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hawaiikidscan.org

David Miyashiro
Executive Director

February 17, 2022

Hawaii State Board of Education
General Business Meeting
Catherine Payne, Chairperson
Kenneth Uemura, Vice Chairperson

Aloha Chair Payne, Chair Uemura, 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 offers comments for Discussion Item A) Presentation on COVID-19 Update for 2021-2022 school year: data on positive student and staff cases, staff and student attendance rates, status of school-hosted vaccination sites, status of COVID-19 testing, Department employee and student vaccination rates, status of Department workforce shortages, supports for students, masking requirements, supports for school safety protocols.

The treatment of students in quarantine and isolation has been a continued concern for our organization, and we've submitted several pieces of testimony over the past year to highlight this issue. Given student learning loss and our system's experience with distance learning, it is our firm belief that students should always receive instruction while they are at home.

We are grateful the DOE provided an update on guidance to schools for students in quarantine and isolation, although we find this short answer to be incomplete: "Work packets or distance learning options are provided as appropriate when students are in quarantine or isolation." As previously stated, we believe all students should be

receiving instruction while not physically at school, so it is very troubling work packets are being utilized. To that end, we have the following questions:

- What is the percentage breakdown of students receiving packets versus distance learning instruction?
- What is the pedagogical justification for continuing to provide packets?
- Can parents opt for distance learning instead of packets?
- For students receiving packets, what is the minimum expectation for contact with teachers? Would it be possible to require all students to receive a check in phone call from a teacher or school employee?
- How does special education or English Learner placement impact whether a student receives packets versus distance learning?

Mahalo for your consideration,

David Miyashiro
Founding Executive Director
HawaiiKidsCAN



Proactive COVID Safety Measures

3 messages

Kayla Kawamura <kayla.m.kawamura@gmail.com>
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Sat, Jan 22, 2022 at 11:57 AM

Aloha,

My name is Kayla Kawamura. I am a speech-language pathologist for the Central District. I am writing in regards to my concerns about weekly COVID testing procedures for the unvaccinated. Although I am vaccinated, I do not believe weekly COVID testing is a necessary precaution within the DOE because people who are boosted can still get COVID and spread it. If we truly want to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our schools, all employees and students should be subjected to weekly testing regardless of vaccination status. On the contraire, we can all be safe by staying home whenever we have symptoms and return to work when proof of a negative COVID test is acquired and our symptoms have fully subsided. These policies for returning to work safely should be implemented in lieu of weekly COVID test policies. With the waning availability of COVID tests, I do not believe my fellow, healthy employees should be "wasting" these resources on a weekly basis. My hope is weekly COVID testing will not be mandated for non-boosted individuals in the future as well.

Thank you,
Kayla

Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>
To: Kayla Kawamura <kayla.m.kawamura@gmail.com>

Mon, Feb 14, 2022 at 8:51 AM

Thank you for contacting the Board of Education. This email address is specifically designed to receive public testimony for upcoming Board of Education meeting agenda items. Attached please find the links to the most recent agendas for the Board's Meetings scheduled for Thursday, February 17, 2022. Please identify what agenda item your testimony is related to or it will not be included as public testimony.

[February 17, 2022 Human Resources Committee Meeting \(Virtual\) \(hawaii.gov\)](#)

[February 17, 2022 Student Achievement Committee Meeting \(Virtual\) \(hawaii.gov\)](#)

[February 17, 2022 General Business Meeting \(Virtual\) \(hawaii.gov\)](#)

Mahalo,
Board of Education Staff
[Quoted text hidden]

Kayla Kawamura <kayla.m.kawamura@gmail.com>
To: Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Tue, Feb 15, 2022 at 5:10 PM

I'd like my comments to be addressed at the General Business meeting. Thank you.

Sent from my iPhone

On Feb 14, 2022, at 8:51 AM, Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov> wrote:

[Quoted text hidden]



GBM 2/17/2022 Testimony re: Red Hill

1 message

Susan Pcola-Davis <Supcola@hawaii.rr.com>
To: testimony_boe <Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Tue, Feb 15, 2022 at 6:17 PM

Board of Education

February 17, 2022

Testimony of Susan Pcola-Davis

General Board Meeting

A. Board Action on Board Resolution on Red Hill water contamination

The contamination was known on November 28th when the Navy shut down the Red Hill shaft and DID NOT NOTIFY ANYONE OR ENTITY.

Once residents and schools started calling to find out why their water smelled like fuel, the Department of Health issued an advisory "not to drink or use the water." Mind you everyone did not get the message immediately. Residents were not immediately notified by the Navy or anyone else. So seven public elementary schools in the Aiea-Moanalua-Radford complex and the Campbell-Kapolei complex were directly affected.

I would presume that the Department of Education has jurisdictional authority over the supply of water to these schools after consulting with the Attorney General. But then again, why wouldn't they. Maybe not jurisdiction, but definitely a responsibility to ensure water is available.

From the minutes of the January 20th meeting,

(1) Board Member Arakaki asked about options for hybrid or distance learning that the Department can provide to families. Hayashi replied the priority is in-person learning and that the military is providing transportation for impacted students between the school and hotels.

CORRECTION: Bus Transportation was discontinued on December 17th. Parents are driving their children to and from school from WAIKIKI daily (11 miles) and Iroquois Point is 26.1 miles during both morning and evening traffic hell.

(2) Board Vice Chairperson Uemura stated that no matter who has the authority, the Department needs to make sure that it makes water available for schools. Hayashi replied that the Department is not waiting for approval to do what is right for schools.

Why did schools go weeks without the ability to use their cafeterias. Pizza and chicken nuggets were served so much that no one wanted pizza again. To me this is not an example of "the Department is not waiting for approval to do what is right for schools." Is eating pizza and chicken nuggets for two weeks, what is right for the schools? This is outrageous.

The Board has jurisdiction to;

1. Ensure that the DOE is responding to the daily hardships put on parents, teachers and students.
2. A responsibility to ensure each one of them is getting the support they need.
3. To strongly recommend that each school be allotted monies for this emergency. [But the unsung heroes and their communities did not wait to come to the rescue.]
4. Insist that the OFO reimburse the school's admin because they used school funds to procure, on an as needed basis. [They are not going to run to the Department every time a new thing comes up. And then asked to justify it. This is how the department works.]
5. Understand that If ever there was a time to act in a fiduciary manner, it began as soon as the notification that the drinking water was toxic.

What is known:

1. The water stations are not made for elementary children, the pump is too difficult to press. Teachers do it.
2. The water containers to wash hands are not made for this type of ongoing situation. But the teachers do it.
3. The schools have identified concerns and have basically come up with better solutions themselves.
4. No school on this list waited for anything! These schools are the entities that come up with solutions.
5. Understanding that although the families are getting money from their various commands, to live in a hotel and incidentals, they are still suffering and many have gone into debt awaiting reimbursement.

So I ask, is this your jurisdiction?

Things that could be done to show your support;

1. Did any one of you go to any of the schools to see with your own eyes, the state of emergency they are in without clean, running water?
2. Please take the time to show up. You need to see it to believe it!

How do you identify a reasonable contingency for this situation?

1. Understanding that the Red Hill Underground Fuel Storage is not stable.
2. This is an underground fuel storage system that has 20 tanks the size of Aloha Tower.
3. Although not all of the tanks are in operation, there are 2 that are four years late for inspection, and several others that have not been inspected in over 30 years and are still operational.
4. There is no true timeline.
5. There is a strong chance that some families will not move back into their homes.

If there was ever a time for contingency plans, now is the time. We've had other disasters like the eruption on the Big Island where students could not get to school. Did the DOE have a contingency plan for that situation? Because this is a mirror of that situation, my gut says "The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) strongly advocates for in-person learning" mantra, no matter what!!

IN SUMMARY:

Do whatever it takes to help these families. Many are paying out of pocket and have gone into debt.

As for little Jimmy's pet chihuahua, take him to the vet?

What about Suzie's pet cat, take him to the vet?

Have you watched a child whose pet has just died?

Have you heard that children are losing their adult teeth, not just one or two.

Have you heard that people are losing their hair, chunk of hair.

The vapors from the water cause serious respiratory problems.

Residents kept on drinking the water for at least one day. Everyone was not notified to not drink it, not wash their clothes in it, not wash their dishes in it, don't use it for your pets, don't water your lawns, don't wash your cars.

Do you think it is safe to drink JP5 and JP8, jet fuels and P-76 marine diesel?

Susan A. Pcola-Davis



Testimony General Business Meeting V.A. COVID 2/17/2022

1 message

Susan Pcola-Davis <Supcola@hawaii.rr.com>
To: testimony_boe <Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Tue, Feb 15, 2022 at 6:27 PM

General Business Meeting

February 17, 2022

Testimony of Susan Pcola-Davis

V. Discussion Items

A. Presentation on COVID-19 Update for 2021-2022 school year: data on positive student and staff cases, staff and student attendance rates, status of school-hosted vaccination sites, status of COVID-19 testing, Department employee and student vaccination rates, status of Department workforce shortages, supports for students, masking requirements, supports for school safety protocols.

NO VALUE ADDED ANYMORE. I say this because it doesn't matter. The Department of Education will continue to do whatever it wants. This is regardless of public testimony and regardless of Board Members input. These reports will come monthly with updates, but no action will be taken. Apathy: this report is useless if there is a recommendation for action and the Department says "no thank you."

As a matter of fact, the public gets 1,2, or 3 minutes to speak on an agenda item and then the Department counters with a defense, the public cannot defend their point. We get heard, sometimes there are results. We got rid of Acellus yet some schools still used it. We watch and listen to the Board ask questions that don't get answered.

Don't feel bad, the legislators do the same thing. There is a reply but not an answer.

Susan A. Pcola-Davis

Testimony - General Business Meeting

1 message

Jeff Eynon <jeffeynon@gmail.com>
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Feb 15, 2022 at 7:25 PM

Dear Hawaii BOE,

I've read Hawaii Department of Education last report dated Feb 17, 2022 in its entirety. One thing stood out to me very clearly - 91% of teachers are vaccinated.

The science is quite clear, the vaccine protects those at risk of dying from COVID. With boosters your likelihood of death is even less.

Now I pose a question. As a vaccinated individual do you feel safe with your COVID vaccine and boosters? Did you know children are even less likely to die from COVID than you are with your double vaccine and booster? So who are you protecting with masks?

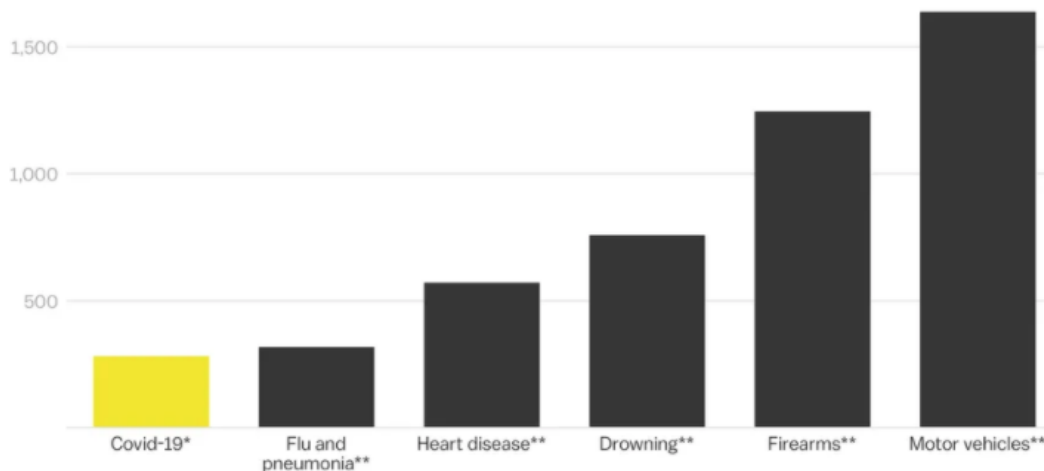
In fact, our children are more likely to die from the flu or pneumonia, accidental drowning, and even a car crash on the way to school than die from COVID.

Do we tell parents within a one mile radius of the school that they can longer drive to school? Should we mandate that? Did we mask our children when the common flu was going around and segregate them? Do we avoid Hawaii's beaches completely for fear of drowning? No we do not.

Why not? Those things all pose a higher risk than death from COVID. We do not mandate the elimination of all risks from their lives even if those risks *could* be mitigated.

Childhood deaths in the US from Covid-19 and other causes

Average annual deaths of children under 18 in recent years, from January through September



*Covid-19 deaths: January through September 2021

**Other deaths: Annual average from January through September across 2015 to 2019 (latest available data)

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



You've chosen to mask our children by force because you are not risk tolerant or logical. Some risk is acceptable and is required to move on with life. I ask you to go out on a limb and take the risk it is time to move on. Yes there is a .01% chance that IF a student were to get infected that student could die. That chance being less than all of the previously mentioned risks to their lives.

What you have not considered is what you're doing to our children. You have not considered the long-term impacts to their mental health, their ability to learn, the impact to their social abilities, the long-term impact to creating successful students. While the

majority of the country has chosen to move on Hawaii children will fall behind will we cower, worrying about the .01% chance.

The risk of Covid-19 climbs a lot with age

Share of reported coronavirus infections in the US that led to deaths, by age



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Sincerly,
Jeff Eynon a concerned parent



testimony for BOE General Business Meeting Thursday, February 17, 2022 at 1:30 p.m. Agenda Item V.A.

1 message

Lynn Otaguro <lmotaguro@yahoo.com>

Tue, Feb 15, 2022 at 8:56 PM

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

February 15, 2022

Board of Education
State of Hawaii

A. Regarding February 17, 2022 BOE General Business Meeting at 1:30 p.m., Item V.A.
[Presentation on COVID-19 Update for 2021-2022 school year: data on positive student and staff cases, staff and student attendance rates, status of school-hosted vaccination sites, status of COVID-19 testing, Department employee and student vaccination rates, status of Department workforce shortages, supports for students, masking requirements, supports for school safety protocols](#)

Honorable Chair Payne and members of the Board:

I am a retired teacher, former deputy attorney general, and supporter of our public schools. I am writing to thank this Board for continuing to monitor the status of COVID-19 in our schools and to ask that it have the DOE continue to work on implementing plans for safer schools now and in the future.

It appears that the surge of COVID-19 cases has begun to subside, although they still remain at levels that at one time we found unthinkable. Rather than abandon steps to mitigate risk of transmission, we need to continue to keep health and safety measures in place at the present. Our geographic isolation, our limited health care resources, and the numbers of households in our communities that are multigenerational and contain vulnerable members call for the continuation of health and safety measures. In addition, just 36.5% of our general population has had a booster. In our schools, our preschoolers cannot yet be vaccinated and only 33.8% of children at 5-11 years of age are fully vaccinated. https://dohdocdeas.doh.hawaii.gov/t/DOCD/views/HawaiiCOVID-19-VaccinationDashboard/AGE?%3Aembed=y&%3AshowVizHome=no&%3Ahost_url=https%3A%2F%2Fpublic.tableau.com%2F%3Aembed_code_version=3&%3Atabs=no&%3Atoolbar=yes&%3Aanimate_transition=yes&%3Adisplay_static_image=no&%3Adisplay_spinner=no&%3Adisplay_overlay=yes&%3Adisplay_count=yes&%3Alanguage=en&publish=yes&%3AloadOrderID=0

To care for our school and larger communities, we need to be prudent with health and safety.

The DOE has worked on some items, but continued efforts in the following areas are important to control COVID-19 transmission and keep our schools safe:

- **Share contingency plans with school communities. Effective implementation of plans requires the understanding and support of school staff, families, and communities. Transparency and the building of good relationships with stakeholders requires the sharing of plans.** Ideally, stakeholders should be consulted in making plans; lacking that, the plans should at least be shared. Notably, from its training, the BOE's own policy provides that "planning and

preparation should be inclusive, collective and in a timeframe that is sensitive to the needs of schools and their communities.”

- **Masks: Keep masking requirements in place.** Procure and distribute **high quality masks** to students and teachers.
- **Ventilation: Provide information and training for school level personnel on using windows and fans and DOE resources including CO2 monitors, box fans, and air filters so that they can be properly and effectively used.** Ensure that information is accessed and understood at each school. **Inspect classrooms and school spaces and make recommendations for improved ventilation. Plan and implement steps for the longer term improvement of ventilation.** *There are bills in the legislature for funding and work on air conditioning. As work on air conditioning is done in schools, upgrades in ventilation and air filtration also should be made.*
- **Testing: Expand surveillance testing programs in schools.** To improve participation in the programs, communicate with families to ensure that they understand the value and importance of testing in keeping communities healthy and schools open. **Consult with an expert to monitor and improve present testing programs and to implement a test to stay program.**
- **Provide staffing and support at school level:** Contact tracing duties have fallen upon school level administrators and personnel. Provide assistance for such duties and communication with the school community and DOE reporting systems. **Provide training and strategic advice to assist schools with health and safety matters. In addition to allowing the creation of positions, ensure that those positions are funded.**
- **Communicate the situation at each school and what steps are being taken: Provide information about the state of our schools and what those schools are doing.** Ensure that each school is sending out timely COVID-19 case notification letters to its school community that include details about case counts and their last day on campus (originally in a template). Ensure that reports to the DOE website on COVID-19 cases are up to date. Provide support and funding to schools to help with communication.

As we have seen, many of the issues affecting our schools are intertwined with our ability to control COVID-19 in the community and in our schools. Among other things, the widespread transmission of COVID-19 and our struggle to control it affects:

- The number of absences of students, teachers, and staff on campus and in transportation;
- The ability to retain and recruit teachers, substitutes, and staff;
- The ability to provide effective instruction and learning due;
- The establishment of routines and habits for students (and families) that make teaching and learning possible; and
- The quality of relationships with stakeholders that is essential for successful schools.

Until the disruptions caused by COVID-19 are better controlled, it will be difficult to fully address learning gaps.

In structuring our schools during this time, it is essential to continue work to improve health and safety, and to create learning environments that are stable and supportive and that reflect the values of our schools. (In the article, “A School Principal’s Blunt Warning: We Can’t Pretend the Pandemic is Over,” a principal discusses some of the challenges faced by families and schools. <https://www.kqed.org/mindshift/59022/a-school-principals-blunt-warning-we-cant-pretend-the-pandemic-is-over?fbclid=IwAR39NSFAmkgmI-kUsR6SCjgkSYBCwTQrmY-j2eNsAik6DGjxarqnIKaUvSc> This Board’s training in HA: BREATH underscores the importance of looking to our values and supporting our students and families at this time. https://boe.hawaii.gov/Meetings/Notices/Meeting%20Material%20Library/Special_2022-01-13_Presentation%20on%20Na%20Hopena%20Ao%20%28HA%29%20Training.pdf)

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Lynn M. Otaguro
O'ahu, Hawaii



TESTIMONY - ACTION ITEM A. BOARD RESOLUTION ON RED HILL WATER CONTAMINATION

1 message

Logan Okita <lokitahsta@gmail.com>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Feb 16, 2022 at 8:23 AM

ACTION ITEM A. BOARD RESOLUTION ON RED HILL WATER CONTAMINATION

Board Chair Payne and Members of the Board,

Thank you for including this item on your agenda. I urge you to adopt the proposed resolution and require the Hawaii Department of Education (HIDOE) to provide you with updates about the crisis at your monthly meetings until water service has been restored to all of the affected schools. In addition to this proposal and monthly reports, please require HIDOE to test the water on these campuses regularly going forward until they are moved off of the Navy's water system.

I teach at Nimitz Elementary and provide reading intervention instruction to students. I am in and out of classrooms and work with students one-on-one or in small groups throughout the day. Not having a reliable and accessible source of running water makes it difficult for me to wash my hands between each of the sessions. As a school community, Nimitz has stepped up to provide our students with a sense of normalcy at school when they are living a crisis at home. Our custodial staff has gone above and beyond to ensure that water stations in classrooms and around campus are filled so that instruction is not interrupted to refill stations or assist with handwashing. Staff members stop in the hallways to assist students who are having difficulty with the pump stations outside. We have an abundant supply of bottled water for drinking. Despite all of these efforts, this is not sustainable for the long term.

Thank you for taking a stand to support the affected schools and our community. Please do not let this resolution be your last action on this crisis. Our students and staff members need you to continue to monitor and act so we can have access to safe drinking water at our schools.

Sincerely,
Logan Okita, MEd, NBCT



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

TESTIMONY - DISCUSSION ITEM A. PRESENTATION ON COVID-19 UPDATE for 2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR

1 message

Logan Okita <lokitahsta@gmail.com>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Feb 16, 2022 at 8:23 AM

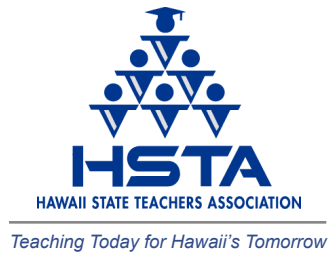
DISCUSSION ITEM A. PRESENTATION ON COVID-19 UPDATE for 2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR

Board Chair Payne and Members of the Board,

Thank you for including this item on your agenda. As an employee, I appreciate being able to access the information provided by the Department because it is not communicated clearly or regularly.

After the Department's presentation in January, Board Members asked about the contingency plans. While case counts in our state are on the decline again, please do not let this issue be swept to the side again. The contingency plans need to be shared with school staff and the community so that everyone is prepared before another surge. The moment to share these plans is not when we are in a crisis.

Sincerely,
Logan Okita, MEd, NBCT



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Osa Tui, Jr.
President

Logan Okita
Vice President

Lisa Morrison
Secretary-Treasurer

Wilbert Holck
Executive Director

**TESTIMONY TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
GENERAL BUSINESS MEETING**

RE: IV. A. ACTION ITEM - RED HILL; V. A. DISCUSSION ITEM - COVID-19 UPDATE

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2022

OSA TUI, JR., PRESIDENT - HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Chair Payne and members of the board,

The Hawaii State Teachers Association, while providing a recommendation, supports board action regarding the continuing Red Hill situation. Additionally, we have comments on the COVID-19 update that is being provided.

Mahalo for listening during your January 2022 meeting to the ongoing concerns regarding the continuing effects of fuel leakage into Oahu aquifers from the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility. While we appreciate that the board is taking up a resolution, we ask that you append to the existing language a stronger call to action for the facility to be decommissioned as soon as possible. This is truly the only “effective and expeditious” solution to protect Hawaii’s most precious resources.

Mahalo for continuing to make COVID-19 data sharing a priority for your meetings. We ask that item 8. a. which states that “everyone must wear masks” be enforced and demonstrated from the top leadership down when on Department campuses and facilities. Our educators have struggled to effectively communicate while using masks, but have complied because that is the rule. Blatant disregard for this simple rule which is held up as one of the critical components in mitigation strategies sends mixed messages that clear rules can be regarded as discretionary.

Discussed at your last meeting was also the sharing of contingency plans. After being questioned by board members Voss and Barcarse, interim Superintendent Hayashi stated that, “I will work together with the CASs and the school principals to create a document that we can share with their communities and their respective employees at the schools.” Please ask if that has been accomplished. We are unaware of anything being shared with school communities and employees as of this writing. What is the timeline for this to be accomplished?



HAWAII GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION
AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO

RANDY PERREIRA, Executive Director • Tel: 808.543.0011 • Fax: 808.528.0922

State of Hawaii
Board of Education

Testimony by the
Hawaii Government Employees Association,
AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO

February 17, 2022

Relating to Action Item IV.A. – Board Action on Human Resources Committee
recommendation concerning Board Policy Positions for the
2022 Legislative Session: school level staff compensation

We support the intent of 2022 Legislative Ad Hoc Committee Chairperson Bill Arakaki's recommendation that the Board amend its general policy positions to support proposed legislation that increases the compensation of all school-level employees in public schools. We agree with Chairperson Arakaki that all school-level employees, and not just teachers, are important to school quality and student achievement. However, there are employees throughout the Department of Education's tri-level system who have also contributed to improving school quality and student achievement.

In written testimony last month, we asked the Board to thank and support the employees who have stepped up, adjusted, and pivoted throughout the pandemic. We shared how our members showed up to work, rarely complained about their working conditions, and were always willing to pitch in – even if it meant putting in extra hours in response to the pandemic and performing additional duties due to staffing shortages. These employees are equally deserving of pay increases.

Wages are a mandatory subject of collective bargaining. HGEA is committed to engaging in good faith bargaining with the Department to negotiate fair and reasonable pay increases for the employees we represent.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit our testimony.

Sincerely,

Randy Perreira
Executive Director