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## Testimony, Investigative Committee, State Public Charter School Commission: Brandon K. Bunag

1 message

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**Kauī Naniōle** <kauinaniōle@gmail.com>  
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Mar 27, 2024 at 1:06 PM

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March 25, 2024

Hawaii State Board of Education  
Chairperson, Hawaii State Public Charter School Commission  
P.O. Box 2360 Honolulu, HI 96804

Aloha nui,

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for the nomination of Brandon K. Bunag for a seat on the Hawai'i State Public Charter School Commission. As the Principal of Hālau Kū Māna, a Hawaiian Focused Charter School, Po'ō Kula Bunag has demonstrated exemplary leadership, dedication, and a profound commitment to the advancement of education in Hawai'i.

Po'ō Kula Bunag's tenure as the Principal of Hālau Kū Māna speaks volumes about his passion for Hawaiian education and his ability to navigate the complexities of charter school administration. Under his guidance, Hālau Kū Māna has flourished, providing students with a culturally enriching educational experience while achieving academic excellence. His steadfast dedication to promoting Hawaiian culture and values within the school curriculum has undoubtedly enriched the lives of countless students and their families.

Moreover, Po'ō Kula Bunag's leadership extends beyond the confines of the school walls. He has consistently proven himself to be a supportive administrator, fostering a sense of community and collaboration among the staff, students, and families of Hālau Kū Māna. His inclusive approach to leadership has created an environment where everyone feels valued, supported, and empowered to contribute to the success of the school community.

Having worked closely with Po'ō Kula Bunag, I have witnessed firsthand his deep understanding of the challenges inherent in operating a charter school in Hawai'i. His experience, insights, and innovative solutions have been invaluable in overcoming these obstacles and ensuring the continued growth and success of Hālau Kū Māna. Po'ō Kula Bunag's ability to navigate these challenges with grace, resilience, and a relentless focus on the best interests of students and families is truly commendable.

In conclusion, Brandon K. Bunag is an exceptional leader whose vision, dedication, and unwavering commitment to Hawaiian education make him an ideal candidate for a seat on the Hawai'i State Public Charter School Commission. I wholeheartedly endorse his nomination and am confident that he will continue to make invaluable contributions to the advancement of education in Hawai'i.

Mahalo piha for considering Brandon K. Bunag's nomination. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any further information.

Me ke kākō'o mau,

**Kauikeolani Naniole**



**Agenda Item VI – A**

**NOMINATION OF BRANDON KEONI BUNAG TO SERVE AS A MEMBER OF THE STATE  
PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION**

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) recommends **SUPPORT** for the nomination of Brandon Keoni Bunag to the State Public Charter School Commission.

Mr. Bunag's unwavering dedication towards the Native Hawaiian community is evident through his extensive experience in the education sector. His passion for 'ōlelo Hawai'i and Hawaiian culture has led him to hold several professional, administrative, and community leadership roles. His aim has always been to equip and inspire students, 'ohana, and communities through education. As a makua, his invaluable perspective enables him to serve in this role holistically and comprehensively.

With his strong cultural background and deep-rooted ties to the community, Mr. Bunag is a valuable asset to the State Public Charter School Commission. His extensive experience and unique perspective will undoubtedly benefit the commission and its beneficiaries.

Therefore, OHA urges the board to affirm and appoint Brandon Keoni Bunag to the Commission. Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to provide testimony.



Wednesday, March 27, 2024

To: Chairperson Haruki, Board of Education

Subject: TESTIMONY: General Business Meeting, Action Item A, Support for Bunag

Aloha e Chairperson Haruki, Vice Chair Barcarse, and fellow educators and mentors,

This testimony is in strong SUPPORT to appoint Brandon Keoni Bunag to the State Charter Commission.

My name is Trevor Atkins. This is my 16th year teaching at a Hawaiian charter school. I also attended Connections PCS as a student prior to the New Century Charter School Ac. I wrote my masters thesis on the evolution of charter schools in Hawai'i, including building relationships with nearly every founder and/or principal. I later founded Ke Ea Hawai'i, an interscholastic student council of student representatives from all 17 Hawaiian-focused charter schools. I have also served as a local school board member at Hālau Kū Māna for two three year terms.

While I wish I could speak on behalf of more of my colleagues from all our schools, I do not have their permission on such short notice. Therefore, this is a personal testimony.

As you perhaps all know, the Charter Commission evolved out of the Charter School Review Panel. Both entities have maintained what I would describe as an antagonistic relationship with our charter schools, borrowing people and concepts from the United States, where left and right wing politics fight a civil war over the politics of education. Many of the borrowed people and concepts are ignorant of the historical context of our charter school system.

Brandon Keoni Bunag is not another borrowed person with borrowed American concepts. He has dedicated his career to strengthening public education through support for the charter schools. He volunteered for years on our local school board, prior to serving as Principal of Hālau Kū Māna during my time there as a teacher. During his tenure, he helped our school grow and advocated for all charter schools in public and community meetings.

He was an excellent school leader. We did not agree on everything, because he was not just a champion for teachers; he was also a champion for student and family needs; he weighed all stakeholders and budgetary constraints to make decisions that were not always popular, but were just and fair. For these reasons, I think he would make an excellent commissioner, capable of considering all stakeholder needs in decision-making.

Appointing Bunag is a step in the right direction toward mending the relationship between the commission and the schools. We should be working together in synergy. Just as a teacher mentors a student towards improvement, so too should the commission mentor schools--instead of bringing in foreign people to do "the dirty work" of punishing schools and manipulating the charter contracts.

In summary, I strongly support the appointment of Brandon Keoni Bunag to the State Charter Commission.

Me ke aloha 'āina,  
Trevor Atkins  
Teacher, Kanu O Ka 'Āina PCS  
Advisor, Ke Ea Hawaii

March 28, 2024

General Business Meeting

V. Committee Reports

B. Student Achievement Committee oral report on March 7, 2024

Aloha, Honorable Members of the Board of Education,

The Department's new formulation of aggregate SGP as the new "academic growth" KPI seems to provide a perverse incentive contrary to the goals of the strategic plan. E.g. a single point SGP move from 39 to 40 of 10% of students would register as a 10% gain in the new KPI, but a 20 point gain (or drop) of any number of students to an SGP score of 70 would go unregistered. By basing the KPI around a single cut-point, the highest and lowest SGP scores are made irrelevant. This is the type of bias that educators tried to leave behind after NCLB. Hopefully the Department will continue to publish the MGP which will provide another check to effective "growth".

Furthermore, by blurring the effects of the highest and lowest "growth" scores the department might be obscuring interesting information. E.g., comparing "proficiency/growth" chart provided by the Department, using the Department's new "growth" formulation, to a similar one presented by the creator of the SGP model but using the more common MGP shows a much sharper trend using MGP (both attached below). Of course these are different data sets, but it might be instructive to see if the Department's chart using MGP would show a more distinctive trend. Again, if the Department continues to publish the MGP these trends could be more clearly studied.

The suggestion for more information about SGP is a good one, as SGP is the underpinning of this important new KPI and the Department of *Education* should promote more understanding not less questioning. SGP is a powerful tool, but is known to be easily misunderstood:

SGPs (and related conditional measures) do not actually answer the question "how much did my child grow?" and that students could actually decline in performance across years, but still receive a high SGP ... Such contradictions in the reporting of students' test performance are likely to confuse parents and educators, thus having the opposite effect than intended on improving the educational process.<sup>[1]</sup>

and

Two of the three words in the SGP acronym are potentially misleading. First, SGPs are not percentiles that would be reported on a score scale but percentile ranks that take on values from 1 to 99. Second, SGPs do not describe "growth" as much as conditional status, as the developer of the metric has noted...<sup>[2]</sup>

The Department's switch from the more common cohort-reference to baseline-reference for their SGP calculations is understandable to try and capture post-pandemic effects, but should be watched carefully. There are good reasons why the baseline-referenced SGP were hardly ever used before the pandemic even though the technique was well known. Eg the Smarter Balanced Consortium itself has the following warning:

“The additional drawback of baselined SGPs over SGPs is that they are susceptible to scale drift. Because the scores are always treated as if they had occurred in the baseline year, any drift in the scale will cause baselined SGPs to be inaccurate to the degree that the scale has drifted.”<sup>[3]</sup>

Others looking at using baseline vs cohort reference data for SGP:

... idiosyncrasies in the linking or equating process used to make scores comparable across years, which will cancel out when students are compared to their own cohort, can be mistaken for changes in student progress when using baseline SGPs. To date there has been little research about how large these effects might be and how best to detect them. Finally, the use of baseline-referenced SGP and MGP statistics does not change the primary nature and interpretation of SGPs and MGPs as descriptive statistics of student progress. While both cohort and baseline-referenced SGPs provide useful descriptive information beyond average test scores, neither type of SGP can provide a direct indicator of school or district effectiveness without additional information<sup>[4]</sup>

SGP is widely used and is subject to much research. We hope the Department keeps us all abreast of such so we all can be alerted to any discoveries relevant to our students and schools.

[1] Craig S. Wells & Stephen G. Sireci (2020): Evaluating Random and Systematic Error in Student Growth Percentiles, Applied Measurement in Education, DOI: 10.1080/08957347.2020.1789139

[2] Clauser, A. L., Keller, L. A., & McDermott, K. A. (2016). Principals' uses and interpretations of student growth percentile data. Journal of School Leadership, 26(1), 6–33.  
doi:10.1177/105268461602600101

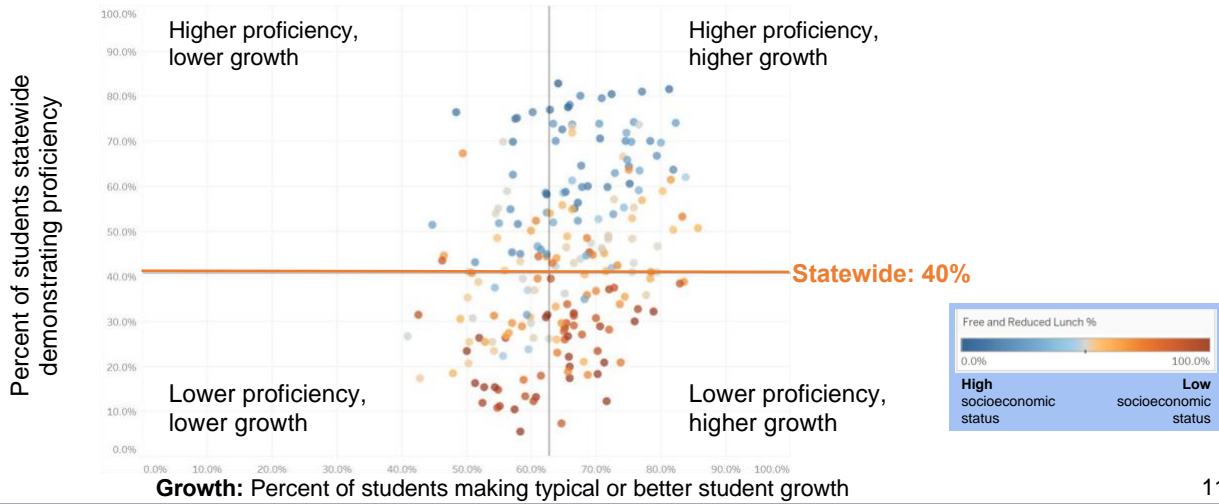
[3] A Guide to Understanding and Selecting Measures of Growth for Smarter Balanced Members  
May 22, 2016

[4] Comparison of 2019 Cohort and Baseline Student Growth Percentiles. November 2020.  
Benjamin R. Shear

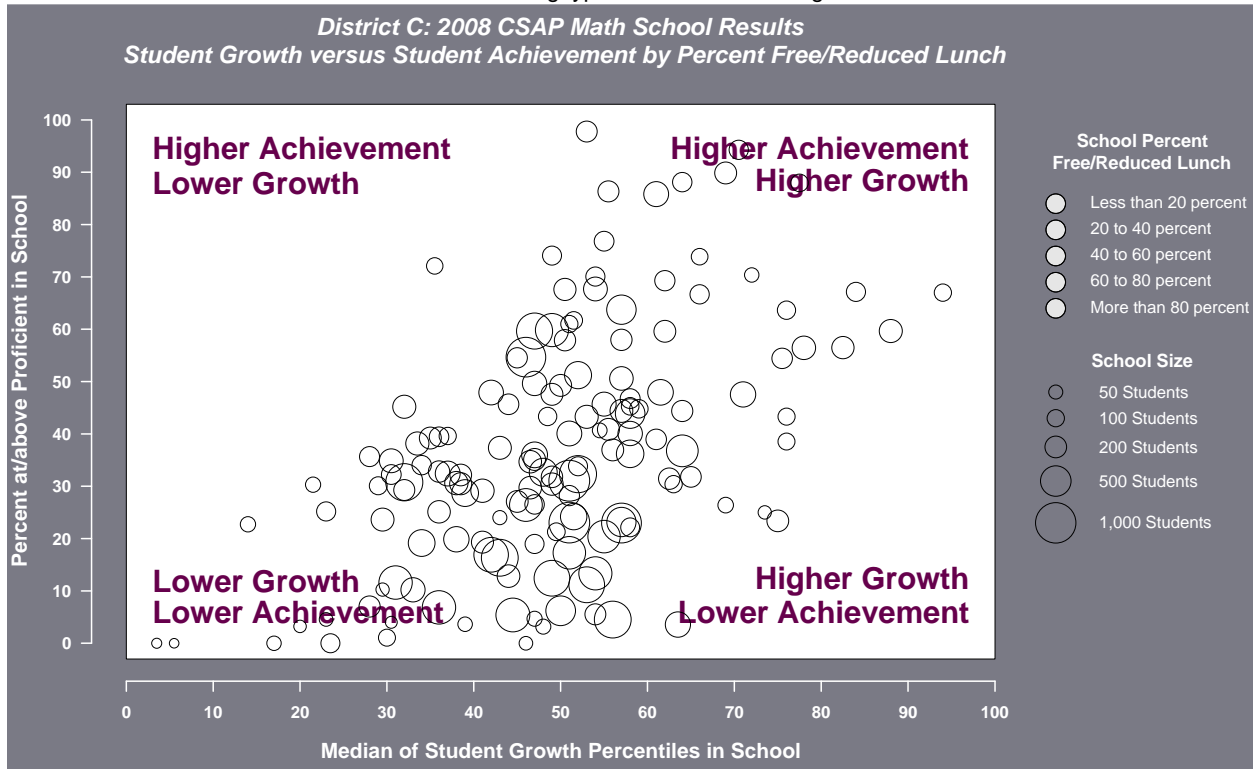


# Proficiency Rates - Math, 2023

Highly correlated with students' socioeconomic status



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<[https://community.ksde.org/Portals/44/Documents/Betebenner\\_Presentation\\_121310.pdf](https://community.ksde.org/Portals/44/Documents/Betebenner_Presentation_121310.pdf)>