.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Cheri Nakamura
HE'E Coalition Director

HE'E Coalition Members and Participants

Academy 21
Alliance for Place Based Learning
American Civil Liberties Union
Atherton YMCA
*Castle Complex Community Council
*Castle-Kahuku Principal and CAS
*Education Institute of Hawai'i
*Faith Action for Community Equity
Fresh Leadership LLC
Girl Scouts Hawai'i
Harold K.L. Castle Foundation
*HawaiiKidsCAN
*Hawai'i Afterschool Alliance
*Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
*Hawai'i Association of School Psychologists
Hawai'i Athletic League of Scholars
*Hawai'i Children's Action Network
Hawai'i Education Association
Hawai'i Nutrition and Physical Activity Coalition
* Hawai'i State PTSA
Hawai'i State Student Council
Hawai'i State Teachers Association
Hawai'i P-20
Hawai'i 3Rs
Head Start Collaboration Office
It's All About Kids
*INPEACE
Joint Venture Education Forum
Junior Achievement of Hawaii
Kamehameha Schools
Kanu Hawai'i
*Kaua'i Ho'okele Council
Keiki to Career Kaua'i

Kupu A'e
*Leaders for the Next Generation
Learning First
McREL's Pacific Center for Changing the Odds
Native Hawaiian Education Council
Our Public School
*Pacific Resources for Education and Learning
*Parents and Children Together
*Parents for Public Schools Hawai'i
Special Education Provider Alliance
*Teach for America
The Learning Coalition
US PACOM
University of Hawai'i College of Education
* Youth Service Hawai'i

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

September 13, 2021

Testimony to the State of Hawai'i Board of Education: Finance & Infrastructure Committee

RE: September 16, 2021 BOE Finance Meeting at 10:30 a.m., Item 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

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Honorable Chair Voss and members of the Board:

I am writing as a parent of a child in public school. My question is as follows:

Where is the funding for staff to implement Surveillance Testing in the schools?

Surveillance Testing is a critical pillar in mitigating the surge caused by the highly infectious Delta variant. ESSER funds authorized under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 was NOT intended to shore up departmental budget shortfalls. Those millions of dollars in federal funding was intended to make health and safety a priority in schools so that we could safely send our students and educators back onto campuses across our islands. According to page 6 of the HDOE memo dated September 16, 2021 from Interim Superintendent Keith Hayashi:

ESSER ARP funds may also be used for the following activities:

Implementing strategies and protocols aligned with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance for the reopening and operation of school facilities to effectively maintain the health and safety of students and staff

If effectively maintaining the health and safety of students and staff is truly the DOE's priorities, then shouldn't they be investing in layered mitigation strategies like **surveillance testing** in the schools?

One of the mitigation strategies that is aligned with the **CDC's guidance for schools is screening or surveillance testing**. In the *CDC Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools*, it states:

In K-12 schools, screening testing can help promptly identify and isolate cases, quarantine those who may have been exposed to COVID-19 and are not fully vaccinated, and identify clusters to reduce the risk to in-person education.

Screening testing can be used to help evaluate and adjust prevention strategies and provide added protection for schools that are not able to provide optimal physical distance between students. Screening testing should be offered to students who have not been fully vaccinated when community transmission is at moderate, substantial, or high levels (Table 1 below)

To be effective, the screening program should test at least once per week, and rapidly (within 24 hours) report results. Screening testing more than once a week might be more effective at interrupting transmission.

(<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-guidance.html#screening-testing>)

The CDC guidelines provide how to ideally utilize screening testing as a mitigation strategy. What follows is a **reality check of what is actually happening on the frontlines in public schools** thus far with the less than enthusiastic roll out of screening/surveillance testing.

Summary of DOH's No-Cost Surveillance Testing in HIDOE Schools:

- ❖ The No-Cost Surveillance Testing in Schools that is being spearheaded by the HIDOH is barely off the ground and already experiencing roadblocks in its implementation.
- ❖ **Surveillance Testing needs to be mandatory not a mere recommendation:** Masks are mandatory. Hand washing is mandatory. Staying home when sick is mandatory. This Surveillance Testing in Schools program is “recommended” by DOE and not “required.” Therefore, some principals are not taking it seriously as a mitigation strategy.
- ❖ **Surveillance Testing should not be optional, especially for communities with low vaccination rates and high community spread:** The majority of public schools have NOT signed up to provide surveillance testing on their campuses. HIDOE reported that 100 schools have signed up, but 157 schools have yet to commit to surveillance testing.
- ❖ **Surveillance Testing should have been a state level HIDOE commitment:** Some principals have had to go to lengths to secure testing for their schools. While other principals do not seem to understand just how important surveillance testing is as a mitigation strategy and are reluctant to make it available to their families and employees at their schools. Why? Mainly due to staffing shortages.
- ❖ **Staffing shortages limit administrators' ability to implement surveillance testing:** School Administrators are unable to find staff to coordinate the surveillance testing efforts at their schools, e.g., some counselors are being tapped to take the lead for their schools on this testing program and they have refused, because their plates are full providing coverage in the classrooms, cafeterias, and recess to monitor students--in addition to their regular duties, i.e., counselors have no time to provide Social Emotional supports to students because they are covering for teachers who are out due to quarantine or pending COVID testing results.

- ❖ **Delays in getting test results:** Some of the DOH tests are sent to labs in California with at least a three day turnaround for results--despite DOH claims that the testing is being done locally at Clinical Labs with a 24-hour turnaround. [Note: Clinical Labs results can be received within 6 hours]
- ❖ **Staffing shortages due to pending test results:** Numerous staff are unable to report to work, because the test results are pending, e.g., over 18 staff at some schools. This staffing shortage is being covered by a limited pool of substitute teachers, office staff and counselors--who are, once again, then unable to perform their regular duties.

This **ripple effect that is occurring at the school level** is an unintended consequence of poor planning from above. When Deputy Superintendent Phyllis Unebasami flippantly stated at last week's House Education Committee's meeting, that schools just need to order the tests and the test kits will be sent to them, she failed to realize **the logistical nightmare** that this poorly planned program would cause for schools **without the proper support of appropriate staffing to carry it out.**

Furthermore, without any consistent coordination from DOE and DOH, **each school is left to their own devices** in implementing the testing program. So, once again, there will be **no consistency across the board**, testing protocols may not be followed accurately--potentially making testing results invalid. How does that help with decision making at the school level around health and safety?

Screening or Surveillance Testing is a CDC recommended mitigation strategy. We want COVID Surveillance testing in schools to succeed so that we can get a more accurate assessment of the actual infection rates in schools and to reduce the risks inherent to in-person learning during a pandemic. However, without the **funding of people to carry it out**, it will be doomed to fail before it even gets rolling. We need a proactive, coordinated, HIDOE level strategy to make testing in schools work the way it was intended to work.

Please provide the funding to ensure that staffing for this Surveillance Testing program is covered, so that we can successfully implement this critical mitigation strategy in our schools; and, so that school admins and parents can make informed decisions about the degree of safety that schools can provide to our educators AND our keiki, especially those who are too young to get vaccinated right now.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Dianne Tam

Table 1. Screening Testing Recommendations for K-12 Schools by Level of Community Transmission

	Low Transmission ¹ Blue	Moderate Transmission Yellow	Substantial Transmission Orange	High Transmission Red
Students	Do not need to screen students.	Offer screening testing for students who are not fully vaccinated at least once per week.		
Teachers and staff	Offer screening testing for teachers and staff who are not fully vaccinated at least once per week.			
High risk sports and activities	Recommend screening testing for high-risk sports ² and extracurricular activities ³ at least once per week for participants who are not fully vaccinated.		Recommend screening testing for high-risk sports and extracurricular activities twice per week for participants who are not fully vaccinated.	Cancel or hold high-risk sports and extracurricular activities virtually to protect in-person learning, unless all participants are fully vaccinated.
Low- and intermediate-risk sports	Do not need to screen students participating in low- and intermediate-risk sports. ²	Recommend screening testing for low- and intermediate-risk sports at least once per week for participants who are not fully vaccinated.		

¹ [Levels of community transmission](#) defined as total new cases per 100,000 persons in the past 7 days (low, 0-9; moderate 10-49; substantial, 50-99; high, ≥100) and percentage of positive tests in the past 7 days (low, <5%; moderate, 5-7.9%; substantial, 8-9.9%; high, ≥10%).

² Examples of low-risk sports are diving and golf; intermediate-risk sport examples are baseball and cross country; high-risk sport examples are football and wrestling.

³ High-risk extracurricular activities are those in which increased exhalation occurs, such as activities that involve singing, shouting, band, or exercise, especially when conducted indoors.

Hawaii State Board of Education
Finance and Infrastructure Committee Meeting
September 16, 2021 at 10:30am

RE: Action Item III(A) - Recommendations concerning priority allocation of federal funds.

Aloha Chair Voss, Vice Chair Fallin, and Members of the Committee –

I am a father to two girls that attend private school and an uncle to three keiki at 2 public schools on Oahu, all under the age of 12. The challenges being faced by our educators and the stress upon us as parents does not discriminate between public and private schools. One significant difference though, is the ability for smaller private schools to more nimbly "shift" to remote learning when necessary, which lessens the concerns of unknown or uncontrolled transmission.

As it relates to Interim Superintendent Hayashi's Memorandum, dated September 16, 2021, it is clear that extensive efforts have been made to prudently manage and prioritize funding to address these unprecedented times. That said, I urge this Committee to seriously consider and take action with these monies that reflects a recognition of the critical importance that surveillance screening plays in protecting our keiki and keeping our schools safe and open.

These education stabilization funds are obligated to: "Safely reopening schools and sustaining safe operations." CDC, DOH and DOE "Back to School" plans all include surveillance testing protocols and emphasize their importance. Yet, DOE has decided that such critical public health interventions should be optional instead of required, and left the decision upon 250 individual principals to implement and effectuate such a crucial initiative with very limited support and resources (other than the tests themselves) to combat COVID and keep our kids safe in school.

I definitely do not presume to know the nuance or details of the difficult decisions this Board and the DOE administration must make, but I do know that we need to do whatever is necessary to get testing (and the staffing support to do so) into every single school as soon as possible, whatever it takes.

Currently, the DOE has put forward three "options" for testing: Operation Expanded Testing ("OET"); Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity ("ELC"); and Increasing Community Awareness Through Testing ("ICATT"). OET, ELC and ICATT are all federal initiatives that provide the test kits and funding to make them happen. Thus far, less than half of our public schools have "opted-in" to these testing programs, and there has been little explanation why surveillance screening is still lacking in our schools.

DOE (or DOH) needs to flood the schools with hundreds of thousands of rapid antigen tests for the next few weeks until we (hopefully) weather this ongoing Delta surge. It is perplexing to understand why they haven't, but even more disconcerting that this does not appear to be the public health and safety priority that it clearly is. Whether it is thru enlisting parents to help, or Hawaii's Keiki Nurses or the National Guard or medical service providers, surveillance testing is an absolute necessity right now, and will remain a vital part of our ability to keep our keiki safe thru the duration of this pandemic.

Please prioritize and expedite whatever funding and resources are needed to get testing into our schools as soon as possible. Mahalo nui loa for this opportunity to testify and your consideration of this request.

Respectfully –

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