

JULIE REYES ODA

TEACHER IN NANAKULI

October 20, 2021

Dear Board of Education,

My name is Julie Reyes Oda. I am a math teacher at Nānākuli High and Intermediate School and HSTA Leeward Chapter President. This is concerning General Business Action Item IV.A: Use of Federal Funds & Finance Action Item III.A: Recommendation on the Supplemental Budget for FY 2022-23. During the General Business meeting, the Superintendent search is being discussed, so at the end of my written testimony, I will detail why Keith Hayashi is not the guy for the Superintendent job.

USE OF FEDERAL FUNDS...

Committee Chairperson Kili Namau'u wants the Board to consider a three-part framework made up of an educational plan, fiscal plan, and detailed expenditure reporting. I support her rationale as it makes sense, but as the saying goes - the devil is in the details. I hope that the Board asks for the Department to identify and monitor all spending even when it comes from state general or special funds. I understand that this action item specifically talks about ESSER II and ESSER ARP funding sources, but I also want to be able to incorporate that level of oversight with the money paid for by people of this state. I often hear people grumble that the DOE gets so much money and should be audited. Obviously, the audit has not materialized, so in lieu of that, can the Board demand more accountability at the schools without rising to the level of needing presentations at every Board meeting? There is a way to do this and it is incorporated into state law: School Community Councils (SCC).

Chairperson Namau'u outlines in her memorandum that:

- the fiscal plan should be secondary and supportive of the educational plan;
- the Board should provide the Department with guidance of what it expects of its educational plan;
- the Board must approve both the educational plan and categorical fiscal plan before the Department can expend funds; and
- the Board should direct the Department to provide detailed periodic expenditure reports.

I am asking for the Board to require each school -after Academic and Financial Plans are approved- to provide detailed expenditure reports. That is not given and it is unknown if the school sticks to its budget or not. The Board has a CPA and I would like to know if it is common to approve a budget and never to refer to it again in the future. The group who approved the budget is never asked to look at it again.

RECOMMENDATION ON THE SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET...

In the Finance and Infrastructure memo, Keith Hayashi writes to Committee Chairperson Bruce Voss that the Department's core mission is teaching and learning. The Department is asking for almost a quarter of a million dollars (\$218,483,640) in general funds to rebuild its base budget. That is a nine digit request. This memo also states that Act 88 cut 175 FTE positions. We are a service organization. We are an organization that operates exclusively to provide teaching and

learning to any eligible kid in our state. Teachers make up nearly 60% of the Department. It makes me wonder why a good number of positions that are being asked to be funded are not in schools or in the classroom when this is an all hands on deck situation and the schools have been screaming for help. Schools don't need help from DOE office staff during recess and lunch, we need school staff all day.

I work in Nānākuli, on the Wai'anae Coast. We are so short staffed that schools in my area are still being assisted by Department office staff. If the core business of the organization is not being met, why are there so few school positions being requested? Before the Board approves money for positions, ensure that a large portion of positions go to providing health and safety, accelerated learning, social-emotional learning, and school based programming that increase student achievement as stated in the educational plan.

The lack of care for the front line employees in the education system is deeply entrenched in our system and evident in the Department's budget. The mantra of the Board and Department should be that if you take care of your employees, they will take care of the students. All of the systems, processes, and accountability mean nothing if they do not include the people. For this organization to be successful, you need highly engaged people. Right now you have front line employees showing and telling you that what is going on is not sustainable. What proof do you need? Tell me and I will get it for you. I also want you to be fair. Is this what you would ask from employees where you work? Teachers and EAs in the classroom are not superheroes. We are all regular people who do a job and we deserve to have dignity.

- Is it dignified for a superintendent to gloss over the fact that teachers and EAs in the classroom are scared for their personal health and safety
- Is it dignified for a teacher or EA to ask in a faculty/staff meeting if they can be told if they were exposed to COVID-19 so they can decide if they are safe to go home...and not receive an answer?
- Is it dignified for teachers and EAs to plead for safe protocols at work, only to be rebuffed by their employer who chooses to hide behind an emergency proclamation for COVID (the very reason the employees are scared) when that proclamation does not prohibit the employer from bargaining? Nowhere in the Governor's emergency proclamation does it say that the Department cannot bargain with its employees.

Who cares about the people who spend all their time with those 160,000+ kids daily. They don't know anything. The status quo has to stop. Does the Board value the voice of the people in the classroom? In a [Board special meeting on September 2](#), they were asked to choose the stakeholders that needed to be more engaged. The stakeholders that tied as top choice were students, parents, school leaders, and state policymakers. Next were the business sector and advocacy groups. Teachers were second to the last, above community leaders. Seriously, should the business sector be more engaged than me? I am also a parent, does that mean what I say matters more than if I made the statement in my role as a teacher? As a teacher, I go to work at the schools. As a parent, I don't send my kid to school because I don't trust the Department to protect my kid. What does that say about how I feel about health and safety protocols in schools? The priorities of who should be engaged are warped.

LASTLY, I WANT TO ADDRESS KEITH HAYASHI'S COMMENT ABOUT ANONYMOUS TESTIMONY LAST MEETING...

Although the Board wants to address desired outcomes for our permanent superintendent in February 2022, I want to make sure that I provide timely feedback. Keith Hayashi addressed written testimony on September 16 by saying, *"I hope those who provided anonymous testimony will share their concerns with school administrators so we can take care of any legitimate issues."*

I am not a disgruntled employee. I have never met Keith Hayashi and only heard his voice for the first time at a Board of Education meeting. **I am explaining why schools need to provide periodic expenditure reports and how the SCC has not been a venue for ensuring the Academic and Financial Plan is aligned with the educational accountability system or encourages and facilitates increased participation and input by parents, students, community members, and the school staff in the affairs of their schools.** The SCCs are a rubber stamp for many principals and are nothing like what Act 221/51 envisioned. Let me explain a legitimate issue with the Board.

I want to explain why someone may want to be anonymous when dealing with Keith Hayashi. On April 5, 2021, I called Waipahu High School to speak to the PCNC so that I could get the link to the SCC meeting on April 6. I wanted to attend Waipahu High School's SCC because I wanted to see the second largest school in the state discuss and approve their Academic and Financial Plan. The PCNC, Jessica Mendoza, told me she was not the one who has the link, she would pass my message to the Chairperson of the SCC, teacher Kahala Huihui. Four hours later, VP Matthew Mitsuyuki called and asked me who I was and why I wanted to attend the Waipahu SCC meeting. Matthew Mitsuyuki told me he would email me. An hour after this call, Matthew Mitsuyuki sent an email to Keith Hayashi stating that I asked what would be covered in the agenda as it was general (it was). Matthew Mitsuyuki said that I was *"pushy (for a lack of better words) to know what and when certain items would be covered...and why we were not providing more detail."* Mitsuyuki ended his email by saying, *"I did not appreciate her questioning how we do things here at Waipahu High."*

I obtained these emails through a government records request as a public citizen. While my request has taken months and is not complete, these are the records that I have obtained so far. None show that Kahala Huihui was notified of my request for her to call me. I was attempting to come to the SCC meeting to hear the Academic and Financial Plan being discussed. I had no intention of speaking at that meeting.

An hour and 15 minutes later, Keith Hayashi sends an email to CAS Keith Hui saying he finds it concerning that I feel *"it's in my [Julie's] purview to share how we should correct our established process."* I asked for an agenda that actually contained something. The posted agenda is below and says "New Business." I asked what the agenda actually covered (since it says nothing), where the link was (why is it not posted), and later asked if the agenda and link were disseminated to the stakeholders six days in advance. I was not provided evidence that the school community was invited to this meeting. These are all basic guidelines for how SCCs run, but asking a question is a threat to Keith Hayashi at Waipahu High School.

Waipahu High School
School Community Council (SCC) Meeting
Tuesday, April 6, 2021 @ 3:30-5:00PM
Google Meeting

AGENDA

Call to Order

Approval of meeting minutes from March 2, 2021

Principal's/Assistant Principal's Report/Announcements

Role Group Reports

New Business

Other Announcements

Next Meeting: May 4, 2021 from 3:30-5:00PM

Events

Adjournment

The email below shows that Keith Hayashi looked me up on the internet at the HSTA website. I checked because I have never used the term "State Director." I conducted an internet search of my name, but because I had become Chapter President by then, I was listed as Chapter President. Next to me were Board Directors, listed as "State Director." While the title is the formal one, I have never used it nor have I heard anyone use it before. In the email, he even said he looked at the Nānākuli website for posted minutes to check on my position on the SCC. This is the same guy who at the last BOE meeting said that, *"We need to be focusing our time and energy of working together as a community to learn how to coexist with this virus for the long term. This means learning from the past, building upon lessons learned, adapting to updated information and guidance, and working together to determine realistic solutions that are centered around keeping students in the classroom safely."* We all just started in-person school at the time these emails were sent, I can see who wasn't focusing his time and energy on working together on keeping students in the classroom safely. In a chapter survey at the beginning of this school year, of all the schools in Leeward, it was teachers at Waipahu High School who reported not being able to physically distance, at least 3 feet, as an issue..more than any other school in the district. While Keith Hayashi was not there at the start of the school year, the class sizes were created when he was principal in the previous school year.

On Mon, Apr 5, 2021 at 3:55 PM Keith Hayashi <keith.hayashi@k12.hi.us> wrote:

Aloha CAS Hui,

I'm forwarding an email from Waipahu High School Assistant Principal Matthew Mitsuyuki regarding a phone call from HSTA State Director from Leeward; Nanakuli High and Intermediate Teacher; and as of the last posted minutes on their school website, September 2019, School Community Council Chairperson Julie Reyes Oda. I am not sure in what capacity Ms. Reyes Oda was making her inquiry, but nonetheless find it concerning that she feels it's in her purview to share how we should correct our established process.

Thank you,
Keith



Keith Hayashi
Principal
Phone: (808) 307-9555
Fax: (808) 675-0257

My Voice. My Choice. My Future.

But Keith Hayashi did not stop there. He wrote emails to CAS Keith Hui, PRO Jaclyn Lone Elk and ES Polly Quigley about me. Then, CAS Hui continued with this charade and sent an email to Superintendent Christina Kishimoto, Deputy Superintendent Phyllis Unebasami, Claudia Asato-Onaga the Executive Assistant to the Superintendent, Lisa Ann Silva the Private Secretary to the Deputy Superintendent, and Joella Hirano the Private Secretary to CAS Hui. In this email CAS Hui claims to believe that I have *"ulterior motives and is using the SCC venue to push a hidden agenda."* Shame on you Keith Hui for lying to your superiors, but also shame on you for using your position to run interference for Keith Hayashi. Keith Hayashi is the same guy who at the last BOE meeting said that, *"it's difficult to respond to anonymous concerns because it's impossible to know the context and extent of the problems being raised. I can't address or fix issues if I don't know where it's happening. We do have communication channels for staff to report concerns. I hope those who provided anonymous testimony will share their concerns with school administrators so we can take care of any legitimate issues."* Look what happens when someone brings up issues with Keith Hayashi. Your reputation gets maligned and lies are being told about you to the highest levels of your employer. Who would want to be subjected to this?

Keith Hui <keith.hui@k12.hi.us>

Tue, Apr 6, 2021 at 3:06 PM

To: Christina Kishimoto <Christina.Kishimoto@k12.hi.us>, Phyllis Unebasami <Phyllis.Unebasami@k12.hi.us>
Cc: Claudia Asato-Onaga <claudia.asato-onaga@k12.hi.us>, Lisa Ann Silva <Lisa_Ann.Silva@k12.hi.us>, Joella Hirano <Joella.Hirano@k12.hi.us>

Aloha Superintendent Kishimoto and Deputy Unebasami,

This is a courtesy heads up that you may be receiving a complaint about Waipahu High School. I have been working with Principal Hayashi and ES Quigley regarding an individual requesting to attend SCC mtgs that have no ties to the school. This person is not an employee, resident in the community, alumni, nor parent. We have reason to believe that the individual has ulterior motives and is using the SCC venue to push a hidden agenda. You may get a complaint from a Julie Reyes-Oda, who is actually a teacher at Nanakuli High/Inter, requesting to join Waipahu High's SCC mtgs. I'd be happy to address any questions or discuss this matter further. Sharing as a friendly heads up this may be coming. Mahalo.

Keith Hui
Complex Area Superintendent
Pearl City - Waipahu Complex Area
Leeward District Office
601 Kamokila Blvd. Rm. 588
Kapolei, Hawaii 96707

(o) (808)692-8000
(f) (808)692-7899

Two minutes after CAS Keith Hui sends that email, he sends an email to CAPS Maribeth Thompson. One of the CAPS duties is to operate as the complex area investigator. CAS Hui took the details of the "background" he claimed to have offline, so I do not have the contents of that message.

Keith Hui <keith.hui@k12.hi.us>

Tue, Apr 6, 2021 at 3:08 PM

To: Maribeth Thompson <maribeth.thompson@k12.hi.us>, Joella Hirano <Joella.Hirano@k12.hi.us>

Hi Maribeth,

Can you help me follow up on this? I will call you to give you more background before you reach out. Mahalo.

Keith Hui
Complex Area Superintendent
Pearl City - Waipahu Complex Area
Leeward District Office
601 Kamokila Blvd. Rm. 588
Kapolei, Hawaii 96707

(o) (808)692-8000
(f) (808)692-7899

About 1½ hours later, I received an email from CAPS Maribeth Thompson. All she did was run interference for CAS Hui and Keith Hayashi with no intention of giving me the link for the meeting. This email actually came after the meeting concluded. I wonder if at the end of her investigation she found my ulterior motives and hidden agenda. Keith Hayashi is the same guy who at the last BOE meeting said that, "That's why we're all working so hard to keep our schools open and safe for learning." Please work on keeping schools safe and not working on keeping members of the public out of Community Meetings that discuss what is done with public money in a public school. We also don't need you sneaking on our campuses for photo ops to post on social media. Next time, announce you are coming to our school and come and visit one our classrooms that have 30+ kids in them. While many of us have buss up rooms that aren't great to post online, you can come see the real part of schools that are causing the safety issues: crowded classes, empty classes (from absences), VPs subbing for teachers, how kids distance in passing, how kids distance in the

cafeteria, employees who are taking on additional duties due to COVID, and teachers that are locked out of the administration building because they don't want employees coming in there for safety, except not my safety. We are thrown in rooms with up to 150 kids coming through a day.

On Tue, Apr 6, 2021 at 4:34 PM Maribeth Thompson <maribeth.thompson@k12.hi.us> wrote:

Dear Ms. Oda,

It has come to my attention that you were not able to attend the Waipahu SCC meeting. Please feel free to call me tomorrow morning in order to provide more information so I can document and address your concerns. I do have afternoon appointments- so if we miss each other, I will make another attempt to contact you. Alternatively, you may respond to this email with a contact number and a good time to call and I will reach out to you.

Sincerely,

Maribeth Thompson
Complex Area Personnel Specialist (CAPS)
Pearl City- Waipahu Complex
808-692-8000 or 784-5668

Leeward District Office
601 Kamokila Blvd Rm 588
Kapolei, HI 96707

My new email address is mary.thompson@k12.hi.us

This Board is being trained by NASBE to build capacity for effective leadership and governance. One of the three pressing issues facing Hawaii schools at the moment is leadership and communication.

https://boe.hawaii.gov/Meetings/Notices/Meeting%20Material%20Library/Special_20210902_Presentation%20on%20training%20to%20build%20capacity%20for%20effective%20leadership%20and%20governance.pdf

The Board training detailed five key skills and attributes for the superintendent:

1. Technical leadership
2. Human leadership*
3. Educational leadership
4. Cultural leadership*
5. Symbolic leadership*

Keith Hayashi fails in the three key skills and attributes for a superintendent. He just does not have the temperament or the thick skin needed for a job like this. If one of the pressing issues is leadership and communication, you need to look elsewhere. Even in a prepared speech to the BOE all he could talk about is how he can alleviate the workload for his fellow administrators:

...we are continuously trying to find ways to alleviate some of the workload at the school level wherever possible. For example, I'm working with my team to take a close look at some of the routine responsibilities we might be able to pause for school leaders in order to keep prioritizing health and safety. We are also in talks with partner organizations on ideas to bring in admin support to assist with identifying close

contacts at schools. We are looking at what's possible within our policies, rules, and regulations to help mitigate and address workload issues at our schools.

How many administrators are at schools compared to teachers, EAs, security, cafeteria workers...all who come into close contact with coworkers and students all day? Yet, the Department reports 95% of their office workers (the highest of all DOE departments) vaccinated while still giving out telework assignments. Employee safety is only important for non-school staff. Keith Hayashi you're in the weeds. Come back to reality and speak to teachers who believe they were infected with COVID on campus. I even had a student tell me he was infected by his brother (who attends the same school) and his brother got COVID from a classmate at my school.

Getting the teachers union to the table to discuss relieving administrator duties due to teacher evaluations means that **the Department can negotiate with the teachers and they have**. The Department needs to discuss working conditions with the nearly 60% of the Department's employees who are asking for an open two-way discussion. Keith Hayashi, get to the table and do the right thing. Show up in good faith. **Board, direct the Department to discuss school staff working conditions.**

I want to keep schools open. I want schools to be a safe place to work and learn. I hope one day we get past COVID to return to the normal school we enjoy being in. Today is not that day.

Keith, you do not need to address me at the BOE meeting. I am just making a statement. No response necessary.

I am not anonymous and this is not an anonymous concern.

Sincerely,

JULIE REYES ODA



October 21, 2021
General Business Meeting

Dear Chair Payne and Members of the Board,

We would like to comment on Discussion Item V. A., Presentation on School Performance Results for the 2020-2021 School Year: Strive HI Performance System.

Both the 2020-2021 school performance results and the 1st quarter 2021-2022 universal screener data show how much the pandemic has impacted our students. We must accept the sobering data and move forward strategically on how we can get students back to pre-pandemic levels and above these levels.

The data reveals that while the system as a whole was impacted by the pandemic, certain subgroups struggled more than others in attendance and in proficiency assessments in both English and Hawaiian. We believe in equity in education. This means our system should provide additional supports to our high-needs students to level the playing field so that all students are able to reach the goal of college, career, and citizenship. However, ultimately, we want to lift every student so that they can maximize their potential.

We think it would be useful for the DOE to look at exemplary schools or complexes that have demonstrated success or show the promise of demonstrating success through their strategic thinking in addressing both high-needs and non-high-needs students. Many of these schools have effectively addressed student subgroups that have historically struggled in our system.

For example, at the November 7, 2019, [BOE Data Retreat](#), the DOE identified exemplary Title 1 Schools, those which have a large percentage of economically disadvantaged students, that performed well in English Language Arts (ELA), math and science summative assessments.¹ Not only are these schools located in areas of poverty, but their student demographics are diverse. Yet, they have been able to create positive environments for their schools as well as obtain positive outcomes for all students.

We hope that the DOE will also view the pandemic as an opportunity to change. Knowing that resources are limited, we hope it will use a systematic and strategic approach to address the challenges facing both our high-needs and non-high-needs students efficiently and effectively.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

1

https://boe.hawaii.gov/Meetings/Notices/Meeting%20Material%20Library/Data%20Retreat_11072019_Presentation%20Inquiry%201%20and%20Appendix.pdf

Cheri Nakamura
HE'E Coalition Director

HE'E Coalition Members and Participants

Academy 21
Alliance for Place Based Learning
American Civil Liberties Union
*Castle Complex Community Council
*Castle-Kahuku Principal and CAS
*Education Institute of Hawai'i
*Faith Action for Community Equity
Fresh Leadership LLC
Girl Scouts Hawai'i
Harold K.L. Castle Foundation
*HawaiiKidsCAN
*Hawai'i Afterschool Alliance
*Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
*Hawai'i Association of School Psychologists
Hawai'i Athletic League of Scholars
*Hawai'i Children's Action Network
Hawai'i Education Association
Hawai'i Nutrition and Physical Activity Coalition
Hawai'i Scholars for Equity and Social Justice
* 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.*

DOE STATEWIDE STUDENT INDICATORS

2015-2016 to 2020-2021

	STATEWIDE STUDENT INDICATORS	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
1	Chronic Absenteeism	15%	15%	15%	15%	12%	18%
2	School Climate (% Positive)	N/A	72%	73%	74%	62%	N/A
3	Inclusion Rate	37%	37%	41%	44%	48%	N/A
4	3rd Grade Literacy	70%	65%	73%	75%	N/A	76%
5	9th Grade On-Track	91%	91%	90%	91%	93%	85%
6	Academic Achievement (ELA)	51%	51%	55%	54%	N/A	50%
	Academic Achievement (Math)	42%	43%	43%	43%	N/A	32%
	Academic Achievement (Science)	43%	46%	46%	44%	N/A	35%
7	Achievement Gap (ELA)	33	33	32	34	N/A	34
	Achievement Gap (Math)	29	28	28	29	N/A	27
8	High School Graduation	82%	82%	83%	84%	85%	86%
9	CTE Concentrator	38%	42%	48%	56%	58%	61%
10	College-Going Graduates	56%	55%	55%	55%	55%	50%
11	Teacher Positions Filled	N/A	93%	92%	92%	93%	93%
12	Teacher Retention	N/A	52%	54%	51%	55%	55%
13	R&M Backlog (millions)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
14	Family Engagement	N/A	N/A	72%	74%	62%	N/A

Source: DOE, DOE Dynamic Report

Achievement Gap (percentage points), N/A (data not available)



Testimony for October 21, 2021 General Business Meeting Agenda Item V.A.

1 message

Lynn Otaguro <lmotaguro@yahoo.com>

Wed, Oct 20, 2021 at 10:50 PM

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

Cc: Bruce Voss <bruce.voss@boe.hawaii.gov>, Shanty Asher <shanty.asher@boe.hawaii.gov>, Kili Namaau <kili.namaau@boe.hawaii.gov>, Kaimana Barcarse <kaimana.barcarse@boe.hawaii.gov>, Kenneth Uemura <kenneth.uemura@boe.hawaii.gov>, Maggie Cox <margaret.cox@boe.hawaii.gov>, Catherine Payne <catherine.payne@boe.hawaii.gov>, Lyla Berg <lyla.berg@boe.hawaii.gov>, Lynn Fallin <lynn.fallin@boe.hawaii.gov>

October 20, 2021

Board of Education
State of Hawaii

Regarding October 21, 2021 BOE General Business Meeting at 1:30 a.m., Item V. A. Presentation on School Performance Results for the 2020-2021 School Year: Strive HI Performance System

Honorable Chair Payne and members of the Board:

The results of recent standardized and universal screener tests show that students' scores dropped in the 2020-2021 school year. The drop has been more pronounced for our at-risk students. This is worrying.

Also worrying is the absenteeism during the 2020-2021 school year and into this present school year, often caused by concerns about COVID-19 safety, or by the need to quarantine because of COVID-19 exposure in or out of school. Further, not in these recent reports, but disturbing are stories of families who either have been advised to homeschool or felt that they had no other option than to homeschool because of their concerns about the safety of schools and the lack of other instructional options; other students who our school system are failing to serve in the way we might hope.

In moving forward to address academic and attendance concerns, it is important that this Board ensure that concerns about COVID-19 health and safety measures and other issues raised by members of our school community be acknowledged and addressed.

While instructional interventions will be important to address learning, as we have come to see, many of the issues that we are faced with this year and during the pandemic are intertwined with concerns about health and safety and issues highlighted by COVID-19. The need and desire for distance learning is largely driven by concerns about the health and safety and the sufficiency of COVID-19 mitigation measures taken in our schools. Parents have cited COVID-19 concerns in keeping their children home and some have felt the need to file for homeschooling when they received truancy letters from school. Students miss school when they are exposed to COVID-19 in and out of class and lack the devices, broadband service, or other resources to make up instruction. Schools struggle to find substitutes and staff to supervise students or to secure funding to assist with COVID-19 testing that might keep students and faculty in school. We do not have enough bus drivers to bring students to school.

Over the past year, school community members have shared their concerns about school health and safety in an effort to make our schools safer. Concerns about the safety of DOE guidance on COVID-19 and the implementation of that guidance, distance learning options and requirements, ventilation, COVID-19

surveillance testing availability and implementation, contact tracing, inconsistency in notifications of positive cases in schools, resources and support for schools in dealing with COVID-19 issues, and communication are apparent in stories shared, in testimony before the Board of Education, and in the three separate petitions for help from the HSTA, Hawai'i for a Safe Return to School, and Parents for Public Schools of Hawaii.

At the September 16, 2021 Board of Education meeting, Interim Superintendent Hayashi mentioned that it is difficult to address concerns if they are anonymous and he seemed to indicate that they will not be addressed unless the concerns are brought to principals or complex superintendents directly.* However, **a look at the concerns that are being raised reveals systemic patterns and issues and surely can and must be addressed so that our schools can best serve our families and communities.**

We are all worried about the academic progress of our students. However, as educators know, trust is essential and relationships are key to successful teaching and learning. There needs to be a willingness to listen, to share information, to reach out and talk with concerned stakeholders (administrators, teachers, staff, students, families, and community members), and to work to solve issues. At this time, addressing concerns about COVID-19 and rebuilding trust and relationships is needed to build the foundation to go on to improve academic progress.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Lynn Otaguro
Oahu, Hawaii

*The fact that those testifying or sharing their stories chose not to disclose their identities tells us that there are reasons that they feel unable to go through the channels suggested. People have shared their fears of retaliation in their desire to remain anonymous. This in itself raises questions about culture and trust, which means that more, not less, work needs to be done in listening to and demonstrating that there is a commitment to all parts of our school communities.

If more specific information beyond that provided by that already provided is needed, then it would be helpful to create a channel for receiving information, questions, and concerns about issues regarding health and safety guidance and distance learning, where people can provide specific information anonymously. An example of such an effort in the past was when the DOE created an opportunity for the community to call about special education concerns during the time of Felix. A present effort is the DOE's bullying app that allows for the reporting of issues anonymously. https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=4629242633807160&id=458644537533678



Testimony General Business Meeting on student performance

1 message

Justin Hughes <hughesohana6@gmail.com>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Oct 20, 2021 at 3:07 PM

Dear Members of the Board of Education,

I have been compelled to write testimony given all the media attention about the DOE in the news media, it seems the DOE is at its lowest. From the onset of the new school year, it was clear the DOE wasn't prepared to open the new school year and a lot of grace was given to the new superintendent because of the transition and odd timing of the outgoing superintendent.

There is a national focus and discussion on learning loss and the need for learning acceleration. In conversation with my child's principal, I was disheartened with the response I received about the DOE's plan for addressing the loss of learning over the last year and a half. I was informed there is no plan because the leadership from the state DOE asked school principals to submit their plans in a lengthy document and because schools are swamped and do not have the time to formulate plans, it basically comes down to which ever school asks first will receive monies.

Given the results of the student performance, I am asking the DOE to take this seriously.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,
Justin Hughes