



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

Testimony: Recommendation of the Committee on Weights XIII Small School Funding

1 message

Lea Albert <lea.albert09@gmail.com>

Tue, Sep 19, 2023 at 3:30 PM

To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

I am a retired DOE CAS, high school principal, vice-principal, and teacher. I am writing in full support of the Committee on Weights XIII recommendation for small school spending. I fully support providing \$250,000 to each of the eight small schools which are remote as well as providing \$250,000 to each of the six small schools which are not remote. The six schools include Kaaawa, Waiahole, and Keolu. I would also wish that the board approve the factoring in of this additional total of \$3.5 million in the 24 - 25 Financial Plan. Planning starts for this document in October 2023.

Thank you for your consideration,

Lea Albert



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

Testimony for BOE 9/21/23 meeting Agenda Item V.A

1 message

Cheryl B <burgharc@gmail.com>

Tue, Sep 19, 2023 at 5:49 PM

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

Aloha,

I stand on previous testimony and ask for the BOE to **SUPPORT** and continue to **provide** \$250,000 to each of the eight remote schools(Ka'uHighand Pāhala Elementary School, Hāna High and Elementary School, Kaunakakai Elementary School, Lana'i High and Elementary School, Moloka'i High School,Moloka'i Middle School, Kilohana Elementary School, Maunaloa Elementary School);

I **SUPPORT** that we continue to **provide** \$250,000 to the six identified small schools/non-remoteschools(Ka'a'awa Elementary School, Waiāhole Elementary School, Keolu Elementary School, Ha'aheo Elementary School, Hōnaunau Elementary School, Ho'okena Elementary School).

In addition, I encourage the BOE to work with and strongly encourage the Hawai'i State Legislature to allocate funds for the above schools and to **provide** necessary funding to our Kaiapuni schools. No one should need to be reminded that we live in Hawai'i and the language, culture and traditions by law should be funded and supported. The BOE and legislature have been historically remiss in funding these schools and Hawaiian language etc. in our schools. We are way past due to rectify.

C. Burghardt

Retired DOE educator

September 1, 2023

Entity: Hawaii State BOE Finance & Infrastructure Committee
Subject: Testimony
Regarding: Recommendation of the Committee on Weights XIII-
Small Schools Funding
Position: Support

Aloha,

We strongly support the recommendation from the Committee on Weights (COW XIII)¹ that the Department seek an additional \$3.5 million of general funds to:

- a. Continue to provide \$250,000 to each of the eight remote schools (Kā‘ū High and Pāhala Elementary, Hāna High and Elementary, Kaunakakai Elementary, Lana‘i High and Elementary, Moloka‘i High, Moloka‘i Middle, Kilohana Elementary, Maunaloa Elementary); and
- b. In addition, provide \$250,000 to the six identified small schools/non-remote schools (Ka‘a‘awa Elementary, Waiāhole Elementary, Keolu Elementary, Ha‘aheo Elementary, Hōnaunau Elementary, Ho‘okena Elementary); and
- c. Factor in this additional \$3.5 million into the school year 24-25 Financial Plan process, which will start in October 2023.

Principal Obra presented to the Committee on Weights on July 12, 2023 to share the challenges of operating a small school while lacking adequate funding. What is clear, is that while the weighted student formula has fulfilled its goal of providing a more equitable, transparent, and decentralized method of funding schools, small and remote rural schools have remained underfunded. As Principal Obra (and others) have stated: the resource requirements to ensure our small schools can equitably provide education opportunities for all of our students have consistently exceeded what we are allocated based simply on our enrollment counts and student demographics.

The Department has also recognized the challenges faced by small schools as evidenced by allocation decision making for both the WSF Reserve Funds and Remote School Funds. As an example, for FY23-24, Kilohana Elementary requested an additional \$131,958 from the WSF Reserve Fund in addition to the \$250,000 from the remote school fund, bringing their final budget to \$1.14M.²

¹ See [Committee on Weights XIII Report, 2023](#)

² From July 12, 2023 Meeting. [IVb. - COW XIII Meeting #2 - Small Rural Combo School Presentation.pdf](#)

Small schools need an operating budget that does not put our students at a relative disadvantage. Without one, administrators are forced to choose between positions or opportunities for students. Schools cannot maintain a steady course and direction when their budgets are in flux, and this instability directly affects students' ability to equitably benefit from their education.

As educators, we believe our students have the right to be educated in the community they live in. As administrators who work in a small school we also know first-hand that our students *want* to be in a school in their community. The Department's new Strategic Plan's first goal – all students experience rigorous, high-quality learning that results in equitable outcomes for all learners – is a commitment we must make as a system and community, to put our kids first. To make sure they have an educational experience they deserve so they thrive.

We know small schools can and will deliver on this if they have sufficient, stable, sustainable funding.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Name ~~with position/title and organization if applicable~~



Testimony

1 message

MariaDonell Thomas <mthomas4@hawaii.edu>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Sep 20, 2023 at 10:23 PM

EMAIL

MAIL

Aloha,

My name is Donell Thomas I am writing as a Lahaina community member regarding the HIDOE/HIBOE response to the fire disaster in Lahaina.

I am disappointed in the way the Hawai'i Department of Education's leadership responded to the fires and devastation in Lahaina.

The complete disregard and care for the people of Lahaina was demonstrated by the DOE's failure to respond to the needs of the students and the people of Lahaina. The DOE did not respond with any consideration to the needs of the people.

No action was taken to account for staff members and students who perished or were injured. No care was given for administrators and staff who lost homes. No one failed to plan for and listen to the people of Lahaina after the fire.

When I called the DOE to ask about school I was told to ask "the principal" and when I responded that her house burned down I got

a pathetic response of, "Oh, I am sorry." For the DOE to 'dump' the response to the fire on the victims of the disaster is disgusting. The DOE did not reach out to the community to ask how to serve the people. Yes - one day of parent meetings to "hear" but not listen. No input from staff just some lies about trauma training which was just a nonsense lecture that triggered the PTSD of survivors.

The DOE/BOE made their own plan and followed it - a half thrown together attempt for distance learning and still bussing keiki across the Pali - People just gave up because they were desperate and felt they had no choice. You seemed to give the people little to no choice, you failed to serve Lahaina which has put hundreds of millions of dollars into the DOE and the state of Hawai'i from the revenue Lahaina produces.

School is slowly taking place but it is very late and many people are still hurting and you could have been the government organization that helped the people.

I urge you to continue to serve the keiki of Lahaina by continuing to learn how to serve the student population and also serve the people of Hawai'i nei by learning from this disaster and formulating a response plan for future disasters- fire, flood, earthquake - whatever. Teachers are expected to reflect and learn from past performance - the DOE/BOE must be held to a high standard and take a good long look at the response to the Lahaina fires and learn.

Most important - listen to the people and do your job as public servants to serve the needs of the people.

Sincerely,

Donell Thomas



Testimony

1 message

Haley van Noord <alohahaley@yahoo.com>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Sep 20, 2023 at 10:26 PM

Haley van Weemen van Noord
Lahaina teacher testifying as an individual
General meeting
Item III.A. Report of the Superintendent: Maui Wildfires Impacts

I would like to remind the board that as students and teachers are scheduled to begin returning to Lahainaluna Road in the next few weeks, to my knowledge there has been no improvement to any school evacuation plans nor any firebreaks cut around the schools. In the past few years the areas surrounding Lahainaluna Road have burned on multiple occasions and we continue to practice outdated fire drills with no updates to safety plans. We now see the severity of the situation and it would be irresponsible to return the student bodies from four schools to three campuses at the top of Lahainaluna Road without an updated, detailed response plan in place for another disaster. What will we do if a fire breaches the bypass next time? How will we evacuate students with an already compromised bus system with too few drivers and not nearly enough seats? Please ensure the safety of the students returning to school in the Lahaina community who have already endured so much. You must require proper firebreaks be cut around the schools and make creating an alternate route off of campuses a priority.