



*You're Someone Special*

May 15, 2023

Testimony

Derek Kurisu, Executive Vice President, KTA Super Stores

General Business Meeting

Testimony for Superintendent Keith Hayashi

It is with great pleasure that I write this testimonial letter in support for Superintendent Keith Hayashi. I am Derek Kurisu, the Executive Vice President of KTA Super Stores. Being one of the largest Hawai'i Island owned businesses, KTA Super Stores is involved with many DOE Schools on our island.

I first met Superintendent Hayashi many years ago when he was the principal of Waipahu High and I was a speaker at a career readiness class. When Keith Hayashi became the interim superintendent, he invited me to a one on one breakfast meeting before visiting the schools on Hawai'i Island. At that meeting, he asked for my opinion on how the DOE can better serve the needs of businesses and organizations on our island. He wanted to collaborate with businesses and organizations to insure students were ready for the workplace and become productive citizens on our island. Superintendent Hayashi made me feel like conversing with a friend instead of a person at a high level. After our meeting, I felt the outer islands are finally being heard. From that day, Superintendent Hayashi is the only DOE Superintendent I know who visits our Hawai'i Island DOE schools several times in a year to talk to our students, teachers, and administrators as well as touring the campuses.

Superintendent Hayashi belongs to the Hawai'i Executive Collaborative. The Hawai'i Executive Collaborative is made of CEO's, Owners, Presidents and leaders of all Hawai'i's businesses and organizations as well as legislative leaders. The HEC's mission is to work together to make Hawai'i a better place. I belong to this organization and my role is to insure all of the members are comfortable and their needs are met. I observed Superintendent Hayashi, unlike any of the past DOE Superintendents, he networks, collaborates, and mingles with all members at this 3 day problem-solving conference. He is not afraid of discussing those tough educational issues. He answers those hard questions, creating a win-win solution with all Hawai'i leaders and decision makers. He is well respected because he shows his sincerity to give every student the opportunity to succeed to make Hawai'i a better place. I know our Governor, our Mayors, Legislators, and company leaders would not hesitate to communicate with Superintendent Hayashi if needed.

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*You're Someone Special*

At the conference, I recall Superintendent, Hawai'i Island Mayor Roth, and I had a conversation on High Schools internships for Hawai'i County. Our County, businesses, as well as the entire State of Hawai'i are facing labor shortages. Superintendent Hayashi believed high school students doing internship or working part time might be a solution. The DOE is currently working with our Hawai'i County to create a hiring and internship program. If this model succeeds, business like KTA will be able to adopt such a program. Also at that conference, Hawai'i Executive Collaborative members decided that they wanted to improve the most underserved communities in the State of Hawai'i. They chose the district of Ka'u where surveys showed that 88% of the Ka'u High School students come from economically disadvantaged families where 80% are on the free lunch program. Test scores, students' progress and college readiness were below average. The survey claims students at Ka'u High school are falling behind other students in the State. At that time, the school was closed due to the Covid -19 pandemic and support was needed from the DOE to feed the students and have the internet connection in the outlying areas of Ka'u. Only 40% of the high school students were attending class since the DOE focused on College Readiness and did away with those industrial arts and hands-on classes. Hawai'i Executive Collaborative got involved and discovered major changes needed to be made to accomplish our task. With Superintendent Hayashi's support, we made the necessary changes. The Hawai'i Executive Collaborative provided the support, funding, found the missing elements, and created Ka'u Dream, a advisory committee chaired by First Lady Dawn Ige. Global Learning Lab concept was created to engage students in "hands-on" learning activities like in the past. They also integrate subjects among the different classes in the school to keep the students interest.

Today, as you enter Ka'u High School, you see the agriculture program growing vegetables. They are harvesting and donating to the food hub in Ka'u. My Farms, a non-profit agriculture organization in Japan, teaches and helps with the school's organic garden. They have a culinary program that teaches and creates value added products from what's grown in their school garden. They have a media program where students are learning about computer designing. This enabled a student to create pictures for a book written by a retired school principal that was published and given to most Hawai'i Island schools.

Ka'u High School also has early college classes articulated between Hawai'i community college and Ka'u High School. This past year, there were about 18 students earning credits from Hawai'i community college early college program. They were able to attend and receive their certificates at the Hawai'i Community College

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*You're Someone Special*

Commencement ceremony. This not only brought pride to the school but to the entire Ka'u community. Today, students are now motivated to come to school to prepare themselves for a career or college. Thanks to the support of Superintendent Hayashi, who was willing to take chances and risk his job and reputation to help the students, school, and District of Ka'u.

As you can see, Superintendent Hayashi believes in career readiness. He knows the importance of preparing every student to become a productive citizen. He wants every students to attend college, trade school, military, or join the workforce after graduation. Superintendent Hayashi not only talks but is willing to pursue anything that benefits our students and community.

I could describe in detail of Superintendent Hayashi as a tremendous leader in the State of Hawai'i. Being someone who worked from the bottom to the top, he understands what it takes to improve our schools. Perhaps this is why he is a strong believer in preschools. Giving every student an equal opportunity to get a start in education. He is well respected by other leaders, the community, as well as our educators! I am a strong supporter of Superintendent Keith Hayashi. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at (808) 959-4575 ext.40328, cell phone at (808) 989-5555, or e-mail at [derek\\_kurusu@ktasuperstores.com](mailto:derek_kurusu@ktasuperstores.com).

Sincerely,

Derek Kurisu  
Executive Vice President  
KTA Super Stores

PHONE: (808) 959-4575

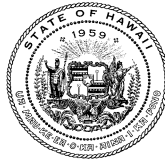
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JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
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JADE T. BUTAY  
DIRECTOR

WILLIAM G. KUNSTMAN  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

MARICAR PILOTIN-FREITAS  
ADMINISTRATOR

**STATE OF HAWAII  
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS  
KA 'OIHANA PONO LIMAHANA  
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT DIVISION**

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May 16, 2023

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HAWAII DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SUPERINTENDENT  
KEITH HAYASHI**

TO: The Hawaii Board of Education

RE: BOE General Business Meeting, May 18, 2023 at 1:30 pm  
AGENDA ITEM VI.C: "Board Action on Human Resources Committee  
recommendations concerning Superintendent's evaluation for 2022-2023 School  
year: end-of-year evaluation"

Dear Chair Voss and Board Members:

The Hawaii State Workforce Development Council (WDC) strongly endorses the leadership of the Superintendent of Education, Keith Hayashi and validates his excellent performance for the 2022-2023 school year.

The WDC, a federally-funded board attached to the Hawaii Department of Labor, is composed of 41 members representing a cross-section of business, government and labor, and its primary purpose is to support those sectors with barriers to employment, high-needs population, ex-offenders, single parents as well as industries in need of employees.

In pursuit of our objectives throughout the past two years, we have worked closely with Superintendent Hayashi and his team, and can therefore address this section in the Hawaii Board of Education evaluation process:

**PART B: Professional Standards: Transformative Leadership Competencies  
NAVIGATION:**

- Builds and effectively leverages political capital and partnerships with key allies, families and community members to support and advance their efforts
- Recognizes the assets that exist in the communities served and seeks to authentically understand their needs

The WDC is extremely pleased with the strong partnership we have forged with the Hawaii Department of Education (HIDOE) under the leadership of Superintendent Hayashi. His vision of career pathway opportunities for students and adults entering career and college is very much aligned with our vision at WDC. During the past two years, we have met and communicated with him and his team on a regular basis and these interactions are highly productive as Superintendent has been able to galvanize resources within the HIDOE and



relevant organizations to further our mutual goals.

Armed with his past experiences at Waipahu High School, Superintendent Hayashi certainly understands the issues related to workforce development and has been instrumental in the meaningful results.

Here are a few examples:

- 1) We are expanding learning in areas of Welding, Smart Farming, Aviation, Commercial Driving License (CDL), IT, Health, Advance Air Mobility (Japan) and Artificial Intelligence Traffic Control (NEC). WDC has been working with HIDEOE on implementing the Workforce Development Diploma and the Career Foundation Certificate which the Governor signed into law last year.
- 2) To address the needs of immigrants in schools, WDC and HIDEOE will be implementing the Seal of Biliteracy and the Global Seal of Biliteracy in a Linguistic Career Pathway. An interpreter strand within this pathway will be developed to implement in the health, criminal justice, agriculture and other academies. This will hopefully also address the teacher shortage.
- 3) WDC and HIDEOE are exploring the possibility of developing a Compact of Free Association (COFA) training video for use by the Hawaii Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR) to increase employment opportunities.
- 4) In partnership with the WDC Employer Engagement Committee businesses and trade unions, HIDEOE will expand career exploration into middle schools and eventually into elementary schools such as Waikele Elementary in order to launch students on a career pathway sooner.
- 5) The WDC Youth Services committee has provided resources for students to explore Smart Farms (Korea), Artificial Intelligence Traffic Control (NEC), and Design Thinking for Micronesian Leaders. In addition, resources were brought in from Korea, Japan, Missouri and Louisiana over the past few months to help students demonstrate their classroom learning through workshops and competitive events.

In summary, Superintendent Hayashi has been nothing but authentic in advocating for student success. We are mindful that the success of HIDEOE and the WDC are linked, and we hope that our journey as partners can continue under the able guidance of the Superintendent. We have faith that the promise of a brighter future for our *keiki* lie ahead.

We strongly urge the Board of Education to give a favorable evaluation of Superintendent Keith Hayashi. Please let us know should you have further questions.

Mahalo for your kind consideration. Mahalo for your service to our State.

Very Respectfully Yours,

Hawaii State Workforce Development Council

Alan Hayashi, Chair

Cary Miyashiro, Chair, Sector Strategies & Career Pathways Committee

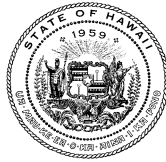
Brian Tatsumura, Chair, Employer Engagement Committee

Ian Kitajima, Chair, Youth Services Committee

CC: Bennette E. Misalucha, WDC Executive Director

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



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May 16, 2023

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HIDEOE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

To: The Board of Education

Re: BOE General Business Meeting, May 18, 2023  
Agenda Item: V.B: "Board Action on Hawaii Public Education 2023-2029  
Strategic Plan (Phase II, Implementation Plan)"

Dear Chair Voss and the Board of Education,

The Hawaii State Workforce Development Council (WDC) supports the Hawaii Public Education 2023-2029 Strategic Plan.

Our primary purpose is to support those with barriers to employment and sectors in need of employees.

The Workforce Development Council is making a deliberate effort to align the needs of businesses and labor using the Hawaii Department of Education's (HIDOE) Career Pathways. We are working with the HIDOE's new Workforce Development Branch and have doing joint projects making learning real for students and prepare them for future jobs. We'd like to expand learning in welding, smart farming, Aviation, Commercial Driving License (CDL), IT, health and AI traffic control.

The Sector Strategies & Career Pathways Committee is working the UH's Hawaii Language Roadmap Initiative, UH Community College, Office of Revitalization, Chaminade University and Workforce Development Branch to address the needs of immigrants in schools and the community building a linguistic/ translator career pathway that leads into education to meet the teacher shortage. An interpreter strands will be developed and implemented in the health, criminal justice, agriculture and other academies. We will create

a Compact of Free Association (COFA) training video for use by the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR)

In partnership with the Employer Engagement Committee businesses and trade unions, HIDOE can expand career exploration into middle schools and eventually into elementary like Waikele Elementary.

Over the past few months, resources were brought in from Korea, Japan, Missouri and Louisiana help students demonstrate their classroom learning.

We support the Hawaii Public Education Plan and will collaborate for student success.

The outcomes of the Hawaii Department of Education and the Workforce Development Council are in alignment with getting Hawaii's youth in the workforce.

Respectfully submitted,

Hawaii State Workforce Development Council

Alan Hayashi, WDC Chair

Cary Miyashiro, Chair, Sector Strategies & Career Pathways Committee

Brian Tatsumura, Chair, Employer Engagement Committee

CC: Bennette E. Misalucha, Executive Director



May 15, 2023

Hawai'i State Board of Education

P.O. Box 2360

Honolulu, Hawai'i 96804

RE: Testimony in Support of Superintendent Keith Hayashi

GENERAL BUSINESS MEETING on May 18, 2023 at 1:30PM

Gentlemen,

It is our privilege to submit testimony in support of the evaluation of Keith Hayashi in his capacity as Superintendent of the Department of Education for the 2022-2023 School Year.

I am submitting this testimony both personally and as Chairman of the Hawai'i Executive Collaborative, a 501c3 community backbone organization of business CEOs and leaders in government, labor, education and the community.

While Keith's work in leading the Waipahu complex is legendary, it's remarkable that he has been able to bring that same kind of transformational leadership to the entire DOE system. He is visionary, an out-of-the-box thinker who is not stuck on the past, and is clear on where he wants to take public education and how he will help lead Hawai'i get there.

In the past, many of us viewed the DOE administration as a bureaucratic impediment to reaching and educating our children. But with Keith Hayashi as our Superintendent, it appears that those sentiments have shifted because of our outsiders view that he and his administration is: 1) focused on results rather than process; 2) bringing care and commitment to teacher and administrative development; and 3) reaching out and collaborating with business with sincere efforts in building community partnerships.

It's truly refreshing to have someone in Keith Hayashi, whom we trust in such an important leadership role for Hawai'i's children.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Duane Kurisu", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Duane Kurisu



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Michael W. Beasley, Esq.

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May 15, 2023

Mr. Bruce Voss, Chair & Members  
Hawaii Board of Education  
State of Hawaii  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Aloha, Chair and Members of the Hawaii Board of Education:

Re: Evaluation of Hawaii Department of Education (HIDOE) Superintendent  
Keith Hayashi, SY 2022-2023.

My name is Herb Lee, Jr and I am the President & CEO of the Pacific American Foundation (PAF), a native Hawaiian serving non-profit organization since 1993. Our mission is to “improve the lives of all Pacific Americans through service with dignity, courage, humility, and competence.”

PAF has had a long-standing partnership and working relationship with the Hawaii Department of Education since 1998.

During Mr. Hayashi’s tenure as State Superintendent, we have met on a number of occasions to share ideas, discuss strategies and implement solutions that have a particular but non-exclusive interest in helping native Hawaiian children k-12.

Specifically, we currently serve 17 schools on the Windward side in the implementation of the Nita M. Lowey 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center program (approximately 1,600 students daily) and the implementation of the “Community School” model program in Olomana, and Waimanalo schools.

PAF is the owner of the Waikalua Loko Fishpond which is a 400 plus year old cultural site that has been utilized as both a classroom and research facility with the HIDOE and the University of Hawaii.

We also serve approximately 3,000 to 5,000 students from the HIDOE per year utilizing Waikalua Loko I’a (fishpond) as one of the largest “community classrooms” on the windward side. Since the year 2000, we have trained over 6,000 teachers across the State of Hawaii in award winning culture-based curricula in all academic core areas.

Career planning and development has been a cornerstone of our educational programs in providing more choices for students and families to consider as both early college and post- secondary opportunities to complement what we teach them in the k-12 system.

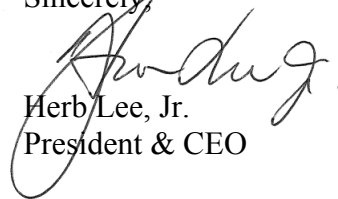
We are very honored to partner with the HIDOE and further exploring the implementation of farm to school programs, early college programs and developing a new Regional Technical Assistance Center for K-12 schools in partnership with Windward Community College.

In all of this, Keith Hayashi has been both a respected and trusted thought partner, innovative and always focused on finding solutions to solving the challenges of the day especially in this “post pandemic” time.

He has been a great transformative leader, understands the challenges of the day and now as Superintendent, we hope to continue to implement and celebrate even more successes especially for the most-hardest hit Title 1 schools in our respective districts.

I am honored to share this very enthusiastic letter of support and look forward to continuing the journey together to meet the needs of our students, families and beloved community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Herb Lee, Jr.", with a large, stylized loop at the end.

Herb Lee, Jr.  
President & CEO





david.miyashiro@hawaiikidscan.org  
hawaiikidscan.org

David Miyashiro  
Executive Director

May 18, 2023

Hawaii State Board of Education  
General Business Meeting  
Bruce Voss, Chairperson  
Kaimana Barcarse, Vice Chairperson

Aloha Chair Voss, Vice Chair Barcarse, 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 Action Item B: Board Action on Hawaii Public Education 2023-2029 Strategic Plan (Phase II, Implementation Plan)**

Given the significant investment of time and feedback in the strategic and implementation plans to this point, we believe that this process is ready to come to a close. Overall, these plans are well-positioned to support and guide our education system and schools to reach new heights in the years ahead. We've provided numerous comments and suggestions through this process, and we feel like this feedback has been adequately incorporated.

Moving forward, we did want to again strongly encourage the DOE to create ample opportunities for community groups and individual stakeholders to continue engaging through formal processes such as task forces, stakeholder convenings, and committees for the appropriate goals and action items. Such an approach lives up to the framework of ne'epapa that guides the DOE.

Mahalo for your consideration,

David Miyashiro  
Founding Executive Director  
HawaiiKidsCAN



**Subject:** Testimony

**Name:** Aarika Riddle, Executive Director of Kristi Yamaguchi's Always Dream

**Meeting:** Board of Education General Business Meeting on May 18, 2023

**Agenda Item:** VI.C. Board Action on Human Resources Committee recommendations concerning Superintendent's evaluation for 2022-2023 School Year: end-of-year evaluation

**Position:** Support

May 15, 2023

Hawaii State Board of Education

[testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov](mailto:testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov)

Dear Hawaii State Board of Education,

On behalf of Kristi Yamaguchi's Always Dream, I am pleased to provide testimony in support of Superintendent Keith Hayashi's evaluation for the 2022-2023 school year. Always Dream is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that has been partnered with the Hawaii Department of Education since 2014. Our mission is to ensure children from low-income communities have access to high-quality books in the home environment and extensive family engagement support.

In July 2022, Always Dream launched a five-year strategic plan to expand our *Always Reading* program across the state of Hawaii. By 2027, our goal is to increase the number we serve with our program five times, reaching 4,000 individuals served annually. This family engagement program rooted in early literacy provides a digital tablet, digital children's library, a data connection (if no wifi at home), physical books, and the support of a family literacy book coach to all of the pre-k and kindergarten students enrolled in the program. Our book coach is a true differentiator, adding capacity for classroom teachers around family engagement. Through curriculum text messages, tracking of reading data on the digital library, and being available to troubleshoot and/or provide accountability, our book coaches act as an extension of the student's teacher to ensure that families increase their knowledge of family reading and increase their family's engagement with books. Studies show that family engagement is the number one predictor of early literacy success. Reading with a child at a young age helps develop their brains, vocabulary, and their interest in reading. The early brain development and language acquisition that comes from families spending intentional time reading at home prepares young students for when they begin formal phonics and comprehension instruction.

Superintendent Hayashi has demonstrated the leader competency of Navigation by partnering with Always Dream to become deeply knowledgeable about our work. Beyond taking the time to meet with myself and our leadership team to understand barriers to expansion, Superintendent Hayashi identified funds to help us serve over 900 individuals across 32 pre-k and kindergarten classrooms on Oahu, Molokai, and Hawaii island. He has been instrumental in our efforts to reach new communities by showcasing our *Always Reading* program among Complex Area Superintendents at one of their regular leadership meetings.

Superintendent Hayashi has also made recommendations of Complex Areas to prioritize so that we can reach more vulnerable populations that could truly benefit from our family engagement and early literacy offerings. As a result of this insight, next school year Always Dream is committed to design a rural model of our program

to better serve communities with less infrastructure and will be looking to add increased language support in Marshallese and Chuukese. Looking ahead to the 2023-2024 school year, we are excited about the projected 1,400 individuals we will serve across 40 classrooms.

Superintendent Hayashi has shared with us that he considers the Department's partnership with Always Dream as being critical to the success of public school students. We are committed to students and families enrolled in Title 1 public schools across the state and grateful for the support of Superintendent Hayashi to get more families reading together at home. Under Keith Hayashi's leadership as Superintendent, we are encouraged that the intersection of family engagement and early literacy will continue to be prioritized for Hawaii's students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Aarika Riddle". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Aarika" being more prominent than the last name "Riddle".

Aarika Riddle  
Executive Director  
Kristi Yamaguchi's Always Dream



david.miyashiro@hawaiikidscan.org  
hawaiikidscan.org

David Miyashiro  
Executive Director

May 18, 2023

Hawaii State Board of Education  
General Business Meeting  
Bruce Voss, Chairperson  
Kaimana Barcarse, Vice Chairperson

Aloha Chair Voss, Vice Chair Barcarse, and Members of the Committee,

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**HawaiiKidsCAN would like to offer comments for Action Item B: Board Action on Hawaii Public Education 2023-2029 Strategic Plan (Phase II, Implementation Plan)**

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Moving forward, we did want to again strongly encourage the DOE to create ample opportunities for community groups and individual stakeholders to continue engaging through formal processes such as task forces, stakeholder convenings, and committees for the appropriate goals and action items. Such an approach lives up to the framework of ne'epapa that guides the DOE.

Mahalo for your consideration,

David Miyashiro  
Founding Executive Director  
HawaiiKidsCAN



Board of Education

Human Resources Committee Testimony (Action Item II A)

And General Business Meeting (Action Item IV C)

Susan A. Pcola-Davis

May 18, 2023

II. Recommendation for Action

A. Committee Action on Superintendent's evaluation for 2022-2023 School Year: end-of-year evaluation.

| RATING           | CHARACTERISTICS   |
|------------------|---|
| Highly Effective | Performance has continually exceeded expectations and has had an exceedingly positive impact on students, staff, community relations and/or program outcomes.               |
| Effective        | Performance consistently meets expectations and maintains effective results, satisfactory program outcomes, and good relations with students, staff, and community members. |

Superintendent Priority 1: Work collaboratively with the Board to develop a comprehensive implementation plan for the Department by **April 2023** to execute the Board-approved strategic plan.

**OPPOSE HIGHLY EFFECTIVE**

**EFFECTIVE:** Performance consistently meets expectations with input from the Board when expectations are not met and changes course.

**Deadline Not Met:** Comprehensive Plan was presented on May 4, 2023 with added adjustments.

Although the team restructured the draft due to feedback at the April 6, 2023, Special Meeting, the public did not receive any explanations of these changes at the May 4, 2023, meeting leaving terminology not used previously unexplained.

Here are some very unclear examples, from my May 4<sup>th</sup> testimony and still confusing;

- Shifting from identifying strategies to achieve the goals, to identifying action items to achieve the desired outcomes.
- Action items will guide the Department towards meeting the objectives of the Board-approved strategic plan.
- Measuring Progress as measures identified to assess the Department's progress in implementing these action items.

The Department met specificity but left out **TARGETS**.

Regardless of the number of principals testifying their support, without TARGETS, no one will know if the goals are being met or when to change course. Explanations with rhetoric and not data will be disappointing.

This is evident by the following indicator;

- 1.3 The implementation plan **does not include** a plan and timeline to align the Department's resources to achieve the objectives of the Board's strategic plan and to provide effective and efficient support to schools, including the review and adjustment of Department programs, organization of the Department for the effective and efficient implementation of the strategic plan, and reconfiguration of the Department's budget for the efficient and cost-effective implementation of the strategic plan.

The Public would like to see timeline based on this indicator for:

- Review and adjustments of Department programs.
- Organization of the Department for the effective and efficient implementation of the strategic plan.
- Reconfiguration of the Department's budget for the efficient and cost-effective implementation of the strategic plan.

Using the timeline as a guide to follow progress on these three parts of Indicator 1.3.

Superintendent Priority 3: Actively and intentionally engage in professional growth.

#### **Support**

#### **EFFECTIVE with comments**

Referencing Exhibit B: The Broad Center's "The Dimensions of Leadership: Transformative Leaders,"  
SEPTEMBER 2018, Page 4-Transformative Leader Traits

More coaching needs to focus on these traits:

EMPATHY: Understands and shares the feelings of others.

COURAGE: ...in the face of pressure from powerful stakeholders and political forces.

RESILIENCE: Responds positively in the face of setbacks.

SELF-AWARENESS: THIS IS A CRITICAL TRAIT.

#### **SELF-AWARENESS**

- Identifies and reflects upon their own strengths and weaknesses
- Able to accurately assess how they are perceived by others
- Aware of how their behaviors and actions impact others
- Understands their own identity, power, privilege, and access, as well as the impact on work and decision making

DEVELOPMENT ORIENTATION: Regularly solicits feedback from colleagues and stakeholders.

Comments and questions on the Superintendent's narrative for this Priority 3.  
Lacks specifics, goals, targets, and evidence.

Explain your intentional Executive Coaching, such as specific skills to attain.  
How often do you meet with your executive coach?

Provide some of the strategies for you to be more effective to increase personal and professional productivity. Provide 1-2 examples.

Meeting management and productivity processes are skills that any superintendent should have prior to taking the position. These skills come with the territory. As a principal, taking in more information and making better management decisions are also part of the position.  
Provide 1-2 examples of how you have improved these skills.

During these coaching sessions, what are the skills you are learning to improve your communications?

Without some kind of report, the Board and the Public are expected to know your progress. It is better to identify several examples of this improvement. This coaching is considered professional development. How many hours are spent per week? How many hours in total? Is your calendar marked off for these sessions?

An informal report could have been evidence in how you found yourself "Highly Effective."

Things that could have already happened:

- Consultation with the Board Chair to determine the frequency, content, and protocol of the periodic reports, as I have identified above.
- The Board's past practice has always included a "Superintendent's Update." That is the Board's kuleana to ensure this is a standard agenda item for the General Business Meeting, not so much the Special Meetings.

Board of Education

GBM Meeting Testimony

Susan A. Pcola-Davis

May 18, 2023

#### IV. Action Items

B. Board Action on Hawaii Public Education 2023-2029 Strategic Plan (Phase II, Implementation Plan)

C. Board Action on Human Resources Committee recommendations concerning Superintendent's evaluation for 2022-2023 School Year: end-of-year evaluation (**See HR Committee testimony**)

#### **Action Item IV B**

#### **COMMENTS:**

Page 4: Added revisions to the Implementation Plan

References to testimonies at the May 4, 2023 meeting regarding Performance Indicators, Targets, Measuring Progress and developing KPI targets waiting for a recommendation from the Department during SY2023-2024 **anticipated in December 2023 leaves our principals, teachers and students without a compass.**

The use of the SY2022-23 performance can be used as "at least" a baseline, regardless of the COVID-19 disruption. Hawaii's education system needs a place to start.

#### **JUST WAIT UNTIL DECEMBER 2023 is menacing.**

Specifically referencing these two paragraphs:

There is a difference between the words "criticize" and "feedback."

***Criticism focuses almost entirely on the problem. It points out the problem (often many times) without providing or suggesting a practical, workable solution. Feedback focuses on recognizing the problem and then working with the recipient to come up with ways to resolve issues, correct problems, and move forward.***

*e. Arguments against the recommendation:*

*Individuals who provided feedback throughout the process, including testimony at the May 4, 2023 Board Special Meeting, often recommended specific actions or activities to be included in the Implementation Plan. In many cases, the actions or activities are consistent with the Action Items in the Implementation Plan. However, the **level of detail** that stakeholders recommended is appropriate for a work plan or for consideration in schools' academic plans. Information collected during the process-including testimony or feedback from surveys-is being shared with those responsible for planning.*

*Some testimony at the May 4, 2023 Board Special Meeting on the draft Implementation Plan **criticized** the Department for not including performance targets in the Implementation Plan. As described during the March 23, 2023 Board Special Meeting, the Department is engaged in a serious effort to recommend KPIs and targets. As noted in the "Key Performance Indicators of Student Learning" section of the Implementation Plan, the Department plans to develop targets for the KPIs during 5Y2023-24 with a recommendation anticipated in December 2023. Given the unprecedented disruption of COVID-19 on schools and learning, the Department will consider the 5Y2022-23 student learning data to propose rigorous, yet realistic state-level targets for the KPIs.*



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

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## Testimony for the Hawaii State Board of Education on Superintendent Keith Hayashi's performance for the 2022-2023 school year

1 message

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**Kirk Smiley** <kirk@donorschoose.org>  
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, May 16, 2023 at 5:19 AM

Hawaii Board of Education,

The following is official testimony of support for Superintendent Keith Hayashi's performance in the 2022-2023 school year. This testimony is to be shared both at the Human Resources Committee Meeting and at the General Business Meeting, both on May 18, 2023. My title and contact information are below.

During the 2022-2023 school year, DonorsChoose partnered with Superintendent Hayashi and the Hawaii Department of Education to fund individual classroom resources requested by Hawaii public school teachers. The program allowed the state's teachers two opportunities to participate, once in the fall semester and once in the spring semester, by creating projects on the DonorsChoose website for specific educational materials that would help their students continue their academic or social-emotional learning in light of COVID-19. Through the program, 5,040 classroom resource projects were funded benefitting 3,617 teachers and 280 Hawaii schools. These projects funded by the department empowered teachers to get the classroom materials that would be most impactful for their students, truly giving voice to the front lines of public education in the state by listening to and understanding their needs. Teacher's projects ranged from STEM supplies ([like studying paleontology](#)) to SEL and cultural learning experiences ([like this project affirming Hawaiian, Ilokano and Filipino culture and identity](#)) to literacy supplies ([like this project teaching students to read](#)) and so much more. Through this partnership, the DonorsChoose team vetted each teacher's request and made sure the materials were shipped to the teacher's school as quickly as possible while also keeping the school principal informed.

On top of that amazing impact, one of the most innovative components of our partnership with Superintendent Hayashi was how this program leveraged a partnership with an anonymous donor who matched all the funding provided by HIDOE to support teachers' projects. While DonorsChoose has run a similar program in six states, our partnership in Hawaii is the only one that includes this matching component to support twice as many teachers and students as otherwise possible. Superintendent Hayashi's commitment to the state's teachers and students has allowed us to continue growing this anonymous donor's matching donation over the last two years. In addition, the partnership helps Hawaii teachers learn how to use the DonorsChoose charity throughout the school year to meet even more of their classroom resource needs or desires, and in those cases, receiving funding from the national community of 5 million DonorsChoose donors, corporate partners, and foundation supporters. Through Superintendent Hayashi's leadership, by leveraging support of both individual education advocates in Hawaii and across the country, Hawaii teachers have received more than \$6 million in funded projects during the 2022-2023 school year.

We are grateful to Superintendent Hayashi for being a leader among state education leaders, truly exhibiting the leadership trait of 'Navigation,' and working across multiple stakeholders and the community to empower Hawaii teachers while advancing student learning and COVID-19 recovery.

With great appreciation,  
Kirk Smiley

-----  
**Kirk Smiley**

Managing Director, Advocacy and Public Partnerships | DonorsChoose

317-403-9233 | [kirk@donorschoose.org](mailto:kirk@donorschoose.org) | @AKirkSmiley

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May 16, 2023

Hawai'i State Board of Education

P.O. Box 2360

Honolulu, HI 96804

Email: [testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov](mailto:testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov)

RE: TESTIMONY in Support of Superintendent Keith Hayashi at the General Business Meeting on May 18, 2023, Agenda Item VI.C

Dear Hawai'i State Board of Education Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony for the General Business Meeting in strong support of the Hawai'i Department of Education (HIDOE) Superintendent Keith Hayashi's evaluation for the 2022-2023 school year: end of year evaluation. My name is Denise Yamaguchi, and I am the Executive Director of the Hawai'i Agricultural Foundation (HAF). HAF is a non-profit organization created to promote agriculture and farming in our community. Our organization has partnered with the HIDOE since 2014, providing a continuum of ag education programs from K-12 for Hawai'i's public school students that are designed create promote careers in agriculture. We work with both the Career Technical Education and Workforce Development programs of the HIDOE.

Prior to Hayashi's tenure as superintendent and as principal at Waipahu High School, he encouraged his teachers to look beyond HIDOE programs to find the best possible opportunities for students. While at Waipahu, Hayashi's teachers participated in HAF programs, including our Young Entrepreneurs and In the Fields programs, designed for students to explore agriculture as a career. And, as superintendent, Hayashi has continued his support of HAF programs, demonstrating his commitment to leveraging partnerships and opportunities that bring important standards-aligned education programs to Hawai'i's public school students. During the 2022 – 2023 school year, under Hayashi's leadership, 198 teachers at 117 schools have partnered with HAF to bring important agricultural education programs to more than 6,000 students statewide. Hayashi is a transformative leader that understands both HIDOE and community needs and leverages partnerships and relationships with community organizations like HAF so that HIDOE and HAF mutually benefit and succeed.

Within applicable rules, HAF wholeheartedly supports Superintendent Keith Hayashi's tenure as the superintendent for the HIDOE. Should you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me, (808) 927-9749.

Mahalo,



Denise Hayashi Yamaguchi, Executive Director



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

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## Fwd: Testimony for May 18, 2023 Board of Education General Business Meeting

1 message

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**Neil Blomberg** <neil.blomberg@k12.hi.us>

Tue, May 16, 2023 at 7:39 AM

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

May 18, 2023

Hawaii State Board of Education

General Business Meeting

Agenda Item VI.C.

Dear Chairperson Voss, Vice Chairperson Barcarse, and members of the Board,

I am writing with comments on the Agenda Item VI.C., Board Action on Human Resources Committee recommendations concerning Superintendent's evaluation for 2022-23 School Year: end-of-year evaluation

As a newer administrator, it can be very challenging to manage the unique needs of the school that I work at, and also to push my school in the direction that the larger state system demands. In my twenty years in the Department of Education, I have seen state leadership that was hands off and unresponsive to the needs of schools, and I have also seen leadership that was overly prescriptive, trying to squeeze change through a very narrow channel of thinking, with uneven results. I am thankful that for the past two years our state leadership team, led by Superintendent Hayashi, has seemed to find the right balance.

We have had direction and focus on student needs, and a call to use data driven decision making to support our students. My school has received fantastic support and encouragement from every state office that I have been in contact with this school year. Welcome changes to hiring systems and practices are currently making the hiring process more predictable and orderly. The focus on career and college objectives has helped give directions to our school wide initiatives here at Kanoelani Elementary. Finally, the clear direction around ESSER funding and purpose has allowed me to make correct decisions in allocating resources and support for the future of my school and its students.

Superintendent Hayashi has tasked us with positive changes, but he does not share vague goals and leave all the work to us. He creates systems and structures that support schools. His implementation plans and ideas reflect someone who has worked in schools and has led positive change himself. He is an inspirational leader to schools because he has done it himself, and now he has supported and tasked all schools with making our own positive impacts.

I sincerely hope that the board sees his success the same way I do. An inspirational and charismatic leader who brings about positive change, a superintendent who has presided over academic achievement success across the state coming out of the pandemic, and the right person to continue to lead us in the years ahead.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,

Neil Blomberg

TA Principal

Kanoelani Elementary School

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@TeachForAmericaHawaii



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@TFAHawaii



An AmeriCorps Program

May 16, 2023

Chair Bruce Voss  
Hawai'i State Board of Education  
PO Box 2360  
Honolulu, HI 96804



RE: Testimony in support of VI.C. Board Action on Human Resources Committee recommendations concerning Superintendent's evaluation for 2022-2023 School Year: end-of-year evaluation

Aloha Chair Voss and Members of the Board,

Teach For America Hawai'i (TFA) is pleased to provide this written testimony in support of Superintendent Hayashi's evaluation. In particular, we affirm that the Superintendent has been highly effective in the transformative leader competency of Navigation.

As a leadership development organization dedicated to educational equity for all Hawai'i students, TFA has worked closely with the HIDOE for a number of years to resource schools in historically-marginalized communities. In the past, our formal partnership with the HIDOE has focused solely on recruiting high-quality teacher candidates for hard-to-fill placements. While we continue this important work, we have appreciated Supt. Hayashi's ability to take an expansive view of how we can effectively partner to advance HIDOE/BOE priorities. This has allowed us to maximize our efforts to nurture a healthy pipeline of outstanding teachers and educational leaders and implement innovative programs to promote student achievement.

This school year, we increased our investment in Hawai'i public schools through new programs like the Ignite Tutoring Fellowship and Reading Buddies program. Both programs facilitate research-based interventions to provide small group literacy instruction and inspire younger students through meaningful interactions with older mentors. This summer, we are preparing to partner with six HIDOE schools to provide summer learning opportunities for students. These initiatives are a few examples of ways Supt. Hayashi has leveraged our core capabilities of talent sourcing, matching, and development in innovative ways to impact Hawai'i's keiki.

Supt. Hayashi's leadership has also allowed us to establish a collaborative relationship with many teams across HIDOE. For example, key stakeholders from the HIDOE Leadership Institute actively supported our recent School Leadership Summit to provide mentorship and development to our current and rising school administrators. We are also growing our collaboration with HIDOE's induction and mentoring team.

We attest that Supt. Hayashi is an empathetic systems leader who has effectively built strategic partnerships to advance the interests of Hawai'i public school students.

Mahalo,

Jill Baldemor

**TEACHFORAMERICA**

Hawai'i

One day, all children in this nation will have the opportunity to obtain an excellent education.

Executive Director  
Teach For America Hawai'i



May 18, 2023  
General Business Meeting

Dear Chair Voss and Members of the Board,

We would like to comment on Action Item VI. B., Board Action on Hawaii Public Education 2023-2029 Strategic Plan (Phase II, Implementation Plan)

As a Coalition advocating for students who often do not have a voice, we encourage the DOE not only to focus on inputs, which are described through the action items in the implementation plan, but on **student outcomes**, particularly in lifting up our high needs, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students. We look forward to the DOE setting tangible targets and meeting them.

We also hope to **see more transparency and outcomes in the Office of Facilities and Operations** so that stakeholders can have confidence that students' basic needs are being safely met, and in the **Office of Fiscal Services**, so that the public knows that **taxpayer dollars are being used strategically for impact**.

We also expect **improved communication between the DOE and the public** and expect updates on progress being made in this area.

We look forward to working collaboratively with the DOE for exciting and positive change.

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

Education Institute of Hawai'i

\*Faith Action for Community Equity

Fresh Leadership LLC

Girl Scouts Hawai'i

\*HawaiiKidsCAN

\*Hawai'i Afterschool Alliance

\*Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and  
Economic Justice

\*Hawai'i Association of School Psychologists

Hawai'i Athletic League of Scholars

\*Hawai'i Children's Action Network

Hawai'i Education Association

Hawai'i Nutrition and Physical Activity  
Coalition

\* Hawai'i State PTSA

Hawai'i State Student Council

Hawai'i State Teachers Association

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.*



May 15, 2023

Board of Education  
General Business Meeting  
Thursday, May 18, 2023, 1:30 p.m.

Subject: Superintendent Self-Assessment Evaluation, 2022-2023 School Year

Testimony of: Gary K. Kai, Executive Director, Hawaii Business Roundtable

Board of Education:

My name is Gary Kai and I am the Executive Director of the Hawaii Business Roundtable. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Superintendent Hayashi's performance.

As many of you know, the Hawaii Business Roundtable (HBR) is a statewide organization made up of Chief Executive Officers of many of the largest companies in Hawaii. While it is made up of business leaders, the Hawaii Business Roundtable is a community organization focused on broad community issues. The children of our employees make up a very large segment of our public-school population so taking care of our schools is really about taking care of our ohana. As such, the HBR partners with government, private, non-profit and other community organizations, to continue to improve our public schools in order to build a stronger future for Hawaii and its keiki.

Superintendent Hayashi plays a key role in creating the public-school system we all want for our children and we consider him to be very effective in all areas of his self-assessment. We have worked with Keith during his tenure at Waipahu High School, his tenures as Interim Superintendent and Superintendent, and have a great deal of faith in his strong leadership capabilities.

In particular, the area described as Navigation is of great significance for the HBR. We all agree that the joint mission should be to unlocking opportunity and economic freedoms which empowers our children to reach their full potential. Workforce development is one of the key platforms of the HBR and one of our goals with Superintendent Hayashi is to develop a system-wide plan which will provide these opportunities for all students and not limited to certain schools or districts. He has a proven track record of providing meaningful education opportunities beyond the classroom by utilizing the partnerships he has developed in the community. The HBR is committed to working with the Superintendent and we understand that this a long-term commitment and not an overnight transformation. He has been an active leader in this effort, as we engage, not just the business community but government and community leaders.

We consider Superintendent Hayashi to be a very effective leader and we look forward to continuing our work to support him and the Board of Education in accomplishing its strategic vision for our public-schools and our children.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit our support for Superintendent Hayashi.

Gary K. Kai, Executive Director  
Hawaii Business Roundtable





## Testimony for May 18, 2023 Board of Education General Business Meeting

1 message

**Janette Snelling** <janette.snelling@k12.hi.us>  
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, May 16, 2023 at 9:08 AM

May 18, 2023  
Hawaii State Board of Education  
General Business Meeting  
Position: Comments Agenda Item VI.C.

Dear Chairperson Voss, Vice Chairperson Barcarse, and members of the Board:

Thank-you for the opportunity to provide my comments to agenda item VI.C.  
Committee action on Superintendent's evaluation for 2022-2023 School Year: end-of-year evaluation. With unequivocal support I provide comments in regard to his body of work over the last year. In my 37 years as a proud member of the HDOE workforce, I have worked under many superintendents. Superintendent Hayashi's performance stands out for reasons not limited to the following:

- He is an accessible leader. Through this year, he has been a hands-on leader. He has been present with state and complex leaders, principals, visited my schools in the HKKK complex area, and has exercised follow through to address every concern or need that have come up during the visits. He is committed to his word and has always "walked the talk."
- He is a decisive and thoughtful decision maker. As an example, he has made tough decisions to lead the department out of the residual COVID health impacts. Even when not popular, every decision has been made with the best data available and in the best interests of students and staff in mind.
- He is an accessible leader. Through this year, he has exercised hands-on leadership. He has been present with state and complex level leadership, principals, visited my schools in the HKKK complex area, and has followed through to address concerns or needs that have come up. He is committed to his word and has always walked the talk.
- He brought significant partnership collateral to the table to broaden opportunities in career and college readiness for students. He created avenues for schools to extend learning opportunities through Work-based learning, internships, externships for teachers, exploration, and connected me to community and industry partners to assist my schools.
- His leadership in developing the department's implementation plan for the State Strategic Plan is an example of his strong, collaborative leadership. He involved staff at all levels in all complex areas through a meaningful and intentional process to develop a plan that fosters ownership and inspires action. The plan provides me with a clear framework of his priorities that align the goals of the strategic plan and provides me as a Complex Area Superintendent with the flexibility on how to best achieve the outcomes with my complex schools.
- Superintendent Hayashi has established clear systems of communication and operations. He has advocated for professional learning communities at the leadership level to ensure that as leaders, we have time to collaborate and learn from our colleagues and have access to the resources to be successful.

By example, Superintendent Hayashi has inspired me to lead with integrity, foresight, creativity, and to not buckle under adversity. The work that we are tasked with at all levels of the department is challenging; but we have a leader who has a clear vision and mission for the department and can inspire a collaborative effort to execute the plan with ownership and accountability. Thank-you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,

Janette Snelling  
Complex Area Superintendent  
Honokaa-Kealahou-Kohala-Konawaena Complex

--

**Janette Snelling**  
Complex Area Superintendent  
West Hawaii Complex Area

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May 16, 2023

Hawaii State Board of Education

General Business Meeting

IVA: Human Resource Committee Report on Committee Action on Superintendent's Evaluation for 2022-2023 School Year: End-of-Year Evaluation

Position: Support

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Dear Chairperson Barcase, Vice Chairperson Asher, and members of the Board,

As the Educational Specialist and State Office Teacher entrusted with leading the [Hawai'i State Teacher Fellowship Program](#), it is with great enthusiasm and a deep commitment to education that we share the experience we have had working with Superintendent Keith Hayashi.

The Hawai'i State Teacher Fellowship Program runs out of the Office of Talent Management's Leadership Institute and is an initiative aimed at empowering and supporting exceptional teachers across the state of Hawai'i.

The primary goal of the fellowship program is to provide selected teachers with unique opportunities for professional growth and leadership development. Fellows are chosen through a rigorous selection process, considering factors such as their teaching effectiveness, commitment to their students' success, and their potential for making a broader impact in the field of education.

Once selected, fellows receive a range of opportunities and support including:

- Professional Development Opportunities: The program offers professional development experiences specifically tailored to enhance their teaching skills, instructional strategies, and leadership abilities.
- Networking and Collaboration: Fellows become part of a vibrant community of educators, forming connections with other exceptional teachers across the state. This networking enables them to share ideas, collaborate on projects, and learn from one another's experiences, fostering a culture of continuous improvement in Hawaii's education system.
- Policy Engagement: The program also seeks to elevate teachers' voices in education policy discussions. Fellows have the opportunity to engage with policymakers, education leaders, and community stakeholders to provide valuable input based on their expertise and classroom experiences.

- **Mentorship and Coaching:** To further support fellows' professional growth, the program pairs them with experienced teacher-leader mentors who provide guidance, feedback, and support throughout their fellowship journey.
- **Leadership Opportunities:** The fellowship program encourages fellows to assume leadership roles within their schools, districts, and communities. This has involved leading professional development sessions, sharing their stories and ideas through writing, and facilitating student and teacher focus groups to inform policy.

Furthermore, we recognize the importance of collaboration and partnership within our education ecosystem. We are dedicated to working closely with education stakeholders and policymakers to ensure the fellowship program aligns with our shared vision for educational excellence in Hawaii.

For the past two years, Superintendent Keith Hayashi has been critical in the success of the Hawai'i State Teacher Fellowship Program. His genuine interest in teachers' experiences and ideas was evident in our first meeting with him, where we described the fellowship program work and goals. He asked us, *"What do you need and how can I help?"* When we explained that by forging strong partnerships and engaging in ongoing dialogue, we could amplify the impact of this program and drive systemic change across our schools, Superintendent Hayashi enthusiastically agreed to meet with the fellows on a regular basis.

This school year alone, he joined us for two Saturday in-person convenings where he shared Department updates, listened to their successes and challenges, and brainstormed innovative next steps with them. The fellows also look forward to their monthly "Coffee and Conversations" online meetings with Superintendent Hayashi, where they spend an hour together sharing their perspectives on a relevant and timely educational topic. The conversations draw out school-level examples and the diversity of thought around access to teacher leadership, innovation, enhancing communication, scaling of pilot projects, strategic plans, and Nā Hopena A'o. During the meetings, Superintendent Hayashi listens deeply, asks key questions to move ideas forward, and shares openly, with the fellows leaving every conversation feeling heard, inspired, and empowered to make a change, knowing that they have a visionary leader in their corner.

We have been consistently impressed by Superintendent Hayashi's dedication, expertise, and ability to lead our Department in a positive direction. When working with our teacher fellows, he has shown that he is able to build relationships and communicate complex issues and challenges in a clear and understandable manner, helping to build trust and support in our community.

We look forward to our continued work with Superintendent Hayashi to further ensure the best possible education for our students.

Sincerely,

*Kristen Brummel*

Kristen Brummel  
Educational Specialist

*Kristi Oda*

Kristi Oda  
State Office Teacher



## HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Hale o nā Luna Makaʻāinana*

STATE OF HAWAII  
STATE CAPITOL  
415 SOUTH BERETANIA STREET  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

May 15, 2023

Honorable Chair Voss and Board Members:

As a member of the Hawaii State Legislature and Chairperson of the House Education Committee, I am writing to express my support for Superintendent Keith Hayashi.

Superintendent Hayashi has been an essential partner in the Legislature's efforts to improve education in our state. Throughout the Legislative session, he worked closely with me and other lawmakers, providing valuable insights and input on critical issues affecting our schools. His dedication to transparency and collaboration has been invaluable in building strong relationships between the Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) and the Legislature.

I have been particularly impressed with Superintendent Hayashi's passion for ensuring that all students in Hawaii have access to high-quality education. His tenacity and commitment to the Department were essential in shepherding the Department through the challenges presented by the COVID-19 virus. This was evidenced by the results of Hawaii's National Assessment of Educational progress (NAEP) scores. While the national average NAEP score saw a decline, Hawaii's scores have risen.

As a representative of the people of Hawaii, I believe that Superintendent Hayashi is the right person to continue leading our state's education system forward. I have no doubt that under his leadership, we will continue to see improvements not only in academic performance but also in the overall well-being of our students.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Superintendent Keith Hayashi.

Sincerely,

Representative Justin H. Woodson

---

**Hawai'i State Capitol**  
415 S Beretania Street Room 405  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

**Representative  
Justin H. Woodson**

District 9  
Kahului, Pu'unēnē, and portion of  
Wailuku

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Education

**Member Committees on:**  
Agriculture & Food Systems  
Energy & Environmental Protection  
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**808-586-6210**  
[repwoodson@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:repwoodson@capitol.hawaii.gov)

**Name:** Hilo-Waiakea Complex Educational Officers  
**Title:** Special Education District Educational Specialist  
**Organization:** Hawai'i Department of Education  
**Meeting:** Superintendent Evaluation  
**Position:** Support

May 15, 2023

Dear Board of Education Members and Superintendent Hayashi,

“The Hawaii State Board of Education ("Board") was established by the Hawaii State Constitution, which grants the Board the power to formulate statewide educational policy.” (2023, BOE Website). Educational Policy must be built on sound educational research and the community it serves. Policy should be built on an agenda that identifies demonstrable evidence of success and know-how. As licensed professional PreK-12 educators, we understand that our clients are not only the students we serve. That is, the Post-Secondary Institutions, Communities, and Organizations whom these students will uplift when they depart PreK-12 education. No other institution has the responsibility of developing innovative learning experiences for fields that do not yet exist. It is imperative as an educational institution that we are led by a professional educator who understands the needs of a global economy while grounding ourselves in the uniqueness of Hawai'i.

Superintendent Hayashi understands that change does not happen overnight- especially for an organization that is the largest public employer in the State of Hawai'i. His leadership ethos is grounded in an understanding of a naturalistic system (Wheatley, M., 2006, Leadership and the New Science).

- One that understands that with change **first** comes chaos and we need to **adjust and not micro-manage or control the outcomes**. Superintendent Hayashi led the department of education through a series of significant changes: Covid, a new Superintendent, a new Board coupled with a Strategic Plan. *During this time he set clear expectations, however, allowed all school-communities to enact what worked given their unique situations. We work better together- Ne`epapa.*
- **Second**, we need to **build relationships and trust with all stakeholders**. *Above all Superintendents in recent memory, Superintendent Hayashi has made a point of visiting not only with the State Leadership and Principals, but Teachers, District Staff, Support Staff, and Community Events. Demands for change and innovation do not work, listening and supporting does. We work better together- Ne`epapa.*
- **Third**, we need to **communicate effectively**. As the largest employer in the State of Hawai'i, this is no easy task; however, *Superintendent Hayshi has communicated with us every step of the way his plans (based on the field's*

*feedback) and how they will be actualized. We have collegial dialogue where he seeks our input, and therefore, our communities input. Weekly communication mirrors the deliverables that come from the State office. There is continuity with communication that is unparalleled. We work better together- Ne`epapa.*

- **Finally, Keith continues to have a vision for public education that is inclusive of all students and stakeholders.** *He has no hidden agendas or pet projects he would like to push forward. This has an interconnectedness that pulls every stakeholder together rather than divide the schools from the complex and the State or divide the complexes from neighbor complexes, or island from island. We work better together- Ne`epapa.*

If professional educators were allowed the opportunity to elect their leadership, there would be no question Superintendent Hayashi would be the professional with the experience, community partnerships, communication, a clear understanding of what Public Education is, and has no hidden agenda to push or permeate public education. Board of Education Members, as a public entity, please acknowledge the overwhelming support from professional educators and approve Superintendent Hayashi's continued contributions in leading public education in Hawai'i.

Todd Yanagi

Todd Yanagi (May 15, 2023 14:42 HST)

Anne Kauhi

Anne Kauhi (May 15, 2023 15:38 HST)

Kara Uchida

Kara Uchida (May 15, 2023 13:54 HST)

Jaysen Akena

Jaysen Akena (May 15, 2023 10:03 HST)

Keala Ili

Keala Ili (May 16, 2023 10:15 CDT)

Dawn E. Palmerston

Dawn E. Palmerston (May 15, 2023 10:02 HST)

Travis Toriano

Travis Toriano (May 15, 2023 13:49 HST)

Vincent Venzon

Vincent Venzon (May 15, 2023 13:30 HST)

Pola Umemoto

Pola Umemoto (May 15, 2023 10:07 HST)

Tyson Tomono

Tyson Tomono (May 15, 2023 15:18 HST)



**Name:** Hilo-Waiakea Complex Educational Officers  
**Title:** Special Education District Educational Specialist  
**Organization:** Hawai'i Department of Education  
**Meeting:** Superintendent Evaluation  
**Position:** Support

May 15, 2023

Dear Board of Education Members and Superintendent Hayashi,

“The Hawaii State Board of Education ("Board") was established by the Hawaii State Constitution, which grants the Board the power to formulate statewide educational policy.” (2023, BOE Website). Educational Policy must be built on sound educational research and the community it serves. Policy should be built on an agenda that identifies demonstrable evidence of success and know-how. As licensed professional PreK-12 educators, we understand that our clients are not only the students we serve. That is, the Post-Secondary Institutions, Communities, and Organizations whom these students will uplift when they depart PreK-12 education. No other institution has the responsibility of developing innovative learning experiences for fields that do not yet exist. It is imperative as an educational institution that we are led by a professional educator who understands the needs of a global economy while grounding ourselves in the uniqueness of Hawai'i.

Superintendent Hayashi understands that change does not happen overnight- especially for an organization that is the largest public employer in the State of Hawai'i. His leadership ethos is grounded in an understanding of a naturalistic system (Wheatley, M., 2006, Leadership and the New Science).

- One that understands that with change **first** comes chaos and we need to **adjust and not micro-manage or control the outcomes**. Superintendent Hayashi led the department of education through a series of significant changes: Covid, a new Superintendent, a new Board coupled with a Strategic Plan. *During this time he set clear expectations, however, allowed all school-communities to enact what worked given their unique situations. We work better together- Ne`epapa.*
- **Second**, we need to **build relationships and trust with all stakeholders**. *Above all Superintendents in recent memory, Superintendent Hayashi has made a point of visiting not only with the State Leadership and Principals, but Teachers, District Staff, Support Staff, and Community Events. Demands for change and innovation do not work, listening and supporting does. We work better together- Ne`epapa.*
- **Third**, we need to **communicate effectively**. As the largest employer in the State of Hawai'i, this is no easy task; however, *Superintendent Hayshi has communicated with us every step of the way his plans (based on the field's*

*feedback) and how they will be actualized. We have collegial dialogue where he seeks our input, and therefore, our communities input. Weekly communication mirrors the deliverables that come from the State office. There is continuity with communication that is unparalleled. We work better together- Ne`epapa.*

- **Finally, Keith continues to have a vision for public education that is inclusive of all students and stakeholders.** *He has no hidden agendas or pet projects he would like to push forward. This has an interconnectedness that pulls every stakeholder together rather than divide the schools from the complex and the State or divide the complexes from neighbor complexes, or island from island. We work better together- Ne`epapa.*

If professional educators were allowed the opportunity to elect their leadership, there would be no question Superintendent Hayashi would be the professional with the experience, community partnerships, communication, a clear understanding of what Public Education is, and has no hidden agenda to push or permeate public education. Board of Education Members, as a public entity, please acknowledge the overwhelming support from professional educators and approve Superintendent Hayashi's continued contributions in leading public education in Hawai'i.

Angie Graham

Angie Graham (May 15, 2023 10:22 HST)

Bryan Arbles

Bryan Arbles (May 15, 2023 11:08 HST)

TIERNEY BARCLAY

TIERNEY BARCLAY (May 15, 2023 09:51 HST)

Bert Bibilone

Bert Bibilone (May 15, 2023 10:25 HST)

Kimberly Castillo

Kimberly Castillo (May 15, 2023 10:42 HST)

Heather Dansdill

Heather Dansdill (May 15, 2023 10:31 HST)

David Dinkel

David Dinkel (May 15, 2023 10:02 HST)

Trini Hironaga

Trini Hironaga (May 15, 2023 10:14 HST)

Kasie Kaleohano

Kasie Kaleohano (May 15, 2023 10:00 HST)

Esther Kanehailua

Esther Kanehailua (May 15, 2023 10:58 HST)

Kurt Kawachi

Kurt Kawachi (May 15, 2023 11:51 HST)

Kelcy Koga

Kelcy Koga (May 15, 2023 10:12 HST)

Suzanne M. Ochi

Tiffany Pratt

Polly Quigley

Polly Quigley (May 15, 2023 10:06 HST)

Jennifer Sueoka

Jasmine Urasaki

Jasmine Urasaki (May 15, 2023 23:19 HST)



To: Hawaii State Board of Education Chairperson Bruce Voss  
Members of the State Board of Education

From: Alex Harris, Vice President for Programs

Date: May 16, 2023

Re: Agenda item VI.B. "Board Action on Hawaii Public Education 2023-2029 Strategic Plan (Phase II), Implementation Plan"

The Hawaii State Board of Education (Board) approved the first phase of an ambitious six-year Strategic Plan in February 2023. **We stand in support** of that phase as well as the second phase of the Plan: the Department of Education's (Department) companion Implementation Plan.

As you know, the Harold K.L. Castle Foundation was asked by former Board of Education chair Catherine Payne to provide financial support so the Board could retain the services of the National Association of State Boards of Education for a superintendent search, strategic plan and evaluation. We gladly provided this support in recognition that our complex system of public education demands clear direction and leadership.

Your work together is now at a critical juncture. It is imperative that this strategic plan go beyond mere words on a page to set real direction for the public K-12 education system that leads to concrete action and ultimately to results.

Your data retreats clearly show that many students struggle academically and emotionally as learning was disrupted and hasn't fully recovered. Too few leave high school with a clear path to a strong future. At the same time, we see bright spots all across the state. But these inspirations alone are not enough to move our system forward which is why such disturbing gaps persist. We must pair record financial resources with ambitious implementation, measuring progress while we go.

We urge you to approve this Implementation Plan so that the Board and Department can jointly move forward together. Now is the time to put ideas into action. Thank you for your consideration.

State of Hawaii  
Board of Education

Testimony by  
Waipahu Complex Principals

May 18, 2023

Relating to Agenda Item II.B. "Committee Action on Superintendent's evaluation for 2022-23  
School Year: End-of-Year Evaluation"

The Waipahu Complex Principals offer the following comments regarding Superintendent Keith Hayashi's remarkable leadership over the course of his career and especially in this last year as Superintendent. He has built systems that have transformed communities and he has an ability to create environments where people from varying backgrounds and experiences come together for the sake of improving public education in Hawaii. His relationships among all stakeholders will continue to strengthen and transform our department.

Superintendent Hayashi's leadership is inspiring. He is relentless in his support of principals and encourages us to continually seek innovative ways to strengthen our school for the benefit and growth of all students. As Waipahu Complex colleagues, we witnessed first hand how Keith, as the former principal of Waipahu High School, not only transformed the culture of the school, but the entire community. Superintendent Hayashi is always advocating for student voices to be heard, while challenging and supporting his peers to be bold and innovative instructional leaders. He has a vision for the department that includes committing to collaborate with all stakeholders, discovering new educational opportunities, and prioritizing students' academic, social and emotional development. His understanding and experience as a systems thinker will help the Department of Education move forward as he leads and guides us to meet the expectations and goals as outlined in BOE's new Strategic Plan and the DOE's Implementation plan.

In his short time as superintendent, Mr. Hayashi has proven that he trusts and values the expertise and experience of school leaders. In creating the Implementation Plan, he solicited input from the field and made adjustments to ensure that the plan insisted on attaining high standards through reasonable measures. In turn, an overwhelming number of public educators trust and respect Superintendent Hayashi and we are confident that, under his direction, the department will see growth, achievement and success.

Collectively, the Waipahu Complex Principals applaud our Superintendent for leading the way during these challenging times. He strives to be collaborative, but will make difficult decisions when called to do so. The students we serve are his beacon of light and this drives him to continue to insist on providing the best opportunities and experiences for all of our students, staff, and families. He is deeply committed to public education and we strongly urge the board to consider a favorable evaluation for Superintendent Hayashi in this, his first year. We look

forward to continuing to support all students in our schools in Waipahu and across the state under Superintendent Hayashi's leadership.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully Submitted,

Waipahu Complex Principals

Alika Ahu, Kalei'opu'u Elementary School  
Pat Anbe, Waipahu Community School for Adults  
Alvan Fukuhara, Waipahu Intermediate School  
Stacy Kawamura, Honowai Elementary School  
Hanh Nguyen, August Ahrens Elementary School  
Sheldon Oshio, Waikele Elementary School  
Zachary Sheets, Waipahu High School  
Aaron Tominaga, Waipahu Elementary School

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR



KEITH T. HAYASHI  
SUPERINTENDENT

JANETTE F.L. SNELLING  
COMPLEX AREA SUPERINTENDENT

**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**KA 'OIHANA HO'ONA'AUAO**  
**OFFICE OF THE COMPLEX AREA SUPERINTENDENT**  
**WEST HAWAII COMPLEX AREA OFFICE**  
**75-140 HUALALAI ROAD**  
**KAILUA KONA, HAWAII 96740-3723**

May 1, 2023

Dear Chair Voss and Board Members,

Over the past months, there have been opportunities for staff and community to provide input into the state strategic plan. We held informational meetings for all staff members during the drafting of the implementation phase of the plan. During this time, feedback was gathered to assist in determining the strategies and performance indicators to best achieve the desired outcomes for the Board approved goals. As principals, we also have been included in providing feedback for both the initial and current iteration of this phase of the strategic plan. We appreciate the value that Superintendent Hayashi and his leadership team has placed on school-based leaders and staff in this process.

The proposed strategies are aligned to a Board-approved goals and desired outcomes. We appreciate that the strategies are targeted to the outcomes and that they are broadly stated to support school-based decision-making and priorities. With this in hand, we have the information needed to implement the strategic plan at the school level. In effect, we are all working toward the same goals; however, the unique differences within our communities may require different ways to attain success for our students.

The plan allows schools to determine the "how" that best fits the unique school and community needs and to collaborate amongst our complex schools on areas that make sense for the greater good. As an example, the HKKK complex is moving together to firmly establish a Professional Learning Community (PLC) process to create high levels of instruction in all schools and all classrooms across our nineteen schools. In the spirit of Ne'e papa, we are working as one united body. On the other hand, our high schools will vary in the methodology used to prepare our students for future success. Three schools are doing transformational work with career academies; other schools are approaching career and college readiness using a different path. The pandemic caused major disruptions in learning; however, schools are already using data to chart the course forward. There is an urgent need to have an implementation plan in place to anchor our work.

If you have been able to visit our schools this year, we are sure that you witnessed both the great work that is happening and the challenges that schools face because of ongoing COVID impacts and socioeconomic challenges. Our schools are looking forward to continuing to refine our efforts to address the holistic needs of our students and to support our staff. As leaders of our schools and complex area, we are committed to implementing innovative strategies and meaningful opportunities for our students and our staff.

We support the Hawai'i Department of Education's Implementation Plan. The current plan reflects educator voices at all levels; a feat that has not happened to this extent in previous plans. Your approval of the plan reflects your confidence in school-based leadership and decision-making. Our schools have recently submitted our Academic and Financial plans for SY 2023-24. We know that there may be adjustments that need to be made and the sooner we have the final draft, the better able we are to ensure that we are ready to implement when the new school year begins. Implementing the plan will allow our schools to move forward to achieve the desired outcomes of the BOE's Strategic plan and ultimately, ensure student success.

With Best Regards,

HKKK Principals

Glenn Gray, Principal *Glenn Gray*  
Glenn Gray (May 1, 2023 17:01 HST)  
Holualoa Elementary School

Noreen Kunitomo, Principal *Noreen Kunitomo*  
Noreen Kunitomo (May 1, 2023 19:38 HST)  
Honaunau Elementary School

Ericka Blanco, (TA) Principal *Ericka Blanco*  
Ericka Blanco (May 1, 2023 20:24 HST)  
Honoka'a High and Intermediate School

Rory Souza, Principal *Rory Souza*  
Rory Souza (May 1, 2023 17:03 HST)  
Honoka'a Elementary

Tammy Yoshimura-Furrer, Principal *Tammy Yoshimura-Furrer*  
Tammy Yoshimura-Furrer (May 1, 2023 17:40 HST)  
Hookena Elementary School

Kori Takaki, Principal *Kori Takaki*  
Kori Takaki (May 1, 2023 17:05 HST)  
Kahakai Elementary School

Wendy Daniel, Principal *Wendy Daniel*  
Wendy Daniel (May 1, 2023 17:22 HST)  
Kealakehe Elementary School

Dr. James Denight, Principal  
Kealakehe High School

Janice Blaber, Principal *Janice Blaber*  
Janice Blaber (May 1, 2023 20:03 HST)  
Kealakehe Intermediate School

Jessica Dahlke, Principal *Jessica Dahlke*  
Jessica Dahlke (May 1, 2023 19:31 HST)  
Ke Kula O Ehunuikaimalino School

Hannah Loyola, Principal *Hannah Loyola*  
Hannah Loyola (May 1, 2023 17:02 HST)  
Kohala Elementary School

Amy Stafford, Principal *Amy Stafford*  
Amy Stafford (May 1, 2023 17:05 HST)  
Kohala High School

Trisha Sanborn, Principal *Trisha Sanborn*  
Trisha Sanborn (May 1, 2023 17:10 HST)  
Kohala Middle School

Michael McCloskey, Principal *Michael McCloskey*  
Michael McCloskey (May 1, 2023 17:12 HST)  
Konawaena Elementary School

Ami Akeo, Principal *Ami Akeo*  
Ami Akeo (May 1, 2023 17:08 HST)  
Konawaena High School

Teddy Burgess, Principal *Teddy Burgess*  
Teddy Burgess (May 1, 2023 17:07 HST)  
Konawaena Middle School

Kris Kosa-Correia, (TA) Principal  
Paauilo Elementary and Intermediate School

Michelle Barber, Principal *Michelle Barber*  
Michelle Barber (May 1, 2023 17:07 HST)  
Waikoloa Elementary and Middle School

Tammie Picklesimer, Principal *Tammie Picklesimer*  
Tammie Picklesimer (May 1, 2023 17:23 HST)  
Waimea Elementary School

State of Hawaii  
Board of Education

Testimony by  
Waipahu Complex Principals

May 18, 2023

Relating to Agenda Item V.B. "Board Action on Hawaii Public Education 2023-2029 Strategic Plan (Phase II, Implementation Plan)"

The Waipahu Complex Principals would like to once again collectively share our support for the Department of Education's 2023-2029 Strategic Plan Phase II, Implementation Plan. We support the plan's new goals and objectives that incorporate Board and statewide strategic targets. We appreciate that we had the opportunity to give input to the plan and we wholeheartedly support the plan for the following reasons:

1. The implementation plan aligns to the Board of Education's three priorities (High-Quality Learning For All, High-Quality Educator Workforce In All Schools, Effective And Efficient Operations At All Levels) and the BOE's Strategic Plan's Goals and Desired Outcomes. The implementation plan provides guidance and focuses on continuous improvement, while empowering school communities to pursue innovative initiatives that are unique to our individual schools.
2. The implementation plan supports individual school leaders by maintaining the core mission to provide a well-rounded education for all students, and career, college, and citizenship readiness through the effective use of standards-based instruction, while promoting 21st century learning skills.
3. The implementation plan and measures connected to the Action Items, give clear direction for schools on areas of focus, yet allows schools enough autonomy to be creative and innovative on how to implement the plan.
4. The plan sets high academic and behavioral targets/goals for all schools to strive for and supports a "Plan, Do, Check, Act" system where schools continually monitor and adjust plans to meet the needs of all students. The plan also encourages the continual use of data by specifically identifying the measures for each Action Item.

We are confident that this plan will allow us to meet and exceed the expectations of our students and individual communities and are in strong support of the implementation plan. The Department of Education's ability to come together to create, discuss, amend, and ultimately support this implementation plan is a direct result of Superintendent Hayashi's leadership. We trust that Superintendent Hayashi has the best interest of the students, schools, leaders, and communities at the forefront of his mind. As difficulties or obstacles arise, we are confident that Superintendent Hayashi will support students, schools, leaders, and communities in attaining desirable growth and achievement. The Board's approval of this implementation plan will



validate the work schools are doing and recognize that the hard work we have ahead can be accomplished if we set high targets and support each other.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully Submitted,

Waipahu Complex Principals

Alika Ahu, Kalei'opu'u Elementary School  
Pat Anbe, Waipahu Community School for Adults  
Alvan Fukuhara, Waipahu Intermediate School  
Stacy Kawamura, Honowai Elementary School  
Hanh Nguyen, August Ahrens Elementary School  
Sheldon Oshio, Waikele Elementary School  
Zachary Sheets, Waipahu High School  
Aaron Tominaga, Waipahu Elementary School



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

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## Testimony for May 18, 2023 Board of Education General Business Meeting

1 message

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**Disa Hauge** <disa.hauge@k12.hi.us>  
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, May 16, 2023 at 11:08 AM

May 18, 2023

Hawaii State Board of Education  
General Business Meeting

Position: Comments on Agenda Item VI.C.

Dear Chairperson Voss, Vice Chairperson Barcarse, and members of the Board,

I am writing to comment on Agenda Item VI.C., Board Action on Human Resources Committee recommendations concerning Superintendent's evaluation for 2022-23 School Year: end-of-year evaluation

Superintendent Hayashi is an honorable person with whom I have had the honor of working for several decades. I supported his candidacy because he is a servant leader who cares about our kids and our community. Forty years in the department have taught me many things, not the least of which is that education is the foundational bedrock upon which our society thrives or falls. There are many who fail to understand the science of education; instead, they follow every new glittery fad, believe the right CEO can magically decree change, marvel at anecdotal stories, and wonder frustratingly why the system isn't producing results.

Superintendent Hayashi understands systems and their importance. He understands the critical leadership role played by principals and those in his leadership positions and has set out to build capacity throughout the system. I'll never forget one of his first meetings with us in which he implored us to be honest with him because, good or bad, he needs to fully understand to best decide. In that meeting he began building a culture of trust and relationships while also establishing high expectations for performance. He made it ok to make honest mistakes and learn from them. He leads open and honest discussions, even when they are uncomfortable and does not shy away from difficult decisions, even unpopular ones. That we've had our voice heard makes it possible to carry out the resultant decision with fidelity.

As a system, our core mission is educating our kids and preparing them for their life choices. Towards this end, Superintendent Hayashi's leadership is building within the DOE the capacity to truly educate our kids by focusing on the BOE's mandates and adhering to its policies. He believes in our kids and

in my community. I feel empowered to truly make a difference in my community because Keith believes, as do I, that schools belong to their community.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,

Disa Hauge

Interim Complex Area Superintendent, Nānākuli-Wai'anae

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.



**To:** Hawai'i State Board of Education Chairperson Bruce Voss  
Members of the State Board of Education

**From:** Terrence George, Peter Ho, Duane Kurisu, Micah Kāne, Elliot Mills, Jack Wong, and Ray Vara

**Date:** May 16, 2023

**Re:** Agenda item VI. B. "Board Action on Hawai'i Public Education 2023-2029 Strategic Plan (Phase II, Implementation Plan)"

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Together, we represent the Board and Leadership Committee of the nonprofit Hawai'i Executive Collaborative (HEC), which grew out of the Hawai'i Executive Conference. As a collective of statewide leaders aligned to advance social change in Hawai'i through collaboration across all sectors, HEC strives to improve the quality of life in Hawai'i by strengthening the economy, and building local talent. Accordingly, we work on various initiatives impacting housing, climate change, education, and workforce development.

As private sector leaders, we know that we are not experts in public education, however, several of us have deep experience in leading change in large, complex institutions—and all of us are committed to supporting unified efforts in the state administration and workforce to provide the best education for ALL students of Hawai'i.

We commend the Hawai'i State Board of Education (Board) for approving the first phase of an ambitious six-year Strategic Plan in February 2023. We stand in support of that phase as well as the second phase of the Plan: the Department of Education's (Department) companion Implementation Plan. While extremely ambitious, we appreciate the connectivity of the two plans focusing on the three priorities, 10 goals and 27 desired outcomes set forth by the Board. As with any organization, the alignment and cooperation between the Board and Administration/staff are critical to the successful implementation of any strategic plan that all of our keiki in Hawai'i deserve.

If well executed, the proposed key action items in the Implementation Plan promises to move the Department towards high-quality learning for all, provide for a high-quality educator workforce in all schools, as well as effective and efficient operations at all levels. The work envisioned by this Implementation Plan represents new and bold commitments to the students and families across our public education system.

Several elements of the Strategic and Implementation Plan align closely with the work that HEC has championed, including Outcome 1.1.1 on kindergarten readiness, Outcome 1.3.1 on K-12 career, community and civic opportunities, and Outcome 1.3.3 on students graduating high school with a plan for their future. As proud community partners of public schools in Hawai'i, we remain committed to providing continued support for our students and schools. Such support could include joint advocacy, community outreach and connection, and strategic philanthropic funding

that we will generate to co-invest in catalytic parts of the Strategic Plan, in coordination with the Department of Education.

We are also pleased that the action items are accompanied by a clear rationale and transparent measurements of success with a special focus on key groups such as students who are economically disadvantaged, have special needs, or other prioritized groups like Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders. We also appreciate the Department's willingness to confront and include longstanding issues like teacher salaries, housing, and the need for Homegrown talent, increased celebration of innovation and best practices of teachers, and deeper implementation and resourcing of HĀ in ALL schools.

We applaud the Board and Department for working so hard to listen to your constituents, for being so focused on student achievement and equity, and for working on a set of measurable outcomes that will help indicate whether our school system is on track. This bold work is complementary to the State of Hawaii's recent deep commitments to dramatically expand preschool, improve facilities, build tens of thousands of units of housing, lower the tax burden on ALICE families, who often include our teachers and school support staff. Taken together, all of these investments will help our next generation to succeed in school and beyond.

With alignment now established with a high sense of urgency, we urge you to approve this Implementation Plan, and focus on determining a realistic resource plan to ensure the Department's success. We also strongly support joint movement forward between the Board and the Department as TOGETHER is the only way such an aggressive plan with short timeframes can be achieved. We are here to support this unified direction and action for the sake of our keiki and families.

Thank you for your consideration.

Micah Kāne  
CEO & President  
Hawai'i Community Foundation

Duane Kurisu  
Chairman & CEO, aio Group  
Chairman, Hawai'i Executive Collaborative

Livingston "Jack" Wong  
Chief Executive Officer  
Kamehameha Schools

Terrence George  
President & CEO  
Harold K.L. Castle Foundation

Elliot Mills  
Vice President of Hotel Operations  
Disneyland Resort and  
Aulani, a Disney Resort & Spa

Ray Vara  
President & CEO  
Hawai'i Pacific Health

Peter Ho  
Chairman, President & CEO  
Bank of Hawai'i



May 16, 2023

Hawai'i Board of Education  
General Meeting  
Bruce Voss, Chair  
Kaimana Barcarse, Vice Chair

Aloha Chair Voss, Vice Chair Barcarse, and Members of the Board:

Mahalo for the opportunity to share some thoughts on the *Hawai'i Public Education 2023-2029 Strategic Plan (Phase II, Implementation Plan)*. We support the Department's proposed implementation plan and recommend the Board approve the plan.

We see alignment between the actions proposed in the Implementation Plan and the Desired Outcomes. It is clear that the actions proposed are based on educational best practices both in Hawai'i and throughout the country, and a thoughtful analysis of what actions will be mostly likely to make a real impact.

We see a strong commitment to helping students to develop interest in and aptitude for the pathways that they choose. This will require high quality college and career counseling as well as a strong academic foundation. Without an academic foundation in K-8, students will struggle accessing the opportunities of pathways in high school and beyond. And without knowledgeable and just-in-time college and career counseling, some students will struggle to find the right path while in high school and beyond. Hawai'i P-20 has been working with the Hawai'i DOE on the counseling initiative for the past 5 years, and we are committed to continuing this journey together.

It is also encouraging to see an emphasis on high quality high quality instructional materials in reading and mathematics. Quality instructional materials make a difference, and are a foundation upon which teachers build their curriculum. The importance of a strong foundation in literacy and mathematics in the early elementary grades cannot be overstated. Students who are academically unprepared, even those who are motivated and interested in the pathways available to them, will struggle to attain their goals. While this may sound obvious- it bears repeating that academic preparation matters, and we should equip all of the teachers with materials that will best enable them to ensure their students are ready.

We are also encouraged to see an emphasis on transitions throughout the K-12 pipeline. Students often experience disruption and difficulties at the transition points in their educational journey, whether it be from pre-school to Kindergarten, from 5<sup>th</sup> grade to 6<sup>th</sup> grade, from 8<sup>th</sup> grade to 9<sup>th</sup> grade, or from high school to whatever is next. These challenges are sometimes based on academic readiness, but sometimes it is about the degree to which students feel aloha as they move from one

school to the next. These transitions are the moments where the data shows that Hawaii's students have struggled, so action items that specifically target these transitions are logical and targeted.

Finally, we stand ready to partner on the commitment to revise the Personal Transition Plan (PTP). The PTP can be a strong tool for advancing each student's progress towards their post-secondary plans. We also know that the PTP's utility has varied in implementation throughout the state, so we are ready to work closely with the Department on this important endeavor which can be such an impactful lever to impact students' achieving their academic and career goals.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephen Schatz', with a stylized, flowing script.

Stephen Schatz  
Executive Director





**STATE OF HAWAII**  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
MAUNAWILI ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
1465 ULUPI'I ST.  
Kailua, HI 96734

May 16, 2023

Dear Chairperson Voss and members of the Board,

I am writing in regards to VI.C. "Board Action on Human Resources Committee recommendations concerning Superintendent's evaluation for 2022-23 School Year: end-of-year evaluation"

Superintendent Keith Hayashi is a dynamic leader. He is an engaged listener, hands-on, visible, and collaborative. He has a clear vision for the department and consistently seeks feedback from the field to ensure we are collectively moving forward together. Superintendent Hayashi recognizes the unique challenges each school community faces and provides school leaders the guidance and flexibility to effectively address these. Under his leadership, our schools have established systems to address the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic while also looking to the future to ensure all students are college, career, and industry ready when they graduate.

In reviewing the Superintendent Priorities and Professional Standards in Superintendent Hayashi's End-of Year Self-Assessment, I believe he has done an exemplary job in each of these categories. With our opening of the year message of ne'epapa, Superintendent Hayashi has cultivated a culture of unity and collaboration. The lines of communication between the state, complex, and school level has vastly improved during his tenure which has fostered cohesiveness within the department. Superintendent Hayashi has demonstrated he can work with all members of the school community by collaborating with the Board, community members, and school leaders to draft and revise our Implementation Plan. As a principal, I appreciate the time he commits to our Principal Forum and Complex Area principal meetings and his ability to clearly articulate where we're going as a department.

One thing that cannot be measured by a rubric or metrics is the heart and aloha Superintendent Hayashi has for our students and our public school system. This is evident when he visits schools and engages with the students and staff or when you get to talk story with him one-on-one. I strongly endorse Superintendent Hayashi and am extremely proud of all that we have accomplished together.

Sincerely,

Nathan Maeda  
Principal  
Maunawili Elementary School



This testimony addresses Action Items B - [Board Action on Hawaii Public Education 2023-2029 Strategic Plan \(Phase II, Implementation Plan\)](#) and C - [Board Action on Human Resources Committee recommendations concerning Superintendent's evaluation for 2022-2023 School Year: end-of-year evaluation](#). C is a look backwards at the department while B is a look forward, so rather than two separate cross referencing testimonies hopefully a combined document makes more sense.

The current version of the implementation plan does not differ much at all from the proposed May 5 draft. This is curious, but perhaps understandable in a disturbing way.

Testimony regarding the draft implementation plan tended to fall into 4 categories. 1) uncritical support from groups of department faculty. 2) uncritical support from the business community. 3) conditional/capitulatory support from department staff, hoping to not be forgotten or taken for granted. 4) suggestions for improvement, often looking for ways gauge the effectiveness of the implementation. That the department did not adjust its plan is extremely disappointing, but fits a pattern of disregard and accountability avoidance.

One of the best moments of the last meeting reviewing the draft implementation plan was (I believe it was) Vice Chair Barcarse's description of an Akule ball representing ne'epapa. The imagery came across vividly, even through the Webex dial-in: a shimmering collection of individuals moving gracefully as one to dodge obstacles. Beautiful. As the first category of testimony rolled in, however, a more treacherous view of an Akule ball came to mind... that of individuals clustering together as protection from a predator who would take out any who fell out of line. The amount of borderline obsequious testimony had the feel of the emperor's subjects praising his new clothes. A re-review of this testimony, though, looking past the praise, can be summarized as "They talked to us. That was nice. We need something. Just get us something, already."

The second category of overly fawning support for the draft plan, from the community of folks who are certainly beyond the reach of the superintendent and his court, had the flavor of the kind of abundant praise you give the awkward new kids on the AYSO team so they don't get discouraged. The business community needs a supply for its workforce. The particulars are not that important, so long as the department is playing for their team. During supervisor's presentation he said "workforce" perhaps dozens of times. I was listening for "college" but missed any mention. I understand that "college" becomes associated with "brain drain" but it is hard to see how graduates become "Globally Competitive" without encouraging wider aspirations than local workforce. I finally understand the full impact of "the soft bigotry of low expectations".

Given this department's tendency to give its attention mainly to the upper crust, whether in the department itself, or the community at large, while neglecting the less glamorous, it is understandable that the all but forgotten staff felt like they had to speak out, as they did for the March 23 meeting when the supervisor, in conflict with board direction, chose to propose the increased salary structure for "leadership". Mr Hayashi seems to regularly emphasize the gap

between leadership and those being managed. It is not clear if this is intentional or inadvertent, but it can't feel good.

The last and apparently least regarded set of testimony was that which suggested room for improvement. While the category 1 testifiers did express overwhelming appreciation for the opportunity to give input, it was less clear how or even if that input was synthesized into the plan. What is clear is that none of the input from the "room for improvement" crowd had any effect. Most curious is the lack of acknowledgement of the input from the Kaiapuni community, especially with an explicit Action Item for Desired Outcome 1.1.4 being:

- 2 Develop a strategic plan for Kaiapuni education (SY2023-24).

The superintendent gives himself the top grade of "Highly Effective" for Superintendent Priority 1: Work collaboratively with the Board to develop a comprehensive implementation plan for the Department by April 2023 to execute the Board-approved strategic plan. This is extremely curious since by his own admission he had to negotiate an extension because he did not understand the original assignment. Grade inflation might be a tactic to avoid being discouraging, but in the long run it just leads to a distorted perspective. True, he did manage to get unvarnished support from the first two categories of testifiers, and he may attribute that to his self-perceived skill in "Navigation", for which he also grades himself top-notch, but there is reason to believe that these are perspectives varnished with their own agendas. I hope the board will remain clear-eyed and unintimidated when grading.

In his self-evaluation the superintendent asserts that he has "focused considerable effort to rebuild and strengthen trust – trust across and within our state offices; trust between the schools, complex areas, and state offices; and trust between the public education system and the school communities." Attached are recent articles which suggest this effort has not been entirely successful. Can we trust the department to follow through with its implementation promises eg to address the professional staff pay? to reduce the achievement gaps (not by bringing the average down, but by lifting the neglected up)?

The current department's Modus Operandi seems to be to do what it wants without regard to guidelines, outside advice, or even laws, and then fill the decision making room with vocal supporters in hopes that sufficient marketing and/or pr will overcome any opposition. We've seen this at the Maui LUC meetings (he got a government official to ask if he was creating a "hostage situation" for crying out loud), on March 23, and this last board meeting to approve the draft implementation plan. Perhaps there is a level of impunity which comes from knowing that there is strong Bishop Street backing, and it is disturbing. The business community needs a workforce, but the high-needs kids need mold free classrooms, bathrooms that are sanitary and safe, and to be able to read, add and subtract.

### **Holualoa Elementary, Hawaii Island Feb 2023**

"We can't rely on their promises without seeing the action being taken. We saw some activity right after the first press conference (in February)... (but) that's not necessarily complete action,"<sup>[1]</sup>

[1] <https://spectrumlocalnews.com/hi/hawaii/news/2023/03/18/lawmakers-and-department-of-education-officials-promise-to-help-holualoa-elementary-school-with-mold-mitigation>

### **Kulanihako'i High School, Maui Feb 2023**

“Why should we trust what you’re telling us today after the history of what the record shows?” Commissioner Gary Okuda asked DOE officials.”<sup>[2]</sup>

[2] <https://www.civilbeat.org/2023/02/new-maui-high-school-opening-date-uncertain-after-doe-agrees-to-build-overpass/>

and

Commissioner Lee Ohigashi of Maui, one of the most vocal members demanding answers from the DOE on Thursday, asked why officials decided to open the school “without resolving the issue of the prior orders?”

“The prior orders were clear — you don’t open the school ... until you meet those conditions,” he said.

Ohigashi, who also serves as the second vice chairman, questioned if this was a way of creating a ‘hostage situation’ with the commission, students and others stuck in the middle while waiting for the school to open.

He said DOE’s moves have resulted in the students “being denied to attend the school.”

Ohigashi also asked it if was a tactic to violate the law<sup>[3]</sup>

[3] <https://www.mauinews.com/news/local-news/2023/02/officials-grilled-over-schools-opening-roundabout-funding/>



## BOE Testimony

1 message

**Kyle Shimabukuro** <kyle.shimabukuro@k12.hi.us>  
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, May 16, 2023 at 11:55 AM

May 16, 2023

Hawaii State Board of Education

General Business Meeting

Position: Support for Agenda Item V. B. Board Action on Hawaii Public Education 2023-2029 Strategic Plan (Phase II, Implementation Plan)

Dear Chairperson Voss, Vice Chairperson Barcarse, and members of the Board,

I am writing in support of the Agenda Item V. B. Board Action on Hawaii Public Education 2023-2029 Strategic Plan (Phase II, Implementation Plan) and ask that you approve the DOE's recommended plan.

At my school, we are ready to take the BOE Strategic Plan and the DOE Implementation Plan and use them to guide our own school level improvement efforts. For example, in our Academic Plan for 2023-24, we are going to focus on three things:

1. Social Emotional Learning for our students and staff
2. Understanding and implementing our Multi-Tiered System of Supports
3. Redesigning our curriculum through our Conceptual Framework and Harvard's Project Zero Classroom

These school goals are aligned to the following Desired Outcome and Action Items in the DOE Implementation Plan:

- 1.2.2, Action Item 1 = Increase schoolwide practices and interventions that address the well-being of students and support a positive school environment, based on needs identified by students in social and emotional health assessments
- 1.1.2, Action Item 1 = Ensure that our school is implementing a K-3 research and/or evidence-based reading curriculum that is quality, aligned with the state's reading standards, addresses the components of reading (phonemic awareness, alphabetic principle, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension), and demonstrates evidence of student achievement and growth
- 1.1.3, Action Item 1 = Ensure that our school is implementing a high-quality mathematics curriculum that is aligned with the state's mathematics standards, coherent across elementary and middle school grade levels within each complex, and demonstrates evidence of student achievement and growth.

In addition to these school wide goals, we are doing some smaller activities like our 1-week Kindergarten Camp where we invite incoming students in grade K (especially ones with no preschool experience) to meet our teachers and get a head start in learning school routines. This aligns to Desired Outcome 1.1.1, Action Item 5 = provide in-school interventions and additional time for learning for entering kindergarten students to develop foundational skills.

From these examples, I hope you can see that we will be able to take guidance from the BOE Strategic Plan and align our school improvement efforts in support of student achievement and growth.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,

Kyle Shimabukuro  
Principal

Mililani Mauka Elementary School  
95-1111 Makaikai Street  
Mililani, HI 96789

Ph: 808-305-1710 Fax: 808-626-3360

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

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## BOE Testimony

1 message

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**Kyle Shimabukuro** <kyle.shimabukuro@k12.hi.us>  
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, May 16, 2023 at 12:14 PM

Meeting: General Business Meeting

Agenda Item: VI.C. Board Action on Human Resources Committee recommendations concerning Superintendent's evaluation for 2022-23 School Year: End of Year evaluation

Position: Support for Effective or Highly Effective Rating for Superintendent Keith Hayashi

Dear Chairperson Voss, Vice Chairperson Barcarse, and members of the Board,

I am writing in support of an effective or highly effective rating for Superintendent Keith Hayashi for several reasons:

- He has increased communication through e-mails, newsletters, and monthly Principal Forums
- He visited my school and my teachers found him to be approachable and willing to listen to their concerns
- During his visit, he was excited to interact with students and see our Fifth Graders teaching our Second Graders how to do basic programming using Spheros (a motorized ball) to move through a maze
- He is truly committed to public education and has expressed his vision to improve schools in support of individual development and how that fits in to improve our society and economy
- As "one of us" - a person, parent, citizen, leader - he can relate to us and provide the leadership necessary to take us into an uncertain future.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,

Kyle Shimabukuro  
Principal

Mililani Mauka Elementary School  
[95-1111 Makaikai Street](#)  
[Mililani, HI 96789](#)  
Ph: [808-305-1710](#) Fax: 808-626-3360

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## Testimony in support of Supt. Keith Hiyashi

1 message

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**Kelly, Jim** <jim.kelly@hawaiianelectric.com>

Tue, May 16, 2023 at 1:05 PM

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

Aloha,

My name is Jim Kelly, Vice President of Government and Community Relations and Corporate Communications of Hawaiian Electric. Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Keith Hayashi as Superintendent of the Department of Education before the General Business Meeting (Thursday, May 18, 2023 at 1:30 p.m.).

Hawaiian Electric serves 95 percent of Hawai'i's 1.4 million residents on the islands of O'ahu, Maui, Hawai'i, Lāna'i and Moloka'i. As we plan for how we're going to achieve Hawai'i's decarbonization goals, we understand working together with key partners such as the Hawai'i State Department of Education is critical. In regard to Superintendent Hayashi's performance for the 2022-2023 school year, we have found him to be highly collaborative and innovative as a leader, partner and connector. He is responsive and proactive on matters of mutual interest. In our experience, the same can be said about the deputy superintendents, principals and teachers within the public school system, which we believe to be a reflection of his leadership.

Superintendent Hayashi has helped to facilitate the involvement of Hawaiian Electric's employees in public schools to support the advancement of Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) and career development opportunities as an investment in local students, who will later become future employees and leaders in Hawaii's communities. In 2022, our employees had the opportunity to connect with approximately 4,600 students on O'ahu to talk about renewable energy, careers, emergency preparedness and energy efficiency. As a result of our partnership, we are able to regularly share informational resources on these subjects with teachers electronically and upon request for lesson planning.

Under Superintendent Hayashi's leadership, Hawaiian Electric employees are continuing to work with his administration on the development of curriculum standards for the Energy Pathway and Programs of Study as a focused investment in workforce development. We are looking forward to piloting the innovative Energy Pathway and Programs of Study in the Campbell-Kapolei Complex Area at the start of the next school year in order to support public school students in pursuit of jobs in Hawai'i's decarbonized energy future. The growth and development of this program has the potential to build a foundation of engagement among students to empower them to participate and provide input in renewable energy planning and policy setting. The important decisions ahead must include everyone – we are all in this together.

Hawaiian Electric has appreciated Superintendent Hayashi's partnership and his ability to bring people together from the public, private and non-profit sector dating back to when he was principal of Waipahu High School. We admire his positive approach to problem solving and look forward to continue working with him as Superintendent of the Hawai'i State Department of Education.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide my written support.

**JIM KELLY**

Vice President  
Government and Community Relations

Corporate Communications

**O:** 808.543.4915 | **M:** 808.341.8926

**Hawaiian Electric**

PO Box 2750, Honolulu HI 96840



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**Senator Michelle N. Kidani**  
Vice President of the Senate



Chair  
Education

Vice Chair  
Higher Education

Member  
Ways and Means

**The Senate**  
**Ka 'Aha Kenekoa**

STATE CAPITOL  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

May 16, 2023

**TO:** Bruce D. Voss, Chairperson; and  
Members of the Board of Education

**FROM:** Senate Vice President Michelle N. Kidani  
Chairperson, Senate Committee on Education

**RE:** **Letter in Support of Superintendent Keith Hayashi**

I strongly and enthusiastically support our current Superintendent Keith Hayashi and believe he should be confirmed for another term as Superintendent. Superintendent Hayashi has proven to be an innovative leader who walks the talk by investing in the resources and building and strengthening relationships necessary to advance public education for all keiki of our Hawai'i.

The majority of Senators are in support of Supt. Hayashi to continue as our DOE Superintendent and their names are listed below.

Some comments Senators noted include: "Superintendent Hayashi has demonstrated at every level and in various positions that he is a proven leader"; "Hayashi is trusted"; "Supt. Hayashi is hard-working"; "Keith Hayashi is deserving to continue as Superintendent"; "You need only look at Waipahu High School to see his work and his great accomplishments" "His leadership is infectious."

"Since he assumed the role of Interim Superintendent in Fall of 2021, the communication between the Department of Education and Legislators has very greatly improved." "Throughout his tenure as Superintendent, Keith Hayashi has been approachable and responsive to the questions and concerns we have brought before him." "Supt. Hayashi kept us updated regarding the many Covid 19 Pandemic issues within our schools." "Updates are regularly provided to my colleagues and I in response to DOE matters impacting our communities." "He provides Senators the opportunity to connect with our schools and students by inviting us to various events at our school as well as DOE events." "My colleagues and I appreciate the open dialogue and open doors which I believe allows Legislators to better understand and support the DOE and their needs."

Superintendent Hayashi has not shied away from the many challenges the DOE has faced, including COVID-19, and he passionately advocates for our public education students and

employees across the state. Most recently, he has promoted quality teaching and learning in our classrooms by collaborating with our Governor, our Legislators, our Hawai'i State Teachers Association, and the Legislature. Hayashi helped to secure a teacher contract agreement which our deserving teachers overwhelmingly ratified. This wage increase will surely go a long way in helping increase recruitment and retention of our highly qualified teachers. Keeping highly qualified teachers will positively impact student achievement.

Superintendent Hayashi not only believes in the potential of all students, but he also prioritizes resources to provide support and remove barriers for students who are experiencing challenges in their education journey. He is especially sensitive to the needs of our disadvantaged students and newcomers to our state. Superintendent Hayashi has worked tirelessly to ensure all students graduate from high school with the skills necessary to succeed in the workforce. In this regard, I consider Superintendent Hayashi to be the most hands-on Superintendent I have worked with in my 15 years as the Chair/Vice Chair of the Senate Committee on Education.

I totally support this Superintendent because of his vision for our DOE, his love for our keiki and his support of our educators. Superintendent Hayashi exemplifies transformational leadership. I sincerely hope that the Board supports him also.

19 MEMBERS OF THE HAWAI'I STATE SENATE SUPPORT IN SUPPORT OF OUR BOE  
CONFIRMING KEITH HAYASHI AS SUPERINTENDENT OF HAWAI'I DOE :

|                                |                           |                          |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Henry Aquino                   | Stanley Chang             | Lynn DeCoite             |
| Donovan Dela Cruz              | Kurt Fevella              | Carol Fukunaga           |
| Mike Gabbard                   | Lorraine Inouye           | Dru Kanuha               |
| Gilbert-Keith Agaran           | Senate VP Michelle Kidani | Donna Mercado Kim/EDU VC |
| Senate President Ronald Kouchi | Angus McKelvey            | Sharon Moriwaki          |
| Herbert "Tim" Richards         | Joy San Buenaventura      | Maile Shimabukuro        |
| Glenn Wakai                    |                           |                          |

Very Sincerely,



Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Chair  
Senate Committee on Education



## 2023 Legislative session update

05-May-2023

The Department had a successful legislative session, with five out of the seven administrative bills we advocated for being passed.

As the Hawai'i State Legislature prepares to adjourn this week, the Department acknowledges and thanks our elected officials for supporting public education. The Department had a successful legislative session, with five out of the seven administrative bills we advocated for being passed. Together, these bills are expected to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Department's operations and services to students:

- **Senate Bill 1518:** Exempts the Department from using the electronic procurement system for the purchase of educational materials up to \$100,000 and for construction up to \$250,000. This will enable the Department to obtain educational materials and complete small construction projects quicker and more efficiently.
- **SB 1344:** Allows school health assistants to administer medication following the approval of a health care professional within the Department.
- **SB 1340:** Reinstates exemptions for certain teachers and registered behavior technicians from behavior analyst licensing requirements, which will help streamline providing applied behavior analysis services to students.
- **SB 105:** Changes the Department's reporting requirements on autism spectrum disorder to an annual report to reduce administrative burdens and allow for more comprehensive reporting.
- **House Bill 1045:** Simplifies the student record transfer process and exempts homeless students from producing required records to reduce administrative burdens and improve access to education for vulnerable students.

The Department weighed in on other measures throughout the session and supported successful bills including, HB 264, HB 388 and SB 830.

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## Hawai'i public schools experiencing 'exceptional' academic recovery

24-Mar-2023

National research suggests Hawai'i public schools have been effective at increasing the speed at which students are recovering from pandemic learning loss.

The academic recovery of Hawai'i's public school students following the pandemic has been "exceptional" compared to most other states, according to a recent analysis by the National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessments. To better understand the effects of the pandemic, the Hawai'i State Department of Education contracted the Center for an in-depth analysis of the impact of the pandemic on academic performance and the extent to which recovery efforts are bringing about intended results.

Dr. Damian Betebenner, lead investigator for the Center, said that the COVID-19 pandemic caused the most significant educational upheaval in U.S. history, and even after three years, students and educators continue to experience the effects of the pandemic.

To catch back up, Betebenner said, students need to learn at rates that exceed their learning rates pre-pandemic. On average, from 2021 to 2022, HIDOE students achieved those accelerated rates to catch students back up. Betebenner's research suggests HIDOE schools have been effective at increasing the speed at which students are learning.

"Of the dozen or so states I've looked at – from the East Coast to the West, all the way to Hawai'i – the recovery, or the rates of learning, that Hawai'i is demonstrating this most recent year are the most impressive I've seen," Betebenner said.

The Center is now conducting case study analyses at several HIDOE schools experiencing remarkable recoveries to further explore what's behind their success and what other schools can learn from their efforts to promote academic recovery. Initial overall findings from the Center's study show:

- Decisive leadership providing clear direction was critical during the pandemic.
- Funding was not a significant limitation for academic recovery during the pandemic as all schools had access to federal Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds. Strong leaders demonstrated resourcefulness and creativity in securing funds for necessary programs and services during a crisis.

Superintendent Keith Hayashi credited the Department's educators and support staff along with students and families: "Our gains are attributed to our hard-working employees, committed students and supportive parents."

Hayashi said the Department's four statewide strategies implemented during the pandemic continue to provide a common set of strategies and expectations for what's happening at all schools.

- **Healthy Habits, Healthy Schools** – Keeping students safe.



- **Action-Oriented Data Decision-Making** – Making smart decisions based on facts and data.
- **Responsive Capacity Building** – Staffing and supporting schools.
- **Effective Academic Practices** – Implementing research-based teaching to engage our students.

Betebenner was in Hawai'i recently to [share some of the findings](#) with stakeholder groups, including HIDOE leadership, the Board of Education, media and legislators.

The National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessments, also known as The Center for Assessment, is a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving student learning and achievement through the development and implementation of high-quality assessments. The Center focuses on providing research-based guidance and technical assistance to educators, policymakers, and assessment developers to ensure that assessments are valid, reliable and fair.

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## 2022 'Nation's Report Card': Hawai'i fourth-graders outperform peers in reading and math amid national pandemic learning declines

23-Oct-2022

Known as "The Nation's Report Card," the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is an assessment program of the National Center for Education Statistics that provides comparable results across states on select subjects.

Amid across-the-board national declines in reading and math scores, Hawai'i's fourth-graders held steady, performing above national averages in reading and math, according to the 2022 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) results released on Monday (12:01 a.m. Eastern Time). Hawai'i's steady performance is notable given the pandemic's adverse impact on student learning locally and nationally. Hawai'i's eighth-graders, meanwhile, performed at the national level for the first time in reading, and slightly below the national average in math.

Known as "The Nation's Report Card," NAEP is an assessment program of the National Center for Education Statistics that provides comparable results across states on select subjects. NAEP is typically administered every two years to a representative sample of fourth- and eighth-graders nationwide. Approximately 8,000 Hawai'i public school students enrolled at 140 schools took the tests in the spring of 2022, the first time the assessments were administered since 2019.

"The fact that our students held steady on three out of the four NAEP assessments, compared to national drops across the board, speaks to the resilience of our students and the dedication of our educators," Superintendent Keith Hayashi said. "Still, from the NAEP and our own data, we know that our math performance — especially in our middle school grades — continues to lag below our state targets and national levels. As we continue to analyze these and other performance indicators, we are doubling down on our efforts to determine where more support and interventions are needed to improve learning and achievement for all students."

The national results are among the multiple measures that the Hawai'i State Department of Education (HIDOE) uses to gauge the progress of students and public schools. The NAEP results validate the HIDOE's recently released annual [Strive HI performance results](#) that showed overall gains in academic performance across core subject areas on the Smarter Balanced Assessment, which measures whether students are on track for college and career success throughout grade levels.

Hawai'i's proficiency level on Smarter Balanced English language arts was the highest among 10 states reporting 2021-22 scores, and was near the highest-performing states in mathematics.

"As measured by our state assessments, students' language arts and mathematics proficiency dropped during the pandemic, then improved last year with the return to in-person learning, despite a record number of students

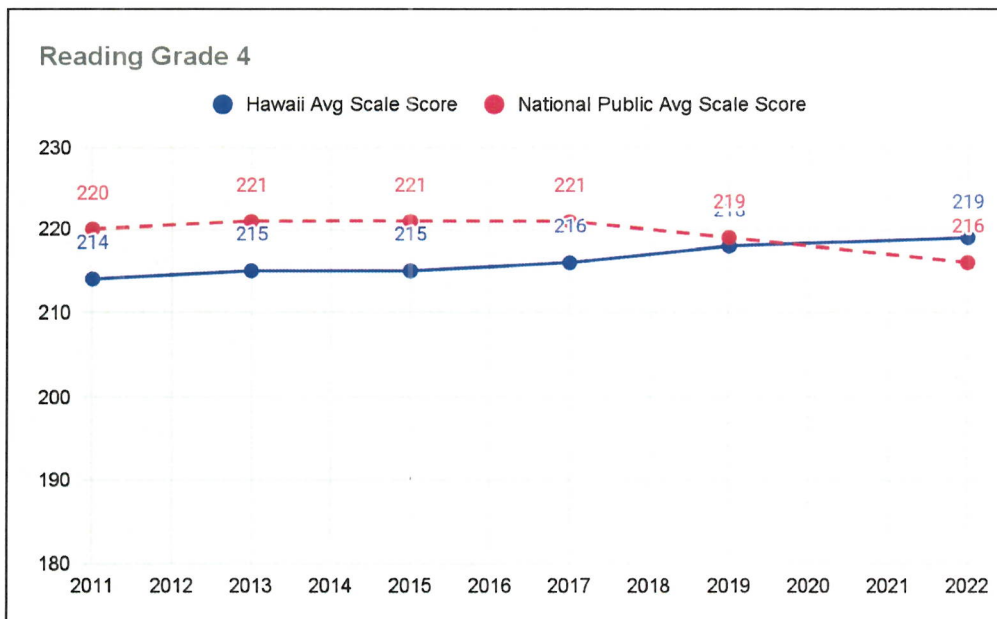
being absent,” Deputy Superintendent Tammi Oyadomari-Chun said. “The NAEP and Smarter Balanced Assessment results indicate that our students, for the most part, are performing at the same level as or above their national peers, and that the nationwide pandemic impacts have been more severe in many other states.”

NAEP state coordinator Dewey Gottlieb added: “While it’s helpful to be able to compare pre- and post-pandemic scores, one of the really powerful ways of using NAEP data is to take a step back and look at long-term trends. Over the last 15 years our fourth-grade reading scores have shown a continuous upward trajectory, which is true for about only eight other states.” He attributes that growth in part to HDOE’s coordinated efforts to [boost literacy](#).

Hawaii’s improvement over time on the NAEP has been nationally recognized as one of the highest in the country. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation in 2016 [ranked Hawaii No. 2](#) in the nation for improvement in fourth- and eighth-grade statewide performance on the NAEP between 2005 and 2015.

#### **Fourth-grade reading**

Hawaii’s average scale score increased by 1 point from 2019 levels. While Hawaii’s year-over-year increase is not statistically significant, it is 3 points higher than the national average for fourth-grade reading, and Hawaii’s performance above the nation is statistically significant.

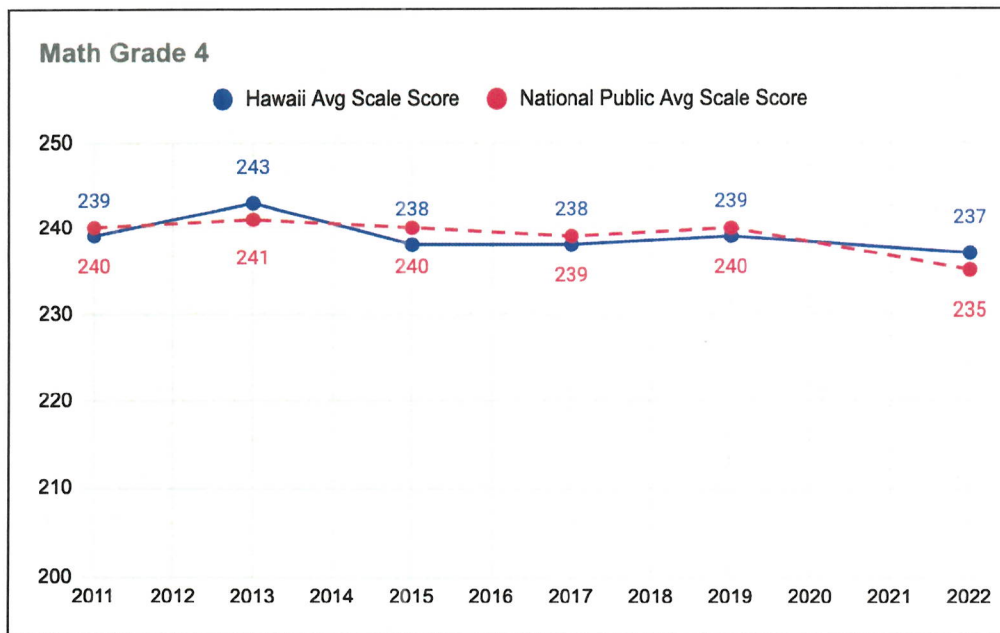


NAEP results are reported in four achievement levels: below basic, basic, proficient and advanced. The percentage of Hawaii’s fourth-graders performing at the proficient and advanced levels in reading increased by 2 points from 2019, and is 3 points higher than the national average.

Over the past decade, while the national average essentially remained unchanged and then declined during the COVID-19 pandemic, Hawaii’s average scale score has shown a significant and steady increase.

#### **Fourth-grade math**

In fourth-grade math, Hawaii’s average scale score decreased by 2 points, which is not a statistically significant change. Hawaii’s score is 2 points higher than the national average for fourth-grade math.

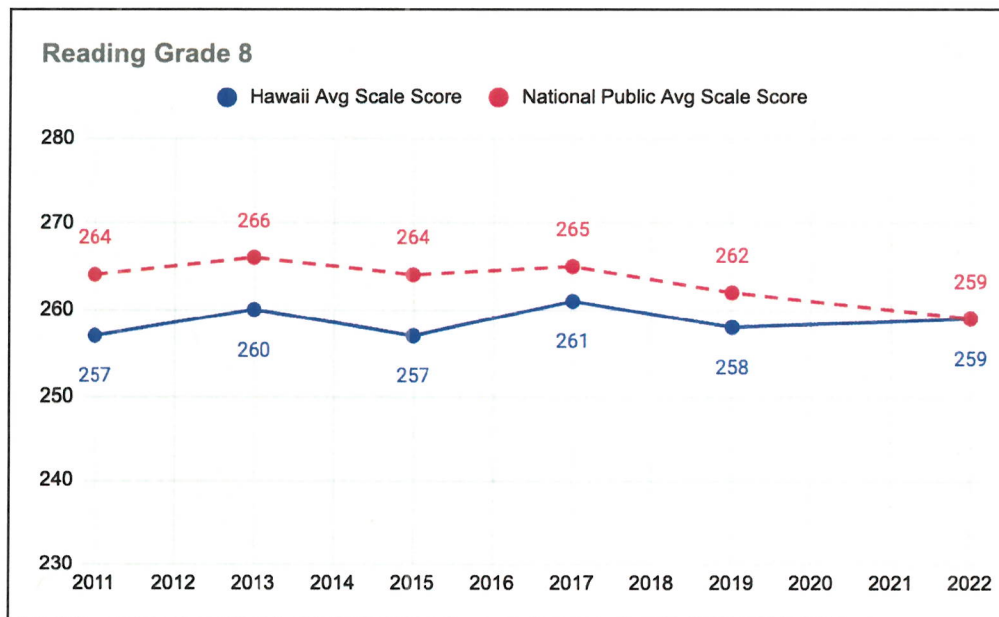


### Eighth-grade reading

In eighth-grade reading, Hawai'i's

average scale score increased by 1 point from 2019 — matching the national average.

The percentage of Hawai'i eighth-graders performing at the proficient and advanced levels in reading increased by 2 points from 2019, and is 2 points higher than the national average.



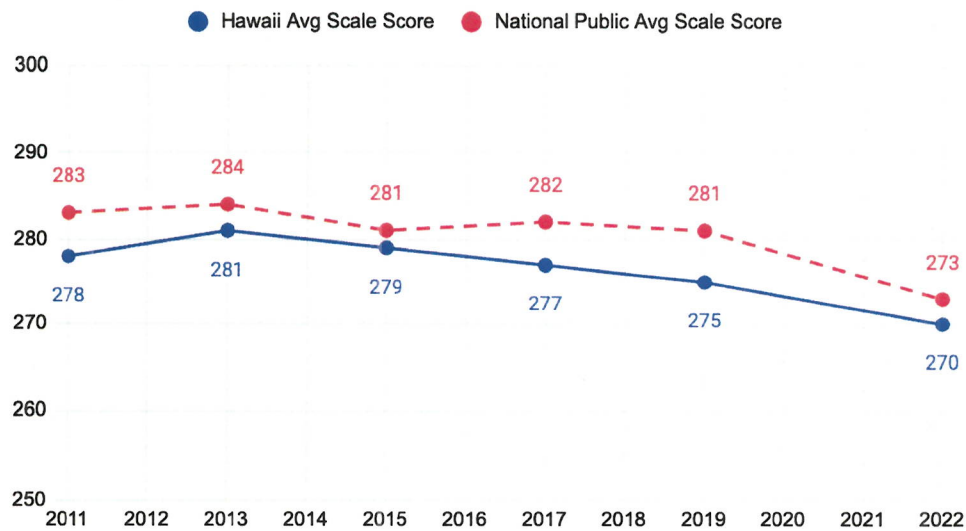
### Eighth-grade math

Eighth-grade math continued to be a challenging area. In eighth-grade math, Hawai'i's average scale score decreased by 5 points from 2019.

By comparison, of the 53 jurisdictions that participated in NAEP (50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and Department of Defense Education Activity schools), none showed an increase in average scale scores for eighth-grade math from 2019.



## Math Grade 8



For more information,  
visit the NAEP  
website at  
<https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/>.

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## 2021-22 Strive HI performance data reflect positive progress in HIDOE student academic recovery and acceleration

12-Oct-2022

The data — reflecting the first full school year of in-person learning following the pandemic — show gains in academic performance across core subject areas and improvements in student success indicators.

The Hawaii State Department of Education (HIDOE) today released its annual [Strive HI Performance System](#) results from the 2021-22 school year. The data — reflecting the first full school year of in-person learning following the pandemic — show gains in academic performance across core subject areas and improvements in student success indicators.

“By prioritizing a return to in-person learning last school year, schools were able to implement data-driven strategies to support and accelerate student learning. These include small-group instruction, intervention blocks, tutoring, out-of-school-time programs, academic coaching, personalized activities, and behavioral and social-emotional assessments,” Superintendent Keith Hayashi said. “Still, last school year was far from a normal year. The encouraging growth we are seeing is a testament to our educators who are counteracting the effects of the pandemic.”

American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief ([ESSER III](#)) Funds were provided to the Department in 2021 to support the safe reopening of schools and to mitigate student learning loss. Through the support of these federal funds, all HIDOE schools — with guidance and support from their complex area — have been able to implement and develop specific programs and interventions to support the specific needs of their students who were impacted by the pandemic.

### Key year-over-year 2021-22 Strive HI results

- Statewide **academic proficiency in English language arts, math and science** increased.
  - Language arts proficiency increased by 2 percentage points to 52% in 2022.
  - Math proficiency increased by 6 points to 38%.
  - Science proficiency increased by 5 points to 40%.
- **Ninth-grade on time promotions** increased by four points to 89%.
- **Career and Technical Education (CTE)** program completion increased by three points to 64%.
- **On-time graduation** rate was maintained at 86%.
- **College-going** rate continued to be impacted by the pandemic at 50%.

“The Smarter Balanced Assessments (SBA), which are used to assess student academic proficiency, are a common indicator of college and career readiness, so these gains are significant because these assessments reflect very high standards. Nationally, Hawaii exceeded, matched or is within two points of other states that have reported SBA results for English language arts and math,” Deputy Superintendent Tammi Oyadomari-Chun said. “This assessment

is one of many tools that schools use to track and measure academic progress and growth, including universal screeners, formative assessments and regular check-ins to plan and inform academic approaches."

In line with national trends, chronic absenteeism rates — especially in elementary school students — saw a substantial increase to 37% from 18% the year prior, mainly as a result of COVID-19 quarantine and isolation requirements for students. Statewide bus driver shortages and the U.S. Navy emergency fuel storage leak situations were also contributing factors to the increase in absenteeism.

Despite the student absenteeism rate, the Department saw academic proficiency gains across all student subgroups, including but not limited to, English learners, students receiving special education services and economically disadvantaged students.

### **Kaunakakai Elementary**

Reflecting statewide trends, Kaunakakai Elementary on Molokai saw double-digit growth in student academic proficiencies across all subjects. From school year 2020-21 to 2021-22, scores for English language arts increased by 12 percentage points to 43%, math increased by 22 points to 40%, and science increased by 33 points to 45%, putting the school over complex area averages and nearly on par with statewide averages. The school's third-grade literacy levels also surpassed statewide averages this year by four percentage points at 84%.

The gains were established even through high rates of student absenteeism. Kaunakakai's chronic absenteeism rates increased two-fold as a result of the pandemic, yet the dedication and commitment of the school's teachers and staff in supporting student learning no matter where the students physically were, was critical to the academic success reflected in their results, according to Principal Daniel Espaniola.

"Our teachers really went above and beyond to help students and their families during this difficult time," Espaniola said. "They voluntarily recorded lessons and posted them online, established strong platforms and open lines of communication with families, and offered additional support opportunities like after-school tutoring for those in need."

Access to technology was also prioritized during this time to ensure that technology and connectivity were not barriers to student learning. To achieve this, the school implemented a 2:1 electronic device to student ratio — one device for home and one for school use — and also distributed wireless hotspots to families without internet connectivity at home through the use of ESSER funds.

### **Wheeler Middle**

Wheeler Middle School on Oahu also saw significant gains in student academic proficiencies across all subjects. From school year 2020-21 to 2021-22, scores for English language arts increased by 11 points to 77%, math increased by 18 points to 57%, and science increased by 6 points to 67%, putting the school over complex area and statewide averages by double-digits. The school's eighth-grade literacy level was 94%, surpassing statewide averages by 18 points.

Structured teacher planning time is one system that played a crucial role in Wheeler Middle's positive results this school year, according to Principal Brenda Vierra-Chun. While students are in elective classes, core subject teachers are given the time to collaborate with one another and prepare for instruction. These sessions, led by academic coaches, allow teachers to look at student learning data, discuss the effectiveness of instructional approaches, and strategize for intervention as necessary. Student data is pulled from a variety of sources, one of the main being "daily checks for understanding" — a school-wide standard in all core classes where students are posed with a question or problem to help gauge their understanding of the day's lesson.

Though especially helpful in addressing pandemic impacts to student learning, these systems have been in place for decades. "Everything we do at our school is very intentional and by design," Vierra-Chun said. "Our curriculum and instruction is very much engineered. We are constantly looking at student data to see what worked well, what didn't, and where we can improve."

Wheeler Middle also credited the implementation of ESSER-funded, school-based summer learning hubs as a major factor in helping to accelerate student learning over the past two years. All students were encouraged to attend the

school's summer learning hub for extended learning time geared toward academic enrichment, intervention or remediation.

“While we are extremely proud of the improvements made over the last year, national research tells us that full student academic recovery can take up to three years or longer,” Superintendent Hayashi added. “Our overarching goal is to have continuous academic gains among all student subgroups beyond just the pandemic learning gaps. It’s very promising to see how the federal funds have supported our schools in getting to this point and we will work hard to secure the financial support to continue to invest in and accelerate the strategies that are making a difference for our students.”

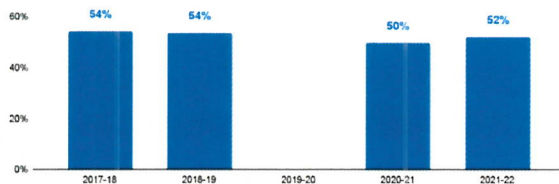
This is the first school year since 2018-19 that data has not been impacted by pandemic-related accountability and assessment waivers. For the 2021-22 school year, the U.S. Department of Education offered states a waiver from some accountability requirements including the 95% participation rate requirement, in anticipation of lower-than-normal participation rates. For the 2019-20 school year, U.S. DOE offered states the option to waive required statewide assessments, and no statewide tests were administered.

Strive HI was launched in the 2012-13 school year as the state's locally designed school improvement and accountability system that offered flexibility from the former federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law. It includes multiple measures of school performance including proficiency in science, math and language arts/literacy; achievement gaps; chronic absenteeism; academic growth; and graduation rates. The system was modified in 2017 to align with the revised HIDOE/BOE Strategic Plan and reauthorization of federal education law under the [Every Student Succeeds Act \(ESSA\)](#).

[Click here](#) to view the 2021-22 State Snapshot of Strive HI indicators. For more information about the Strive HI performance system, [click here](#).

#### Academic Achievement – Language Arts

Strive HI: Percent of students proficient (statewide), based on state standards

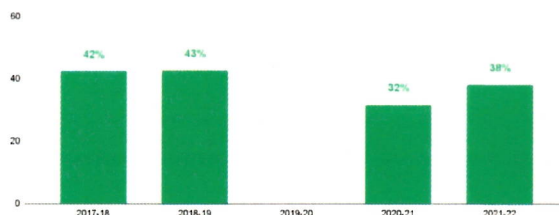


Based on results from Smarter Balanced Assessment, KAEO, and HSA-Alt



#### Academic Achievement – Mathematics

Strive HI: Percent of students proficient (statewide), based on state standards

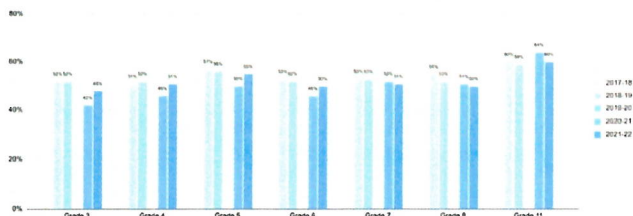


Based on results from Smarter Balanced Assessment, KAEO, and HSA-Alt



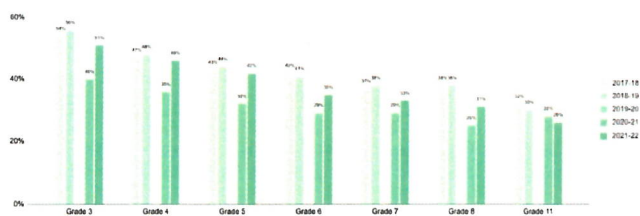
#### Language Arts Achievement – By Grade Level


Strive HI: Percent of students proficient (statewide), based on state standards



#### Mathematics Achievement – By Grade Level

Strive HI: Percent of students proficient (statewide), based on state standards



 [Click here](#) to download a PDF of the above data.

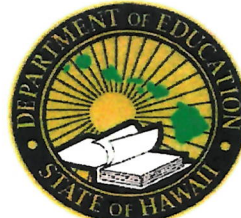


Hawai'i State  
Department of  
Education

# STATE LEADING AND LEARNING

SY 2022-2023 Inaugural Cohort  
State-Level Educational Officers  
Leadership Development

Final Debrief Materials  
2023 May 9, Tuesday





# State Leading and Learning (SLL)

## Vision

More than ever, we need leaders - at all levels of our Department - who can bring transformational, adaptive and principle-centered change for equity and excellence.

## SLL Design Team

Stacie Kunihsa,  
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## Proposed SY 2023-2024 Dates

Launch  
Modules:  
August 10-11

Module 3:  
September 12

Module 4:  
October 24

Module 5:  
November 21

Module 6:  
December 12

Module 7:  
January 9

## STATE LEADING AND LEARNING FRAMEWORK

DOE System and School Support

- Inter-Office/Tri-Level Collaboration
- Student Success
- Customer Service and Support
- Supporting the System

Leading Within Your State Office

- Intra-Office Collaboration
- HIDOE Resources
- Communication
- Teamwork

Leading Your Team

- Roles & Responsibilities
- Expectations
- Systems Thinking
- Decision Making
- Advance HIDOE Priorities & Direction

Self Reflection and Leadership

- Personal Beliefs
- Self as a Leader
- Impact on Others
- Empowering Others

## Program Overview

The State Leading and Learning (SLL) - a professional leadership development modules series - ignites and inspires state-level leaders to grow their leadership capacity and strengthen their leadership competencies. We are strengthening a culture of leadership needed for today's children and their education.





# What is a Change Leadership Project?

## Change Leadership Project

A change leadership project is multifaceted and complex and often demands cross-office work. You will hear the EO's vision, why now, and impact on improving the Department for today's students.

This culminating session is a showcase by the SLL Educational Officers as state-level leading and learning.

## Sharing Protocol:

Each project team has seven (7) minutes to succinctly and powerfully communicate.

Then, for the next three minutes, they will receive roses and thorns (feedback).



For Thorns, cohort members may answer with, "Thank you for the question, we did not consider it." or "Thank you for the feedback, would you like us to get back to you?"

Finally, one leadership member will ask the following two questions from your last evaluation:

What is something in your practice that you're feeling good about/proud of now that you've experienced State Leading and Learning seven modules?

How has the SLL experience affected you?

## Roses-Thorns Feedback

| ROSES<br>  | Change Leadership Project Presentation Areas | THORNS<br>   |
|---|--|---|
| What is something that went well in this area?  |  | What was unclear or missed? What got in the way or hard in this area?   |
| May sound like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I appreciated how feasible (realistic and attainable) your vision was.</li> <li>I like how focused your vision was - concise yet able to provide guidance decision making.</li> <li>It was general enough to allow for adjustments as conditions may shift.</li> </ul> | Vision of Change Project                     | May sound like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I am unclear what priorities to commit to. How does this change influence my or our priorities?</li> <li>Where does culture or capacity building come in?</li> </ul> |
| May sound like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This appeals to my long-term goals or our interests.</li> <li>I can see how crucial and important this change is.</li> </ul>   | Why  | May sound like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Who will be affected by the outcomes?</li> <li>Who is contributing resources?</li> <li>Who will benefit from the outputs?</li> </ul>                                 |
|   | Intended Impact                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How will the team meet the impact requirements defined?</li> </ul>   |
|   | Additional Factors to Consider               | May sound like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do you need a project champion (executive sponsor)?</li> <li>Did you consider resistance or this pain point to ____?</li> </ul>                                      |

# State Leading and Learning (SLL)

## Why State Leading and Learning?

- Lack of strategic and systematic concerted effort to address gap in lack of State level support. Design to be intentional and purposeful
- Lack of overt training program - "figure it out/get it done" (no formal onboarding, mentoring, basic expectations, connection to other offices –Where do I fit?)
- Need to extend pipeline across state level and provide differentiated supports
- End customer are the students and schools
- Need to understand our work and how it impacts schools, students and families.

Who builds leaders? We all do! SHARED RESPONSIBILITY——NE'EPAPA

[Presentation to Superintendent's Cabinet SLL 2022 July 25](#)

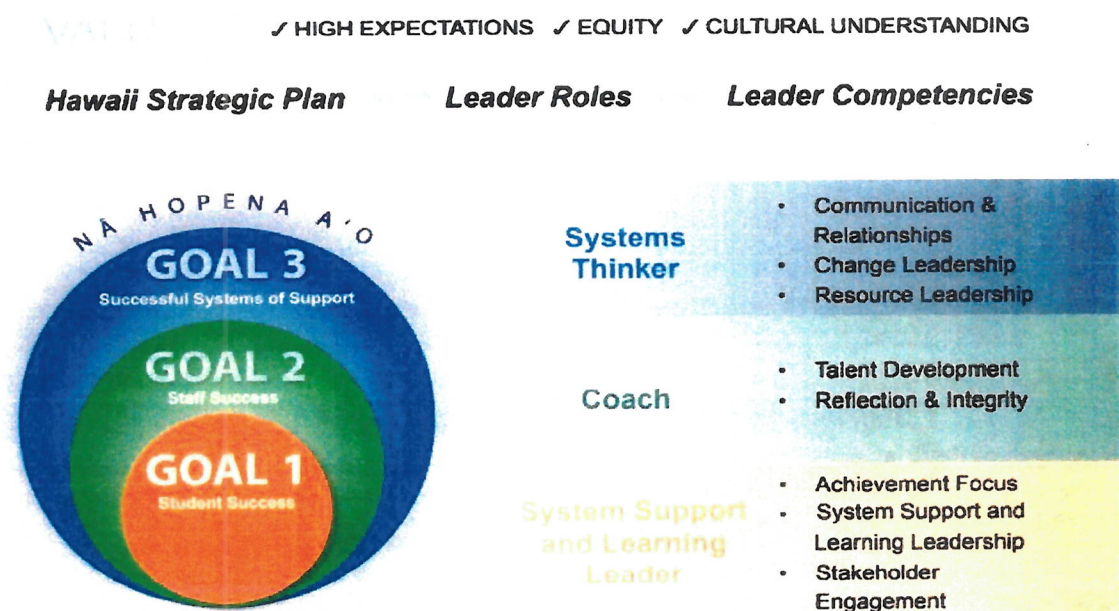
## What is leadership development?

Leadership development is the process of improving leadership skills and competencies through various activities.

For leadership development, staff at all levels are taught the invaluable leadership skills that allow them to properly lead, inspire and guide their teams to success.

This type of development is important to properly cultivate a culture of leadership throughout Hawaii Department of Education.

# Leadership Competencies



Source: [ESSER Guidance Document, p.21](#)



[https://www.kitv.com/news/local/2023-regional-murrow-award-winner-kitv4-producer-inspires-others-after-growing-up-homeless/article\\_abc360f2-33e3-11ed-a9a2-afe99a3ac2c4.html](https://www.kitv.com/news/local/2023-regional-murrow-award-winner-kitv4-producer-inspires-others-after-growing-up-homeless/article_abc360f2-33e3-11ed-a9a2-afe99a3ac2c4.html)

## 2023 Regional Murrow Award Winner! | KITV4 producer inspires others after growing up homeless

By Marisa Yamane  
May 9, 2023



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## Editor's Note

*This story was awarded the 2023 Edward R. Murrow Regional Award for Journalism for Feature Reporting on May 9, 2023. It ran on KITV4 on September 13, 2022. See the full list of winners here.*

HONOLULU (KITV4) -- It takes a lot of people to put on a newscast including many people behind the scenes.

The producer of the new KITV4 Island News at 4 has quite a story to tell -- one of hope, inspiration, and success.

The producer is in charge of putting a newscast together. It takes a special kind of person -- a good communicator, a leader, a strong writer, and someone who's prepared for the unexpected.

Victoria Cuba takes it all in stride, at least she makes it seem that way.

"As a producer, and I think anyone in the newsroom, you're under constant stress," Victoria said. "But at the end of the day, I still love it."

That's because she gets to inform the public and tell stories.

"I really think and I truly believe that everybody does have a story to tell because of my own story. It's not something that I was willing to share when I was younger. And still sometimes I'm hesitant about today because you know people see it as shameful," Victoria said.

Victoria was homeless as a child.

"The first time we were all homeless, my mom was working three jobs, and she just couldn't afford to pay the rent," Victoria said.

---

The lived in an old Matson shipping container in a junkyard in Pearl City.

"There's one bathroom there and we'd shower with a hose and it was really cold," Victoria said.

Victoria was in the sixth grade.

"And that first time that we were homeless you know, I didn't think much of it. She just kind of reminded us that you know, you guys have we have each other, you and your brother are still together. Like you know, that's what really matters," Victoria said.

They eventually moved from the junkyard into an apartment.

"And like I remember driving out once and looking in my rear view mirror and I said that's where it's always going to stay, in my rear view mirror," Victoria said.

But her family became homeless again, for a second time, when Victoria was a junior at Waipahu High School. She kept it a secret.

"That was the hardest thing was growing up and not being able to tell my friends. Like, hey, I live in a van," Victoria said.

She eventually did tell her friends, teachers, and the staff, and they embraced her.

"I just hope that everybody who has been in my life and who's cheered me on on the way that I'm doing right by them by doing what I do and keep going. I think that, besides a fear of falling back into homelessness, it's really the support of the people who've got me here I can't let them down," Victoria said.

People like Keith Hayashi, who was the principal of Waipahu High School at the time. He's now superintendent of Hawaii's public schools.

"There was no doubt in my mind that Victoria would be successful and in whatever area she chose -- that was back from in high school. You know there was this something in this girl, that drive and commitment to making a difference in the lives

of other people that she was special, and I know others saw that too in her," Hayashi said.

After Waipahu High School, Victoria went to the University of Hawaii at Manoa, and even did a study abroad in London.

After graduating in 2018, Victoria landed a job as a producer at KITV4. Last month, she was promoted to senior producer.

"You know, I think with Victoria, she was always driven because of what obstacles she went through," said Victoria's mother, Debra Cuba.

"We're definitely all proud of her and who she is and who she's become," Hayashi said.

Victoria's mother is also really proud, and Victoria is very thankful that her mother taught her perseverance.

"You helped me get to here, so thank you," Victoria said. "You're welcome," Debra responded.

After all, it's not how you start, it's how you finish.

"If you told 15-year-old Victoria that she would be where I'm at right now she would laugh because it would seem impossible. Like the person I am today was just a dream," Victoria said.

"Definitely a role model for all students, not only at Waipahu but I think all students statewide," Hayashi said.



**The child poverty rate fell by nearly half in 2021 as enhanced child tax credit sent billions of dollars to families**

By Tami Luhby, CNN



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## Far out! Observatory on high school campus offers young minds a chance to aim high

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Space discovery doesn't have to be from atop a mountain by professional researchers.

By [Annalisa Burgos](#)

Published: May. 11, 2023 at 3:39 PM HST | Updated: May. 11, 2023 at 5:06 PM HST



HONOLULU (HawaiiNewsNow) - Space discovery doesn't have to be from atop a mountain by professional researchers.

On Oahu, it can come from the roof of a Hawaii high school — and soon, by students.

Nearly a year since the state Department of Education unveiled its first research-grade space observatory at Waipahu High School, staff are testing the telescope and software and getting it ready for students to use.

They hope to have students using the equipment this fall.

"The first time I saw Jupiter through a telescope on a dinky little tube, reflector telescope as the most magnificent feeling in the world, realizing that the picture isn't just a picture, it's a thing," said Justin Bergonio, lead teacher for the new Waipahu High School McNerny Foundation Research Observatory.

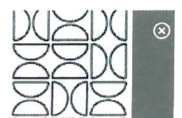
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"And eventually I think it reflects and bounces off into this little guy here, which is the CCD camera. And so this kind of acts as like our eyeball collecting everything. And this is how we can be able to see all the cool stuff that's out there," said Bergonio, who gave HNN a tour of the telescope and the dome that houses it.

The telescope can be remotely controlled.

So far, it's taken photos of galaxies, the Orion Nebula, and star clusters.

"I know that there's tons of pictures and tons of people doing the same thing, but it's different doing it yourself," Bergonio said.

The observatory supports students in the school's college-level Astronomy class, in conjunction with Leeward Community College, and the Mauna Kea Scholars program.

It's also aimed at encouraging students to pursue STEM careers.

Senior Marianne Bonilla is excited about the project.

"There are still a lot of things you can see out there, especially with new instruments," she said.

"And with my proposal, I learned that there's definitely a lot of tweaks and things that can be that can be done to these instruments to make your pictures and stuff even better."

"There's also stuff related to astronomy that's related to agriculture. So like, you could use the moon phases to figure out how to grow plants," said sophomore Chantel Rafanaan, who wants to be a farmer.

"I want them to realize that science is a process and it does require patience," said Bergonio, who hopes to eventually expand access to telescope to students across the state.

"But at the end of the day, like I said, it's something that will definitely be worth it."

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Taboola Feed

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