



Testimony

1 message

Anika Agerlie <aagerlie2013@gmail.com>
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Fri, Nov 10, 2023 at 3:57 PM

Anika Agerlie
Teacher, Konawaena Elementary School
General Business Meeting
Report of the Superintendent - Maui Wildfire Impacts

Comment: I am writing to share a concern over fire safety at DOE schools. The wildfires in Lāhaina were devastating. In addition to countless homes, four schools in the area were heavily impacted, with one school being a complete loss after the fires. Unfortunately, Lāhaina is not the only area in Hawai'i with the potential for deadly wildfires.

As of this month, Konawaena Elementary School has been without a working fire alarm system for 4 years. We are currently in position #20 on a list of schools to receive a new system. Our school has been told the cost for a new system is \$90,000-\$100,000, a price tag that we cannot afford without assistance from the department. The department has stated that it will be fixed, however there has been no timeline provided and no sense of urgency, even after a fire broke out on our campus in January 2021. At one point the DOE claimed the system would be replaced over winter break in 2022. That did not happen.

Our school is on the slopes of Mauna Loa and surrounded by pasture land. A fire that starts on any of the adjacent properties would quickly spread to our campus. Last week, Hawai'i County issued a Red Flag Warning over the potential for wildfires spanning from North Kohala to Ka'ū. Our school is in the middle of this hazard zone.

I urge the Board of Education to examine why we have 20+ DOE schools without working fire alarms. This is an issue that threatens the safety of thousands of students and public school employees across the state. If the DOE continues to ignore the very real issue of fire safety in their schools, it is only a matter of time before another tragedy occurs.



Testimony

1 message

Hannah Hokenson <hhoke479@gmail.com>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Mon, Nov 13, 2023 at 2:59 PM

Hannah Hokenson
Teacher, Konawaena Elementary School
General Business Meeting
Report of the Superintendent - Maui Wildfire Impacts

Comment: I am writing to share a concern over fire safety at DOE schools. The wildfires in Lāhaina were devastating. In addition to countless homes, four schools in the area were heavily impacted, with one school being a complete loss after the fires. Unfortunately, Lāhaina is not the only area in Hawai'i with the potential for deadly wildfires.

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I urge the Board of Education to examine why we have 20+ DOE schools without working fire alarms. This is an issue that threatens the safety of thousands of students and public school employees across the state. If the DOE continues to ignore the very real issue of fire safety in their schools, it is only a matter of time before another tragedy occurs.



david.miyashiro@hawaiikidscan.org
hawaiikidscan.org

David Miyashiro
Executive Director

November 16, 2023

Hawaii State Board of Education
General Business Meeting
Warren Haruki, Chairperson
Kaimana Barcarse, Vice Chairperson

Aloha Chair Haruki, 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 A: Board Action on designation of Board Members to an ad hoc committee [a permitted interaction group pursuant to Hawaii Revised Statutes Section 92-2.5(b)(2)] concerning 2024 Legislative Session.

We agree with the recommended appointment of ad hoc committee members. We do respectfully recommend that the committee includes speaking with advocates and community groups like HawaiiKidsCAN during its November-January pre-session meetings. Our organization is in close communication with legislators, students, parents, educators, employers, and other key stakeholders, so we hope to share some of these perspectives with ad hoc committee members.

Mahalo for your consideration,

David Miyashiro
Founding Executive Director
HawaiiKidsCAN

November 13, 2023

Submitted by an Anonymous Teacher
Konawaena Elementary School
General Business Meeting
Report of the Superintendent - Maui Wildfire Impacts

To our Hawaii Board of Education:

I am writing to share a concern over fire safety at DOE schools. The wildfires in Lāhaina were devastating. In addition to countless homes, four schools in the area were heavily impacted, with one school being a complete loss after the fires. Unfortunately, Lāhaina is not the only area in Hawai'i with the potential for deadly wildfires.

As of this month, Konawaena Elementary School has been without a working fire alarm system for 4 years. We are currently in position #20 on a list of schools to receive a new system. Our school has been told the cost for a new system is \$90,000-\$100,000, a price tag that we cannot afford without assistance from the department. The department has stated that it will be fixed, however there has been no timeline provided and no sense of urgency, even after a fire broke out on our campus in January 2021. At one point the DOE claimed the system would be replaced over winter break in 2022. That did not happen. We are asking for your support to provide the funds and to get a fire alarm system installed at Konawaena Elementary School.

Our school is on the slopes of Mauna Loa and surrounded by pasture land. A fire that starts on any of the adjacent properties would quickly spread to our campus. Last week, Hawai'i County issued a Red Flag Warning over the potential for wildfires spanning from North Kohala to Ka'ū. Our school is in the middle of this hazard zone.

I urge the Board of Education to examine why we have 20+ DOE schools without working fire alarms. This is an issue that threatens the safety of thousands of students and public school employees across the state. If the DOE continues to ignore the very real issue of fire safety in their schools, it is only a matter of time before another tragedy occurs.

Last month Konawaena Elementary teachers shared the annual Fire Safety Booklets with our students. We stressed the importance of fire prevention and having a clear plan of action at school and at home. I am asking you to support our schools, our keikis and school staff by taking this matter with urgency. Action needs to be taken now for the safety of our communities. Please fund our schools and do the work needed to get fire alarm systems installed.

Sincerely,
A caring and concerned
Konawaena Elementary Teacher

November 14, 2023

To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

re: **November 16, 2023 GBM Agenda Item V. Committee Reports**

Aloha Board of Education Members,

The Board's Committee Reports are not Committee reports. They are meeting agendas. When I click on the link to the SAC report in this GBM meeting notice:

V. Committee Reports

A. [Student Achievement Committee Report on November 2, 2023 meeting](#)

The link opens the November 2, 2023 SAC meeting notice (agenda, testimony, and meeting materials) at this URL:

boe.hawaii.gov/Meetings/Notices/Pages/November-2%2c-2023-Student-Achievement-Committee-.aspx

A meeting notice is not a committee report per *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* (RRONR). Per its Bylaws, Article X, the Board of Education is supposed to govern meetings by following RRONR.

ARTICLE X

PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

Section 10.1. The rules contained in *Robert's Rules of Order, newly revised*, shall govern meetings where they are not in conflict with the law, these bylaws, or other rules of the Board. In making a ruling or interpretation of the rules, the order of determination shall be 1) the law, 2) these bylaws, 3) Board policy, and 4) *Robert's Rules of Order, newly revised*.

RRONR has been refined for over 100 years. The reason it is so widely used is because it's proven method for large organizations to get business done efficiently, effectively, and with focused input on issues at hand. RRONR works if it's followed.

I would be most appreciative if BOE committee chairs follow the RRONR section on Committee Reports. I have a hunch that other members of the public would appreciate that, too.

This raises the topic of how Board business is conducted currently, and if there's room for improvement.

I've been attending BOE meetings and submitting testimony off and on for over 10 years. There have been many technological and procedural improvements in how the Board conducts its meetings, a couple of which were actually my suggestions. I often suggest that other boards see how the BOE system works procedurally, though not where following RRONR is concerned.

These days, I don't see the BOE getting much business done. What I do see is a lot of DOE presentations, but no motions arising from these reports and/or suggestions the public provides in testimony. Nothing that suggests what the Board should do, if anything other than accepting the report (which is done by the Chair and not moved upon). All of this is in RRONR. Even the Board Bylaws refer to making a motion ("provide any recommendation") to open a discussion about actions to be taken or other issues discussed at the committee level. If there's nothing new to propose, then the document stands on its own, and the BOE should just accept the report and move on.

Section 5.10. Committee Reports. Standing Committees shall promptly inform the Board of the actions taken or issues discussed at their meetings. Committees may submit written reports in advance of any regular meeting in lieu of an oral report, provided that the Committee Chairperson shall orally provide any recommendation from the committee for Board action.

For those of us out here who actually want to read a committee report, it would be so helpful if there was one. I think that's a good suggestion for Board improvement from a member of the public. I'm sure there are more "boots on the ground" soldiers inside and outside the DOE working to improve our public education system who have good ideas about how the Board can improve. Unfortunately, there is no opening for the public and employees with no power to raise concerns about topics that might not be making it into DOE reports or BOE agendas or suggestions for how the Board itself can improve.

I have an idea for how the Board can improve public engagement to fulfill its responsibilities described in items 10 and 13 of BOE Policy 400-1, and do this in an organized, efficient manner.

POLICY 400-1

BOARD OF EDUCATION ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

10. Establish Board procedures to address petitions from the public.
13. Periodically conduct Board self-assessment.

I suggest that the Board establish a “BOE Improvement Database.”

BOE Improvement Database

The Board of Education shall establish a database of suggestions from the public for Board improvement, and provide a monthly report of the past month’s suggestions for standing General Business Meeting (GBM) agenda item:

Submissions to Board Improvement Database.

This “BOE Improvement Database” will have an online interface for public submissions. In order to ensure the data is manageable, the database will have, at a minimum, the following fields and settings:

FIELD	OPTIONAL (Y/N)	SETTINGS
FIRST NAME	Y	
LAST NAME	Y	
STATE OF HAWAI'I RESIDENT?	Y	YES or NO toggle.
ISLAND OF RESIDENCE	N	
DOE EMPLOYEE?	Y	YES or NO toggle.
DOE BRANCH, DEPT., SCHOOL	N	Drop-down list of DOE branches, departments, schools.
DOE POSITION TITLE	N	If YES to “DOE EMPLOYEE?” drop-down list of positions in employee’s selected branch, department, school.
MAILING ADDRESS	N	
PHONE	N	
EMAIL	N	
SUGGESTION	Y	1,200 character limit.

One day prior to posting the agenda for a monthly General Business Meeting, the BOE will generate an XLS or CVS report of all submissions since the last report to include with the meeting materials contained in the posted meeting notice.

Once the database is established, acquiring and publishing the data is easy.

Mahalo for your consideration,


Vanessa Ott