



Agenda Lahaina/West Maui schools. 1:00. Agenda II

1 message

Cheryl B <burgharc@gmail.com>

Tue, Sep 5, 2023 at 5:01 PM

To: Testimony BOE <Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha

It is my testimony to ask the BOE and HIDOE to please put the systemic bureaucracy on hold and take time to look at the issues and situations we currently have due to the fires in Maui with a lens of compassion and patience.

Having just read the testimony linked to the BOE agenda email, I can say that as a retired elementary educator that the teacher's testimony is concerning to say the least. It is beyond belief that the people of the DOE/BOE (not the system) have been unable to convey and smooth paths for those folks affected by the fires.

Communication with educators in the classroom from the BOE/DOE top admin. has always been lacking. That a message makes it from the Supt. through the various people/CAS, principals, coaches and then to classroom educators has been shown to be ineffective and to cause major gaps in understanding as well as implementation deficits. The system continues this absurd path to the detriment of everyone and especially the students and educators who are responsible for them. Ask almost anyone and they will have their own experience with communication failure within the system. HOW is it that those people who have already been traumatized by the fires are now put in a position to relive and to have new traumas at the hands of the people who should be first to help and lessen their burdens. WE have the capabilities to do better, but we defer to "the way it has been", "we have to keep it the same for everyone" and "oh, what if we get sued".

The fires at Lahaina, Kula and Olinda have affected people so deeply and it is time for the BOE/DOE to listen instead of going in with plans created by people on O`ahu. We are talking about basic needs. How will we feed the students, make sure they are safe and feel comfortable to even come to school? Haven't even begun to talk about the human and other resources needed for them.

It can not and should not be "back to what the system calls normal". Most of these folks are still recovering from the effects of the pandemic and now this.. Our biggest concern and path should be HOW do we help and be looking for the best ways to do so.

As an elementary teacher, I can't even imagine losing my home but to lose home and my classroom is unimaginable to me. Does anyone really understand what it means to have everything gone, if it is not your experience?

Where do we go from here? I hope that the BOE takes the time to listen as humans and reach out to those people for whom the paperwork might be unclear, reassure all of the employees that you as well as all of

us in the community are here to support as we can. Reach out to retired educators, community volunteers and let us help as well.

In summary, here is our chance to go forward and be a part of a change in how we look at things and how we proceed. Maui has given us an opportunity to clearly look at ourselves and how we respond to crises and every day. Hawai'i is unique. Our communities are unique and we need to listen to each one, truly hear what is being said and support the way they feel best to move forward. Listen to the folks of Maui, truly listen.

Cheryl Burghardt
retired DOE educator



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

Testimony for 9/7

1 message

Kati Hedden <katibhedden@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Sep 6, 2023 at 3:08 PM

Aloha,

I am Kati Hedden, a teacher at Lahaina Intermediate School. My condo burned in the fire. I would very much like to continue live in the Lahaina area as that is my community and home. If possible, may you please consider working with other government agencies to create affordable teacher housing in the Lahaina area for those Lahaina teachers displaced by the fire? Mahalo for your consideration, Kati Hedden

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Aloha



Testimony/Request

1 message

kimberly Nolasco <kimbersea@hotmail.com>

Wed, Sep 6, 2023 at 8:31 AM

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

RE: Student Achievement

Dear DOE,

I am a parent of two Lahaina students, one in Intermediate and one at the High School level. I applied for the distance learning 3 weeks ago in order to get my child's academic and SEL needs met. I was put on the waitlist and just now received info to get my 6th grader in the synchronous class. However, my 10th grader is still waiting for the asynchronous class with no response. I called 6 times yesterday throughout the day, left messages but no one answers or returns calls. I have computer access and need to get him started asap, he can not sit around and wait week after week. Please call me or email with his confirmation. His name is Colton Nolasco.

Thank you,
Kim Nolasco
(808)280-4422

Sent from my iPhone

Board of Education

September 7, 2023

Special Meeting

Susan Pcola-Davis testimony

Report of the Superintendent

- Maui Wildfire Impacts
 - a. Reconnecting with staff and students. I attended the Community Meeting on August 30 at the MACC. Very open communications with the information that was available to share. A number of very concerned teachers and parents expressed their frustrations. They said that the DOE was unavailable during the first week and that showing up now was a little too late.
 - b. A lack of communication abilities was first and foremost and is probably one of the first things the DOE needs to take a deep dive. Create a process for all the things that went wrong with communication.
 - c. The DOE was getting information from Maui and had to know that there was not any communication ability. No phones, no computers, no radio, no broadband. Knowing all this the DOE continued sending messages that could not be retrieved.
 - d. Graduation was another topic on parents' minds. Some ideas are to look at other sites. Talk about setting up portables. The answer is not definitive yet. Busing another topic for discussion.
 - e. Lahaina wants their students in Lahaina. It has to be done safely with the health and safety of the students, teachers and all on campus employees.

- f. I heard loud and clear that Lahainaluna HS wants their football team back in action. As the superintendent explained about the soil testing, his remarks fell on some deaf ears. Absolutely NO HUMAN CONTACT on these schools until soil tests come back indicating it is safe.
- g. Any person going on campus before the “all clear” must be in Full PPE. (P100’s if available, N95’s which should be changed every 1.5 hours, fully clothed, no slippers, covered shoes, gloves and eye goggles.
- h. Air conditioning, HVAC, all need to be checked by qualified AC cleaners. You must replace filters.
- i. If you re-open the schools, there must be a plan for water. Water buffalos are great. Think about toilets, hand washing, drinking fountains, I’m touching the tip of the iceberg with issues with water. I know from watching what happened to the schools on the Navy contaminated water line. Did the DOE do a lessons’ learned or an after-action report?
- j. The full picture of the contamination has not been seen yet.
- k. Purple Air has been installed in three areas in Lahaina. The technology has not been explained in depth to the public. A map will show real time data. The caveat is, if the data shows that the air is unsafe, there is no protocol for what to do next.
- l. I arrived at 11:00 am and left at 5:00 pm. During that time, I had to use my inhaler 4 times. This is unusual. As I went into the airport there was something wrong with my glasses, I went in the restroom and saw a sticky film on the lenses. I washed them in soap and water twice to clean them. I returned home and Thursday and Friday I was still using my inhaler because I was having issues. On Saturday, I was cleared up.



Testimony

1 message

Kacie Seitz <kacie.seitz@k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Thu, Sep 7, 2023 at 11:37 AM

Dear Members of the Hawaii Board of Education,

I am Kacie Seitz, the Curriculum Coordinator at Kamalii Elementary School. As you are aware, our school has been entrusted with the responsibility of educating students from the west side of our island, in addition to the 60+ students who were displaced from their homes due to the recent fire. We take this privilege and honor very seriously, and every educator at our school is committed to loving, caring for, and educating ALL students on Maui.

I am here today to express our support for the desires of the families from Lahaina and the west side of our island. We stand with them in seeking solutions that best serve the educational needs of the children in their community.

However, I am also here to emphasize the urgent need for assistance regarding the mental health of both our teachers and students. Each day, we welcome a substantial number of new students to our school, sometimes as many as 20 or more. While we are wholeheartedly dedicated to embracing these students with love and support, we are facing a critical shortage of crisis counselors to aid both our students and teachers.

Currently, we have only one school counselor and one behavioral health support (BHS) counselor shared among multiple schools. Even before the tragic events of August 8th, these positions were scarce in relation to the needs and student enrollment. Now, in the aftermath of an unimaginable tragedy, we find ourselves without any specialized crisis counselors to assist ALL students and teachers who have directly or indirectly experienced the trauma.

Teachers at our school were offered a single webinar on trauma, but this is far from adequate. We are in dire need of in-person resources and specialized support staff to help us navigate this crisis effectively. Students and teachers are arriving with diverse and complex needs, and while we strive to reassure each child that they are safe and loved, we are not trained professionals in crisis counseling.

For many of our students, the fire is an ever-present trauma, dominating their thoughts in every moment. Simple questions like asking a child their birthday can elicit heart-wrenching responses, such as the cancellation of their celebration because their home was lost to the fire. These triggers are constant reminders of the trauma they have endured, and we, as educators, are not equipped with the necessary training to provide the level of support they require.

Our dedicated educators are doing their utmost to create a sense of normalcy and security for wildfire survivors. However, we recognize our limitations as non-mental health professionals. The trauma experienced by both our students and teachers necessitates specialized care. It is absolutely vital that we have crisis counselors on site to provide the essential support.

I implore the Hawaii Board of Education to take immediate action by allocating resources and personnel to our Maui schools, especially those receiving daily busloads of children passing through the disaster zone. These students are exposed to the trauma of the fire on their way to and from school, and we urgently need crisis counselors who are trained to work with children and are experienced in handling severe trauma. These professionals can help our students cope with their emotions, process their grief, and develop the necessary coping mechanisms to thrive academically and personally.

Furthermore, the absence of crisis counselors has taken a toll on our teachers. We are doing our best to support our students, but the emotional burden is overwhelming. Without the assistance of trained professionals, for both students and teachers, we are at risk of compromising our ability to provide a stable and nurturing environment for our students.

In light of this ongoing crisis, I respectfully request the following actions:

- Immediate deployment of crisis counselors to Maui schools, especially those with students bussed from the west side, to support both students and teachers.
- Ongoing training and resources for educators on trauma-informed teaching practices to better assist students dealing with trauma.
- Regular assessment and monitoring of the mental health needs of our students to ensure they receive the care and attention required.
- A commitment to long-term support, recognizing that the effects of trauma may persist for years after the initial crisis.

I eagerly await your prompt response and action on this critical matter.

Sincerely,

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Kacie Seitz, NBCT
Curriculum Coordinator
Kamali'i Elementary School

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