

Testimony: SAC Discussion item IV-A

1 message

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Testimony for Student Achievement Committee

Discussion item IV. A. Presentation on student academic status for the 2021-2022 school year....

Dear Chair Namauu, Vice Chair Arakaki, and members of the Student Achievement Committee:

Hawaii’s students have underperformed pre-pandemic and Hawaii is currently performing worse as a result of learning loss due to the absence of basic instruction, not even quality instruction.

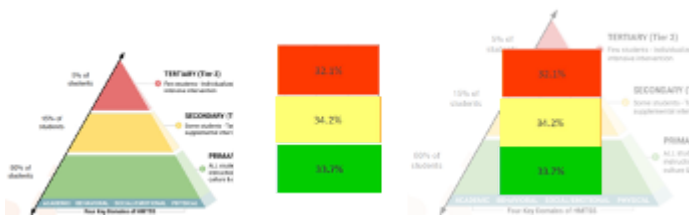
Current screener results illustrate disproportionate amounts of students requiring additional supports:

Mathematics Quarter 1 2021



Expectation Current state What skills are required to attain expectation? What is the DOE willing to do?

Language Arts Quarter 1 2021



Expectation Current state What skills are required to attain expectation? What is the DOE willing to do?

Phyllis Unebasami’s report excludes 13 schools

1. How is the accountability system (for complex area superintendents and principals, and data gathering and usage) different? A different screener is not an excuse to not have the data for this report.

2. For the five schools that did not complete a screener, how are they assessing and monitoring student current performance and progress?

How is this different than the system that has produced 60-75% of Hawaii’s students below grade level?

Phyllis Unebasami illustrates on slide 6, the school and complex area supports for academics by tiers. Tier 2 and 3 are the same supports that have been used for decades:

1. What has the DOE identified as the reason why these supports have not produced results over a decade and how are they addressing this?
2. More of the same will produce the same low results.

Tier 1 supports:

The DOE's current Learning Acceleration plan will not achieve this. It is apparent from the Qtr 1 screener results:

1. The non-high needs population does not have access to grade level content even with in-person learning. If the non-high needs population lacks grade level content, it is more concerning for the high-needs population that also lack access to grade level content, this hurts children.
2. Ineffective classroom formative assessments, teachers may not have support or school personnel does not know how to analyze their data to make the necessary changes to their instruction. This is a skill that very few teachers master, and school administrators ignore.
3. In-Person learning opportunity sounds like you are checking a box. The DOE is missing the point and the moral imperative of its profession.
4. Summer programs proved to be non-rigorous and ineffective over the last two years. The data speaks for itself.
5. Page 3 of Keith Hayashi's memorandum paragraph six states, "Once students are identified as performing one or more grade levels behind, schools may provide intervention blocks,....." If (as stated in slide 6 under Tier 1) formative classroom assessments are effective, a teacher will automatically adjust instruction for students preventing the dramatic drop of a grade level or more. It is evident the DOE's long standing practice of formative assessments lack effective systemic implementation and sustainability.
6. Christina Kishimoto removed the expectation of standards-based state-wide core instructional materials, allowing schools to choose materials without a reliable state-wide reliability review process. Instead instructional review is now dependent on the complex area ,creating inequities throughout the school district of Hawaii. As a result of this, the DOE has an additional grapple with identifying appropriate and effective tier 2 and 3 interventions, doing the same things (as listed on slide 6 and Page 2 of Hayashi's memorandum #2 Description) with different and unaligned instructional materials will not produce results to the benefit of students – it will create continued teacher frustration when decisions are made without the education know-how.

How is this different than the system that has produced 60-75% of Hawaii's students below grade level?

Slide 7: ELA

Piecemeal experimentation will not lead to systemic change and sustainability. The DOE consistently disregards systemic improvement, yet makes the claim equity is a priority.

1. What are the current outcomes of each capacity-building and sustainability effort on this slide?

How is this different than the system that has produced 60-75% of Hawaii's students below grade level?

Slide 8: Mathematics

What does equitable access for all student in support of college, career, and community readiness means?

How is the DOE addressing teaching math and learning math?

What is the expectation and measurable outcome for capacity building? Who's capacity will be built? (The DOE has been building capacity for decades, millions and millions of dollars of Title II funds have been expended, how is this different?)

What does sustainability look like? What is the measurable outcome?

How is this different than the system that has produced 60-75% of Hawaii's students below grade level?

As the experts in education, the DOE demonstrates the absence of expertise in the profession. I have created a short list of pervasive deficiencies within the DOE and will expand at a later time to avoid overwhelming the committee's focus.

- a. BOE policy begins with standards – the pervasive resistance and/or lack of accountability of standards-based instruction praised and rewarded in Hawaii with principals messaging “test scores aren't important” state-wide. If the DOE continues to regard principal for this message, then please change BOE policy. The DOE must discontinue saying politically correct statements “for show” and encourage actions that contradict BOE policy.
- b. Education know-how
- c. Leadership training
- d. Organizational accountability, especially leadership accountability
- e. Organizational values
- f. Ethics

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
W. Hyde



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David Miyashiro
Executive Director

October 21, 2021

Hawaii State Board of Education
Student Achievement Committee
Kili Namau‘u, Committee Chairperson
Bill Arakaki, Committee Vice Chairperson

Aloha Chair Namau‘u, Vice Chair Arakaki, and Members of the Committee,

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

HawaiiKidsCAN would like to offer comments for Discussion Item A) Presentation on student academic status for the 2021-2022 school year: elementary, middle, and high school quarterly grades; English language arts and math universal screener data for elementary and middle schools; and on-track high school graduation.

The data presented today should set off major alarm bells across our education system. Simply put: the majority of students in the most foundational years are not on track academically. If not addressed successfully and swiftly, students will very likely be negatively impacted throughout the rest of their K-12 journeys.

As such, the stakes are extremely high for the impact of the tiered system of School & Complex Area Supports for Academics. We urge the BOE to seek clarity from HIDOE around the following questions:

- How do the interventions identified in this memo overlay with federal ESSER funds available to HIDOE to address learning loss? Given the significant number of students who need intensive supports, how will HIDOE ensure resources are effectively deployed to meet need?

- For Tier 2 and 3 students, it's clear that tutoring and additional academic support are key interventions. Therefore, the BOE should demand additional details and information regarding what these interventions entail. How many more hours of support can families expect to receive? What are the implications for funding and capacity with staff and facilities? What is the balance expected between HIDOE direction/guidance and school autonomy to design their own structures?
- The English Language Arts and Math goals and plans seem impactful for generating long-term benefits for students, but it is unclear how these approaches will be responsive to the urgent needs in our current context. Instead, it appears as though HIDOE is proceeding with status quo plans as opposed to rapidly reimaging what is needed given the current crisis.

Mahalo for your consideration,

David Miyashiro
Founding Executive Director
HawaiiKidsCAN



October 21, 2021
Student Achievement Committee

Dear Chair Namau'u and Members of the Committee,

We would like to comment on Discussion Item IV. A., Presentation on Student Academic Status for the 2021-2022 School Year: Elementary, Middle, and High School Quarterly Grades; English Language Arts and Math Universal Screener Data for Elementary and Middle Schools; and On-Track High School Graduation.

The universal screener data for the first quarter of the 2021-2022 school year for grades 1-8 are extremely alarming. Only a quarter of our students are on or above grade level in math and a third of our students in English Language Arts (ELA). These numbers bring to light how severely the pandemic has impacted student academic performance, not to mention how the pandemic has affected our students' social-emotional condition, for which we still do not have a metric.

The DOE's plan is to utilize its Hawaii Multi-Tiered System of Support (HMTSS) to address student deficiencies. This includes Tier 1, 2 and 3 Instruction and state office support of professional development in ELA as well as a focus on professional learning communities for mathematics. There is also an expansion of mathematics pathways.

We believe that the DOE's proposal falls short of addressing what is needed to get students back on track. First, we are not sure of what the goal is. Is it to get students back to pre-pandemic levels by the end of the year? Is there a short-term and a long-term goal? What groups of students are we looking at? The data is not even aggregated by subgroups, nor is it divided into elementary and middle school, so we are not sure which segments of students have experienced the greatest learning loss. Is the DOE looking at the root causes of learning loss pre-pandemic and during the pandemic to formulate appropriate strategies to address these causes? Has the DOE done an analysis across schools to see which elementary or middle schools have effectively addressed learning loss to learn from these best practices? What will be the financial resource requirements?

Until the DOE addresses these fundamental questions, even evidenced-based strategies it is proposing and spending precious resources on may not be the answer. We urge the DOE to be vigilant in asking and addressing these questions to understand more specifically how the DOE will lift our students, not only academically, but socially and emotionally.

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 Scholars for Education 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.*

Aloha Board of Education Chair and Members,

I would first like to thank all of you for your volunteer service, leadership, and commitment to our public schools and most of all, for your collective wisdom and skillfulness in allowing everyone an opportunity to provide input and participate in a democratic process during Board meetings. I have learned so much and am grateful for the time you spend preparing and how you seek to understand and not just be understood. Creative thinking and problem-solving are more important than ever and as someone once said, “you cannot leap a chasm in 2 jumps.” People will not always agree but your transparency, patience, and willingness to engage makes a difference in building trust, especially during uncertain and worrisome times. The Superintendent you select should do the same.

As a long time DOE educator, I offer a “what if...” idea in case it might help just as countless others have done and who truly want what may be best for future generations, whether they are parents or family members, community and educational organizations, businesses, or even other countries.

RE: Department of Education’s Multi-Year School Calendar (2023-2024 and 2024-2025)

Current Board Policy 106-5 Student Instructional Hours and School Year Requirements Policy and Waiver Process states, “Waivers shall be granted only in extraordinary circumstances. Waivers are intended to facilitate student learning and student achievement by enhancing school-level flexibility.”

While these waivers must be a school request, what if a complex (K-12) proposed a waiver to allow the school calendar to be quickly amended on an emergency basis or due to “extraordinary circumstances” such as a COVID surge in the community? When we have hurricanes and other natural disasters or even water main breaks, our schools have closed on a short-term basis in the interest of health/safety. Families want to and have assumed responsibility for their children when this is done. Families also assume responsibility for their children during a break/vacation ranging from one week to two months (summer), and make plans and decisions accordingly. When a child is sick and cannot attend school, families also have to figure out childcare until the child recovers. During a break, teachers also have choices and decide what they can and want to do, e.g., professional development, spend time with their families. School offices remain open during breaks and do not close. During a school break, other organizations offer childcare and educational activities for a particular duration, cost, etc.

So why not allow schools within a complex (or even complex area) to have the autonomy and flexibility to decide whether they should move to a break at a different time from other schools when needed by their respective community but make up the time when things are better and safer? As an example, a complex dealing with high COVID transmission in the community could switch to a week or more to a break schedule with the understanding the time off must be made up before the next school year begins, e.g., taking a 2 week break in September means not taking Fall Break in October and one week less in December. So there would still need to be 180 days of instruction as required by state law. The number of total days for breaks would remain the same and five-day weeks for students would also stay the same

A stressful and high anxiety environment is certainly not an ideal teaching or learning environment for anyone. Students may be in a safe “bubble” at school where public education can also level the playing field in providing equal access to a quality education, but students do not stay in that bubble 24/7 and never have, nor can we insist that they do so unless we have the staffing and facilities to offer this. We must stop the illogical and defensive insistence that our schools are totally safe when we know, just as everyone else does, that we cannot create a totally controlled environment nor a 24/7 bubble because students leave schools to engage with a larger community. We can and must shut down when health and safety and students’ lives are at stake or do so to minimize higher risks. We truly have a **shared** responsibility as schools, families, and communities and we need to increase and support transparent and open communication and collaboration both internally and externally.