



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

Testimony of an EBES parent- Tannelle Agamao-Gainey

1 message

TA G <tg567800@gmail.com>

Thu, Mar 4, 2021 at 7:37 PM

To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

This email is in regards to the change being proposed for the fourth quarter. Currently my third grader has class online with Mr. Huang. Although our covid cases have dramatically reduced, covid still exists and the potential for my child to get it and bring it home is still there. It doesn't make any sense to disrupt his current schedule. I am not comfortable and I am completely against being forced to have my child attend class on campus for the fourth quarter. At the beginning of the school year we were asked to choose between hybrid and distance learning. To suddenly make a unilateral decision for all students to go back is unacceptable. The community is still being asked to mask up and social distance. How will the children social distance if the school is at 100% capacity? Have the schools been given enough time to prepare for this? Is it even worth it for just a month and a half. The school year is practically over. Not much will be salvaged just by making this change. I believe that preparations for the fall should be made instead seeing as its several months away. This would help make full in person learning safe at that time. As far as I'm concerned, the current hybrid / distance learning schedule is working at EBES. Every school is different and the concerns we have as parents are important to consider before making a decision that impacts our child's education and safety. To take away our option to keep our child in distance learning till the end of this school year is unfair and unsafe. Please take our concerns into consideration.

Sincerely,
Tannelle Agamao-Gainey



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

Please do NOT reopen schools for the remainder of the school year

1 message

Nicole Folk <lostgirl_79@yahoo.com>

Thu, Mar 4, 2021 at 3:00 PM

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

March 4, 2021

To the Members of the Board of Education,

I am a parent of a second grader and a PPT at Ewa Beach Elementary school. My son has been a part of Cohort C and doing very well with the way things are and have been for the first three quarters.

I believe that reopening the schools fully for all face to face learning or all distance learning would change everything and would not be for the best at this late date. Having all of the students (that choose) face to face instruction would not be given the chance to be properly distanced. This would also make things harder for the teachers and staff to keep up with proper health and safety protocols. How would bathroom breaks be handled or even just children being children. Our keiki who have been missing each other for so long would find it hard to stay within their own "distance bubbles". The students that choose full distance learning in my opinion would also be missing out in a big way. At least the students that are in Cohort C now get to be a part of the class and learn from their teacher. The new model would be a punishment of sorts for the distance learning students. They will not be able to interact with their classmates and teachers that they have come to know during this school year so far. These students would now be "on their own" and just monitored by "staff members" this makes no sense and would create a sense of isolation for many. In times like this we should be pulling together and not dividing which is essentially what this feels like.

I think having to decide all one way or the other isn't the best thing at this time. Our current model has been working the way it is just fine and seems a shame to change it so drastically at the end of the year. It would take both on campus students and distance learning students a while to now have to get used to a new way of instruction which would be a lot more time taken away from their learning and growth. I feel like the DOE has not done enough to support the students and teachers, and having to make a decision solely for the socialization of our keiki isn't fair for both students and teachers.

With only 6 weeks left in our current school year please keep things the way they are. Starting fresh with a new school year would be a better beginning for all. This would be a better chance for the teachers, staff, students and families to get prepared and immunized. I humbly ask you to please reconsider changing the current models (Cohort A, Cohort B and Cohort C) and keep the safety of our keiki, teachers and school staff at the forefront of our thoughts or maybe create a new model that allows Cohort C to still participate in their current class with their current teacher.

With much Aloha and Mahalo,
Nicole Folk



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

testimony

1 message

Devin C <holymashpotatoes@gmail.com>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Thu, Mar 4, 2021 at 12:02 PM

March 4, 2021

Dear Board of Education,

Oppose return to school for all students

I am a first grader at Ewa Beach Elementary.

I believe I should do online learning because there is a virus. When you are at home, you can't spread it or catch it. I would feel unsafe at school with the virus with everyone in class. There will be too much kids in class and you can't space out the desks. After awhile, the masks will get irritating. The little kids will take it off. That is not good. It might cause them to spread it to other people at school.

It would be scary if I had to go back to school with the virus. That would make it harder to learn and listen because I would be too nervous and scared.

I feel that we should keep the plan that my school is using. That way I can stay online. As you can see, I do not want to die.

Virus-free. www.avg.com



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

1:30 p.m. Full Board

1 message

Debbie Anderson <debbiea@hawaii.edu>
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Thu, Mar 4, 2021 at 11:02 AM

D. Board Action on Board policy positions for the 2021 Legislative Session: early learning, superintendent minimum qualifications, board member orientation and training, and collective bargaining employer votes

Example: For superintendent minimum qualifications, "prioritize for the superintendent position candidates that have the minimum qualification of ten years of employment in a department of education with at least five of those years serving in the capacity as a principal or higher.⁵ The measure also includes a desired qualification for a candidate as having a working understanding of the State's tri-level system of educational administration."

Given a lengthy number of concerns expressed about the Superintendent's contract extension, please consider letting this expire and enable better Department Leadership.

It's not too soon to discuss qualities preferred in a superintendent and the search process:

Role Model for Code of Conduct.

Employees, contractors, and volunteers shall maintain high standards of honesty, integrity, and impartiality, and avoid unethical behavior.

The Board of Education needs to be able to rely on reports from the Superintendent, without information being withheld.

Tainted Money

No external body to the State of Hawaii should be allowed to donate funds and then change or rescind such action to influence in an unduly manner. For an almost \$2 billion budget, to have a \$50,000 donation give away taxpayer power is untenable.

Role Experience

A superintendent should have to meet similar criteria to Principals, which include a minimum of a couple of years of classroom experience. Preferably, should have also experience as an Educational Officer (Vice Principal, Principal).

Local understanding

Given the disconnect of external searches connected to organizations such as Eli Broad, please consider a preference for meeting the state residency provisions of section 78-1(b). We need an administrator who is sensitive to the needs of local communities, 'ohana and employees.

Mahalo for listening!



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

Testimony for General Business Meeting March 4

1 message

Rebecca Hadley-Schlosser <beccasuehi@gmail.com>

Thu, Mar 4, 2021 at 7:27 AM

To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

Attached is my written testimony for today's general business meeting.

Rebecca Hadley-Schlosser

 **written testimony march 4 general business meeting.docx**
17K

March 3, 2021

Aloha Chairperson Payne and members of the Board of Education,

I'm writing to you regarding General Business Meeting discussion item IV. A. Presentation on Department of Education strategies for safe reopening of elementary and secondary schools to more in-person learning for fourth quarter of 2020-2021 school year. My name is Rebecca Hadley-Schlosser and I am a proud special education teacher at Nanaikapono Elementary School and proud member of the Hawaii State Teachers Association.

I have reviewed the DOE Metrics documents and am very concerned by some of the numbers presented. These numbers would indicate that we need to pause the discussion on whether to reopen elementary schools to full in-person instruction at this time. I found it interesting to note that the raw data provided by the DOE does not include data from our public charter schools.

Hawaii has 294 public schools, including public charter schools. As of the end of February, the data provided by the Department is not inclusive of all schools in Hawaii. The data appears to lack information from our public charter schools. This may skew the data that has been provided by the Department in the metrics document available on the DOE website.

However, when reviewing the information, it is apparent that there are schools who are not ready to open to full in-person learning because they lack sufficient PPE to get through the end of the school year. According to the Department's data, 171 schools have less than a 60-day supply of PPE in 1 or more categories. If you want teachers in their classrooms teaching students in person, you need to ensure that they have proper and sufficient PPE before opening those schools. If cannot ensure that there is proper and sufficient PPE, don't open the schools to full in-person learning. This is a recipe for disaster if you do. I have friends who are also special education teachers at other schools and what I hear from them is that their school, despite what it says in the Department's data, does not have sufficient PPE for the staff. These teachers are buying their own disinfecting wipes because they are not being provided by their administration.

Another metric you have is classroom ventilation. According to the Department's data, there are 1,319 classrooms that are not properly ventilated. How can you ensure the safety and well-being of the teachers, educational assistants, students, and other staff who may be housed in these classrooms when their rooms aren't properly ventilated?

Metric 4, Elementary School Quarterly Grades shows that 21% were graded well-below in ELA and 15% in Math. It would be interesting to disaggregate the data to figure out which of these students are our English Language Learners and students with disabilities and see how they fared in this area since a majority of students receiving in-person instruction are in these two groups. I also wonder if this included those students who had not logged in or been present in class the number of days required to give a grade are included in this data.

I am being told my numerous elementary school teachers that their principal has informed them that they will be going back to full in-person instruction come March 22. From what they are saying, there was no input from teachers as to whether this was going to happen and how it was going to happen before they were told this. Fortunately, I am not in this position. Our administration team at Nanaikapono has been very open and has worked collaboratively with us to make decisions from the beginning of the year. We have had numerous discussions

about how we're going to bring students back and what it will look like. We also are given the opportunity to provide feedback on procedures so that we feel heard and valued by our administrative team. It concerns me that other teachers are not being treated this way. Their principals are being told by the DOE they need to have students return beginning March 22, but they are not having those important discussions with their teachers to ensure a smooth transition back.

Another issue that is not being addressed is ensuring that staff who want to are getting the vaccine. We were fortunate that acting CAS Disa Hauge worked with the Waianae Comprehensive Center to hold a mass vaccination for Nanakuli and Waianae Complexes. Over 1100 staff members were vaccinated through this. Some teachers have not been able to get an appointment for their vaccination. The process was akin to trying to buy Bruno Mars tickets on Ticket Master, as I was told by a fellow teacher. If you truly want the schools to reopen safely, then those staff members who desire to get the vaccination, should be given priority and get their vaccination now.

I realize the goal is to have all elementary students return to campus daily, but if we are to maintain the six foot social distancing requirements, no elementary school is equipped to do so. There is only so much space in an elementary classroom that can be utilized for student desks to be placed six feet apart. I have had to reconfigure my room each time I've had more students return to in-person learning. I have room for one more student and any additional students will result in my having to reduce the six foot spacing. I feel like I'm the mask police daily with my second graders. I am continually having to remind them of where their mask needs to be.

I implore you, members of the Board, to ask Superintendent Kishimoto to slow down the roll out of returning to learn in-person so that schools are able to have sufficient PPE and staff who want to have received both shots. Additionally, a message needs to be sent to principals to work in collaboration with their staff to plan a safe return to learning. If students cannot be brought back to in-person learning safely, it should not happen. I get that it's been a year since most students entered a classroom. However, I believe we are reaching a point of exhaustion that will be detrimental to our health and may result in teachers resigning or retiring in high numbers. We are working harder than ever before this year and it would be best if each school made decisions based on their data within the community rather than having every elementary school have all students return as of March 22.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Hadley-Schlusser

Kindergarten through Second Grade Special Education Teacher

Nanaikapono Elementary School



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

Testimony

1 message

Melissa Walsh <melissarwalsh@hotmail.com>

Wed, Mar 3, 2021 at 7:55 PM

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

Melissa Walsh-Middle School and Elementary Parent

Oppose the new return to learn plan, with students returning full time April 12

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing today on behalf of the teachers, students and families of our Hawaii Public School system. I am in complete disagreement with the proposed plan to bring all elementary students back to campus as of April 12, 2021. While I cannot attest to other schools, I can speak for Ewa Beach Elementary. With 20-25 students in a classroom, it will be hard pressed for there to even be a foot between desks. I have personally volunteered extensively in a 5th grade room, and would not feel comfortable in such a room. To place our educators and students in such a room, is a stretch without COVID. Add in the fact we live in Ewa Beach, it is always hot. Our current air conditioning does not last the entire day, kids and students are typically sweating by noon. I can't imagine spending 6 hours in a full room, mask on, too close to others. Such an unnecessary risk for 5-6 weeks. Add in the fact this will be yet another change teachers, students and families will need to adjust to for again 5-6 weeks. Not worth it. Our current system is working for most students, those who it isn't working for have been highlighted and accommodations made. To force families to choose between what many feel is an unsafe option or for their child to be taught by a computer, which is not what we, as parents were told would happen at the beginning of the year, nor is it what a tax dollars are for.

Please consider allowing parents to choose what is best for their child, their family. Please do not put our educators in an impossible situation. Please resume full time in person in August.

Thank you,
Melissa Walsh

Sent from my Galaxy Tab A



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

Angie Baldwin Parent of Special Education Student at Ewa Beach Elementary (preschool) opposed

1 message

Angie Baldwin <elevationangie@gmail.com>
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Mar 3, 2021 at 7:28 PM

Aloha,

I am a parent of a preschool Special Education student at Ewa Beach Elementary and we have been at Distance Learning status this entire school year. We joined the school immediately after Covid started and my son, Oliver Baldwin, has a compromised immune system.

Ewa Beach Elementary has gone above and beyond to include us in all of the curriculum. My daughter attends a private school on island and I am mentioned multiple times that Ewa Beach Elementary has been so much more on top of the curriculum.

I believe that forcing a 100% return to school one month before the year ends will be more detrimental to the students and school. They are already spread so thin, (and I am so grateful that we have been able to stay home and my appreciation for their efforts is incredible) but uprooting this system that is already in place is going to make it so much harder.

As it stands, if school becomes mandatory, I will have to withdraw my son (which for me is easier as it is preschool). Regardless of this ease for me now, if he was older I would still need to withdraw him because his health is more important to me than attending school. I know I am not the only one.

There are so many blended families with at risk family members that are not able to risk their lives. The national news says that we won't be able to vaccinate all of the adults until May, not including children, and Hawaii is behind the curve on vaccinations as is.

Please do not force this change so close to the end of the year. It will only uproot families, further stress teachers and administrators as well as aid in increasing the covid numbers. This is a bad decision.

Mahalo!

Angie Baldwin
808-425-3436



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

Testimony

1 message

Shayne Greenland <shayne.greenland@k12.hi.us>
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Mar 3, 2021 at 7:26 PM

Shayne Greenland - Principal (Ewa Beach Elementary School)

Reopening of Elementary Schools to ALL students - Oppose

Aloha BOE Chairwoman and Members,

Do you realize that many schools like Ewa Beach Elementary School who have chosen the hybrid learning option HAVE and ARE providing in-person learning? EBES is doing this while also implementing mitigation measures to control COVID-19 transmission as the DOH memo states. Currently in our hybrid model, 67% of students attend class either two or four times a week depending on their needs and classroom space availability. The other 23% of our school population participates in online instruction four days a week with a teacher facilitating. EBES offers parents a choice for distance learning or in person-learning for ALL of our learners.

At the beginning of the school year, schools were asked to create their own plans to meet the needs of their families. And that is what we did with little or no guidance from the DOE. Now, that has all changed to a one size fits all plan: every one face to face everyday OR total distance learning with no teacher support. Choosing between the two will cost parents and students at my school. Parents will need to worry that if their child opts to return, they face the possibility of less than 6 feet social distance in class as well as during pick up/drop off areas. Students schedules will need to be adjusted to allow for staggered breaks and lunch. On the other hand should parents choose to continue with total distance learning, students will now be on their own with NO teacher to ask questions to nor any time to participate with other classmates in the classroom type bonding activities.

The consideration of changing our plans at this time of the year creates frustration across the board from students, parents, teachers and administration. EBES has gotten to the point in this COVID race where we are working very well together creating the academic stability and safe campus we know that will best provide for our students and staff. Did anyone stop to think about how this will disrupt the current Cohorts we have developed, the SBA testing schedules, SPED meetings that will need to be updated, movement of the students within the classroom as schools try to balance their numbers in response to parent requests? Staggered lunch, recess, drop off/pickups, bus accommodations, collection and redistribution of Chromebooks... all of this will need to be overhauled for only a month and a half of in person instruction. So much for stability for students who may have to meet a new teacher, or for the teacher that now has to grade students that they have no relationships with. Or for the administration team and support staff that need to redo school schedules and plans yet again. We speak of student voices in schools, listening to the stakeholders who are in the situation because they know what is happening in their particular school situation. Shouldn't the school administration, teachers and staff also have a voice? They are the ones in the trenches and know what it takes to make things work smoothly while at the same time considering the needs of our students.

Does the BOE, DOH & DOE truly understand what is happening at schools right now to make such a blanket prescription? Parents on our school's social media pages are upset that now they have no choice to the plan that is currently being implemented with very little turnaround time. A choice between the physical proximity concerns of a full face to face everyday learning model vs. the choice of total virtual learning with no teacher support or engagement with students doesn't seem like a fair choice to ask them to make. Who is really winning with this change? What are we really gaining by changing now? The health and safety of all stakeholders is still at risk. Mask wearing, social distancing and small cohort size has allowed EBES to be successful in our current plan. EBES could keep its current bell schedule, add additional students on campus learning 4 days a week, continue to service our online students with our own teachers in the afternoon. This would be a very minimal change to our structure that would greatly assist with the teaching and learning of students and the health and safety of all. We have trusted our Principals to make the decisions to this point, why should now be any different?

Thank you in advance for your support,

Shayne Greenland - Principal

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.



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

Mr and Mrs Garrett Rawlins OPPOSE

1 message

Garrett Rawlins <xerxesdvi@gmail.com>

Wed, Mar 3, 2021 at 7:21 PM

To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Cc: Honey <jrawlins77@gmail.com>

To whom it may concern,

I Garrett Rawlins and my wife Janice are the parents of Bria grade 3 and Brent grade 1 OPPOSE the incoming changes regarding full implementation one the 4th quarter of the 2021 school year. We do not see the point of making these changes at the end of the school year. We feel that this is an unnecessary risk we are exposing our children to. To stop all COVID cleanliness controls for no reason is irresponsible and extreme. Please reconsider this decision and help us protect our kids.

Thank you for your consideration,
Mr and Mrs Garrett Rawlins



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

Open Schools

1 message

James Smith <jamesasmith80@gmail.com>

Wed, Mar 3, 2021 at 7:08 PM

To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Good evening,

Please open all schools for all children. I have three children in different grades at different schools and believe this is the best option for them. Please also consider the future employment of any principals that are pushing their own political agenda to keep schools closed.

Thank you



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

Testimony

1 message

Maria Shanahan <mariagshan@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Mar 3, 2021 at 4:28 PM

General business meeting
Agenda item IV A
Comment

Please see below

Begin forwarded message:

From: Maria Shanahan <mariagshan@gmail.com>
Date: March 3, 2021 at 16:23:52 HST
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Subject: Return to in person learning

Aloha,

Although I am in favor of returning to learn in person, I personally believe all students should have been attending school daily from August, I think having students return April 5 places an undue burden on teachers and staff for only about 8 weeks of the remaining school year. Having to change my therapy schedule at this point in the school year or accommodate students who switch to total distance learning just simply isn't possible with the already very limited staffing. Let's just finish the school year in the current blended model and have a clear contingency plan for reopening next school year.

Mahalo for your time.

Maria (Shanahan) Cappello
Speech-Language Pathologist
Kaua'i Complex Area



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

Return to in person learning

1 message

Maria Shanahan <mariagshan@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Mar 3, 2021 at 4:23 PM

Aloha,

Although I am in favor of returning to learn in person, I personally believe all students should have been attending school daily from August, I think having students return April 5 places an undue burden on teachers and staff for only about 8 weeks of the remaining school year. Having to change my therapy schedule at this point in the school year or accommodate students who switch to total distance learning just simply isn't possible with the already very limited staffing. Let's just finish the school year in the current blended model and have a clear contingency plan for reopening next school year.

Mahalo for your time.

Maria (Shanahan) Cappello
Speech-Language Pathologist
Kaua'i Complex Area