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Hawaii State Board of Education
Student Achievement Committee
Bill Arakaki, Committee Chairperson
Lauren Moriarty, Committee Vice Chairperson

Aloha Chair Arakaki, Vice Chair Moriarty, and Members of the Board,

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 Discussion Item A) Presentation on economic impacts of pandemic learning loss for school-age children by Eric Hanushek, Paul and Jean Hanna Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.

We are incredibly grateful for this timely and important discussion. While it has been nearly four years since school campuses were initially closed following spring break, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the impacts of the pandemic are still very much relevant today. Unfortunately, Hawaii has faced a number of other challenges to our broader community, including the Maui wildfires, cost of living, housing and homelessness, and environmental protections. From the time HawaiiKidsCAN spends at the Hawaii State Capitol during legislative session and reviewing news headlines, we do not feel like the state is treating educational outcomes with the appropriate level of urgency.

We are looking forward to today's presentation and discussion with Dr. Hanushek. We would urge the BOE to consider the following questions:

- While the DOE rightfully acknowledges that "Hawaii is a leader in academic recovery when compared with other states," it doesn't seem like there has been an

available analysis yet on why this is the case. One may theorize that it has been the investment in summer school and bringing high-need students back to campus during the pandemic, but it would be incredibly valuable to what is replicable and effective.

- In terms of Dr. Hanushek’s analysis of economic losses, HawaiiKidsCAN fears that the estimated economic loss of 1.2 percent of GDP could actually be understating the negative impact on local students. Hawaii’s high cost of living and lack of affordable housing should indicate that the stakes are even for local students who want to survive and thrive in the state. According to Bankrate, the cost of living is 52.93% lower in Oklahoma City, OK versus Honolulu. Therefore, we wonder if Hawaii students will face more challenging circumstance than students in Oklahoma, even with the larger estimate of GDP loss for Oklahoma. We would be curious to hear Dr. Hanushek’s perspective.
- We are eager to hear potential solutions from this presentation. We previously shared the following priorities with the BOE from Harvard University’s Thomas Kane have called for a focus on acceleration that aims to go beyond a pace of learning that existed before the pandemic. His advice includes:
 - **Prioritizing summer learning** – This has been an area of strength for HIDOE, but we hope there is an opportunity for more students to participate moving forward, as just 16% of public school students participated in an official program in 2023.
 - **Prioritize 9th grade for catching up** – For example, a double-dose of Algebra for those below proficiency in 8th grade.
 - **Demand Evaluations of Academic Recovery Interventions** – While the DOE has been on-track with spending ESSER support funds, it is unclear what data has been collected to show which interventions have been most effective at accelerating learning. This level of transparency would be very helpful for the BOE, schools, families, and public

HawaiiKidsCAN would also like to offer comments for Discussion Item B) committee review and discussion of strategic plan key performance indicators and academic achievement targets.

We appreciate the DOE’s commitment to anchoring the 2023-2029 Strategic Plan in student-oriented data. We support the proposed new KPIs and differentiated academic proficiency levels. The Strategic Plan has great potential to drive game-changing outcomes for students, so we encourage the DOE, BOE, and our community partners to commit to helping students achieve the DOE’s suggested stretch goals. We did notice that the memo and presentation do not mention achievement or opportunity gaps, so we would strongly encourage the DOE to include the outcomes of our high-need student subgroups with all reporting.

Mahalo for your consideration,

David Miyashiro
Founding Executive Director
HawaiiKidsCAN