

September 21, 2023

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

Aloha,

My name is Alexandra Obra, Principal of Waiāhole Elementary School. I 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.

I 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. I (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

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

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

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. If you have further questions, I can be reached at 808-210-0504 or by e-mail at alexandra.obra@k12.hi.us.

Sincerely,

Alexandra Obra

Alexandra Obra

Waiāhole Elementary School

Principal



Testimony for Waiahole Elementary

1 message

Grace <gracelandeza@gmail.com>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Sun, Sep 17, 2023 at 12:04 PM

Entity: Subject: Regarding: Hawaii State BOE Finance & Infrastructure Committee
Testimony
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

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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

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.

Grace Landeza

Sent from my iPhone



Testimony on COW XII Report

1 message

Mark Hines <mhines@midpac.edu>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Sun, Sep 17, 2023 at 3:52 PM

Date

Entity: Hawaii State Board of Education
Subject: Testimony
Regarding: Recommendation of the Committee on Weights XIII- Small Schools Funding
Position: Support

Aloha,

I strongly support the recommendation from the Committee on Weights (COW XIII) 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, starting in October 2023.

Principal Obra presented to the Committee on Weights on July 12, 2023 to share the challenges of operating a small school without adequate funding. It is clear 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. For example, for FY23-24, Kilohana Elementary requested an additional \$131,958 from the WSF Reserve Fund and the \$250,000 from the remote school fund, bringing their final budget to \$1.14M.

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 benefit from their education equitably.

As educators, we believe our students have the right to be educated in their community. Having worked with 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 the educational experience they deserve so they thrive.

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Mark Hines

Director, Kupu Hou Academy
at Mid Pacific's Center for Advancing Education
mhines@midpac.edu @mhines
<https://www.midpac.edu/kupuhouacademy/>
2445 Ka'ala St., Honolulu, HI 96822 808-441-3784



Testimony

2 messages

Jennifer Luke Payne <jennifer.luke_payne@k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Sep 6, 2023 at 11:44 AM

Entity: Hawaii State BOE Finance & Infrastructure Committee

Subject: Testimony

Regarding: Recommendation of the Committee on Weights XIII- Small Schools Funding

Position: Support

Aloha kakou,

My name is Jennifer Luke-Payne, I am the principal of Kaaawa Elementary School. I am in support the recommendation from the Committee on Weights (COW XIII) 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 and I along with some DOE employees worked together to figure out what size a school would need to be for the weighted student formula to properly support a school. The number we came up with was 250 students. All the schools listed in the "b" section above are below that count. Moreover, we worked on tallying up what the budget would need to be so a small school could be functional and stable. This amount ended up being \$1.38 million (total weighted student formula) for each school. I was not available to present to the Committee on Weights (C.O.W.) on the date of their meeting so Principal Obra presented our proposal to the committee. After some discussion the C.O.W. decided an additional \$250,000 would be a good amount to give to the small schools. Although this is below the amount I would want/need, it is way better than continuing on the same trajectory.

Small schools need an operating budget that does not put our students at a relative disadvantage. Without one, I am compelled to choose between positions and or deny 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.

This \$250,000 is not completely sufficient, but it is a step in the right direction. I do have a few questions. Representative Lisa Kitagawa informed Principal Obra and I that the Legislature added an additional \$5

million in the weighted student formula to support small schools this year. So here is my question: what is the \$5 million being used for this year? And, if we receive the \$250,000 for next school year that is only \$3.5 million. So what will the rest of the \$5 million be used for? For a small school every cent counts.

I have had the pleasure of serving as the principal of Kaaawa Elementary School for 12 years. I believe in my students, my faculty, and my staff. I am committed to my community and I hope you will join me in helping to build a more stable learning environment by approving this additional \$250,000 for each of the schools listed above. I know it will not go to waste at my school and you will play a part in helping my children to gain the support they need.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Jennifer Luke-Payne/ Principal Kaaawa Elementary School

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.

Jennifer Luke Payne <jennifer.luke_payne@k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Sep 18, 2023 at 12:49 PM

Entity: Hawaii State BOE Finance & Infrastructure Committee

Subject: Testimony

Regarding: Recommendation of the Committee on Weights XIII- Small Schools Funding

Position: Support

Aloha kakou,

My name is Jennifer Luke-Payne, I am the principal of Kaaawa Elementary School. I am in support the recommendation from the Committee on Weights (COW XIII) 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
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- 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 and I along with some DOE employees worked together to figure out what size a school would need to be for the weighted student formula to properly support a school. The number we came up with was 250 students. All the schools listed in the "b" section above are below that count. Moreover, we worked on tallying up what the budget would need to be so a small school could be functional and stable. This amount ended up being \$1.38 million (total weighted student formula) for each school. I was not

available to present to the Committee on Weights (C.O.W.) on the date of their meeting so Principal Obra presented our proposal to the committee. After some discussion the C.O.W. decided an additional \$250,000 would be a good amount to give to the small schools. Although this is below the amount I would want/need, it is way better than continuing on the same trajectory.

Small schools need an operating budget that does not put our students at a relative disadvantage. Without one, I am compelled to choose between positions and or deny 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. This \$250,000 is not completely sufficient, but it is a step in the right direction. For a small school every cent counts.

I have had the pleasure of serving as the principal of Kaaawa Elementary School for 13 years. I believe in my students, my faculty, and my staff. I am committed to my community and I hope you will join me in helping to build a more stable learning environment by approving this additional \$250,000 for each of the schools listed above. I know it will not go to waste at my school and you will play a part in helping my children to gain the support they need.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Jennifer Luke-Payne/ Principal Kaaawa Elementary School

[Quoted text hidden]



September 21, 2023
General Business Meeting

Dear Chair Haruki and Members of the Board,

Board Action on recommendation concerning recommendations of the Committee on Weights XIII regarding the Weighted Student Formula fund allocation for the 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 school years.

We strongly support the COW's recommendation on additional support for small and rural schools.

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
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.*