

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



DR. CHRISTINA M. KISHIMOTO
SUPERINTENDENT

**STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

July 9, 2020

TO: The Honorable Catherine Payne
Chairperson, Board of Education

FROM: Dr. Christina M. Kishimoto
Superintendent

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "CK", positioned to the right of the name "Dr. Christina M. Kishimoto".

SUBJECT: **Presentation on Department of Education's Comprehensive Plan for Reopening Schools Plan for the 2020-2021 School Year**

BACKGROUND

Across the country, the COVID-19 pandemic continues to create uncertainty in dealing with the economy and public health. Education leaders are facing unprecedented challenges as they transition to new school models to ensure the necessary supports are in place for students to get back on track academically, socially, and emotionally following extended school closures. The Department, at each level of our tri-level system, has taken the necessary steps to mitigate the potential effects of COVID-19 on our public school system. Various actions at the school, complex area, and state office levels have led to significant changes in the Department's approach to addressing the unique needs of our schools' learning environments, support services and business functions.

As the Department moves forward in our commitment to reopen schools on August 4, 2020 for the Fall semester, we know that the delivery of instruction in Hawaii, the nation and the world is going to look very different. Our HIDOE 'ohana has been diligently working on plans for the new school year, growing from this experience and applying lessons learned toward our commitment to equity of access and quality education.

RETURN TO LEARN: SCHOOL REOPENING PLAN

The State of Hawaii is required to plan and prepare for disasters and emergencies that may result from a wide variety of threats and hazards. Established in June 2019, the Department's Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) is an all-hazards plan that establishes a single, comprehensive framework for the coordination of authority, responsibility, and support from the Department. When directed, we will take the appropriate actions to mobilize and deploy

AN AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

resources to assist in life, safety, and property protection efforts in accordance with the State of Hawaii Emergency Operations Plan (HI-EOP). The Pandemic Contagious Virus Plan, which was revised in March 2020, provides extensive guidance for the Department in dealing with any pandemic threat to our schools and offices.

The HIDOE Emergency Operations Plan can be viewed at:

<http://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/DOE%20Forms/HIDOE%20Emergency%20Operations%20Plan.pdf>

The HIDOE Pandemic Contagious Virus Plan can be viewed at:

<http://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/DOE%20Forms/HIDOE%20Pandemic%20Contagious%20Virus%20Plan.pdf>

As we continue to be impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department has also been developing a comprehensive set of actions for the reopening of our schools. The *Return to Learn: School Reopening Plan* is the Department's plans for safely welcoming our students and teachers back to campus in Fall 2020. The plan articulates the scope of work required to respond to health and safety issues while implementing the Hawaii State Board of Education's call to action for our school communities to give hope, act with kindness, and work toward togetherness. The *Return to Learn: School Reopening Plan* contains seven main areas of work and resources that help guide Department decision-making:

- **Health and Safety:** Utilizing guidance from the Hawaii State Department of Health (DOH), reopening plans include cleaning and sanitation, campus visitors, personal protective equipment (PPE) and more.
- **School Design:** The Department remains committed to working with school communities to ensure that school design decisions and modifications prioritize and support the needs of students and their families during this uncertain time.
- **Equity and Access:** The Department is committed to providing access to a high-quality education for all students regardless of geographic location, economic status, academic ability or language proficiency. Part of this commitment includes investing in technology to provide equitable access to devices and connectivity at school and at home.
- **Operations:** The Department is working to ensure that all systems are functioning as needed to allow for on-site and distance learning.
- **Staff Capacity:** Maintaining staff capacity and performance during these uncertain times remains a priority for the Department.
- **Family and Community:** The Department seeks to strengthen our community bonds through a variety of initiatives, including training opportunities for families around distance learning, providing technology support and telehealth services, and partnering with business and industry to provide more design-based learning opportunities.
- **Contingency Planning:** As the Department moves forward with reopening schools, we continue to plan for the possibility of additional interruptions to the school year as a result of COVID-19 and regularly update and review our contingency plans.

The *Return to Learn: School Reopening Plan* can be viewed at:

<http://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/ConnectWithUs/MediaRoom/PressReleases/Pages/school-year-2020-21.aspx>

The pandemic has presented us with the opportunity to transform equity of access within our public education system by making permanent innovative improvements to our digital learning approaches to better engage our students, particularly our most vulnerable learners. The Department plans to accelerate digital transformation to enable more individualized academic experiences for our students, continuing our focus on the modernization of our technology infrastructure to support quality teaching and learning using new modalities. On August 4, 2020, we will launch the new Ohana Help Desk, our technical support to families who are critical partners in our keiki's success.

The *HIDOE Digital Transformation for Learning Plan 2020-21: Accelerating Digital Transformation* can be viewed at:

<http://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/DOE%20Forms/Digital%20Learning/DigitalTransformationforLearningPlan.pdf>

As the situation evolves and as new guidance becomes available, the Department will continue to adjust our plans to ensure that we are providing a safe learning and working environment for our entire HIDOE 'ohana within the context of our learning organization and mission.

HEALTH AND SAFETY HANDBOOK

As the Department prepares for the opening of the 2020-2021 school year, the Department continues to be proactive and agile in its tri-level response to the COVID-19 pandemic across schools, complex areas, and state offices. This *Health and Safety Handbook* provides guidelines to ensure the continuity of learning on healthy and safe campuses and serves as a supplement to the *Return to Learn: School Reopening Plan*.

The *Health and Safety Handbook* can be viewed at:

[http://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/DOE%20Forms/2020-07%20Health%20and%20Safety%20Handbook%20\(SY%202020-21\)%20Version%201.pdf](http://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/DOE%20Forms/2020-07%20Health%20and%20Safety%20Handbook%20(SY%202020-21)%20Version%201.pdf)

The Department is committed to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) duty of care, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Hawaii State Department of Health guidelines by following safety precautions and worker protection in the work environment. Consistent with state policies, specifically Board Policy 1110-6 and 302A-1509, Hawaii Revised Statutes, the Department's response efforts focus on the following to cover the work and learning environments, including the employee working from home during COVID-19.

During this time of uncertainty and crisis, there are a few assumptions that must be made to achieve our main objective:

1. COVID-19 will not be totally eliminated; there will always be cases in our communities.
2. Every COVID-19 case cannot be prevented; we need to manage spreading the disease.
3. Development of a vaccine would greatly reduce disease incidence.

Creating and maintaining optimal learning environments for all students while minimizing the risk of spreading infectious diseases, including COVID-19 is our main objective. This handbook is a living document that will continue to be updated as conditions change throughout the 2020-2021 school year.

PRINCIPAL HANDBOOK

The Department has also developed a detailed *Principal Handbook* for our school leaders that will help guide them in implementing our *Return to Learn* plan. Our public schools are the central hub within each neighborhood of parental engagement and student success; thus, our school leaders will need to ensure the health and safety of their students, employees, families, and communities during these changing times.

For School Year 2020-21, school leaders created elementary, middle/intermediate, and high school models for the reopening of the school year to ensure adherence to the health and safety guidelines. Each school model adopted must:

- Ensure 180 days of instruction;
- Prioritize Kindergarten through Grade 2 and Pre-Kindergarten students for face-to-face learning on campus (as applicable);
- Prioritize vulnerable students, including but not limited to children with disabilities, English learners, and economically disadvantaged students, for face-to-face or online learning, as appropriate, on campus;
- Allow for student support services to be provided;
- Ensure compliance with social distancing and health and sanitation guidelines from state health officials and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); and
- Abide by the current collective bargaining agreements between the labor unions and Department.

In selecting a model, schools considered the delivery of instruction (face-to-face, online, hybrid/blended); the bell schedule; the impact on school operations, such as bus transportation and the delivery of meals to all students; the impact on personnel; and the delivery of non-academic learning activities such as social emotional learning.

The *Principal Handbook* can be viewed at:

[http://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/DOE%20Forms/Principal%20Handbook%20on%20Reopening%20Schools%20\(SY%202020-21\)%20Version%202.pdf](http://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/DOE%20Forms/Principal%20Handbook%20on%20Reopening%20Schools%20(SY%202020-21)%20Version%202.pdf)

REPORTING

The reopening of the schools' data system and school performance reports will inform tri-level decisions, plans and implementation of programs or processes. Data used for reporting and progress monitoring will be used judiciously in collaborative discussions and efforts.

The Department has outlined the metrics that we will collect, the method for collecting data, and the timeline for reporting the described metrics. These metrics are designed to provide data about the progress of implementation for the BOE priorities with the reopening of schools. Reports will be submitted on a monthly basis, beginning September 30, 2020, to ensure timely and accurate information essential for strategic decision-making for the Department and the Board of Education, including data to inform the public and stakeholders about system status, needs and concerns.

For the sake of our haumana, the Department continues to promote a supportive and collegial environment that includes in-depth data analysis and discussions before recommendations are made.

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

As the 10th largest school district in the nation and the only State Education Agency and Local Education Agency, HIDOE and its schools are charged with communicating to a wide range of audiences, including 22,000 full-time employees, 20,000 part-time employees, 180,000 students and their families, government officials, community partners and more.

The Department uses a diverse toolkit of communication channels to enhance engagement and ensure that the majority of its internal and external stakeholders can be reached during a crisis situation.

Statewide Communication

HIDOE will continue to share statewide updates about the 2020-21 school year and COVID-19 impacts, including school and office closures, on its public website, intranet and social media channels (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn). Internal updates will also be emailed to official k12.hi.us Google accounts as needed.

Due to the large number of employees, students and families served by the Department, there will be situations where important and urgent messages are communicated through traditional media including news stations, newspapers and radio.

The statewide leadership team made up of key superintendents and key directors meeting twice a week for briefings and decision making. Complex area superintendents are charged with communicating with their complex area team and school leaders.

Multiple forms of communication and feedback loops are utilized for issue-based recommendations and includes:

- Deputy Superintendent's Principal Roundtable
- Principals' forums (e.g., elementary, middle/intermediate and high school)
- COVID-19 Response Team
- Situational crisis response teams

School-level Communication

Schools are encouraged to create a communications timeline to share information and updates about the 2020-21 school year with key school community stakeholders (e.g. staff, parents, students, area lawmakers, partners, vendors, etc.).

Key messages and updates that schools should anticipate communicating include, but are not limited to:

- Selection of school model;
- Updated school handbook;
- Health and safety guidelines;
- Updated school supply lists in response to COVID-19 impacts;
- Loaner devices;
- Potential positive COVID-19 case;

- Changes in school processes and procedures (e.g., pick-up and drop-off routines, campus visitors).

Schools should audit their communication channels to ensure that they are working properly, the appropriate staff have access and log-in information, contacts are up to date, and to determine whether or not additional channels are needed to communicate with internal and external school community audiences.

Communication channels include:

- SchoolMessenger
- Social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube)
- HIDOE Gmail
- School website
- HIDOE-approved education applications

HIDOE's Communications Branch is tasked with providing support during crisis situations including media relations, school-level messaging such as letters to parents and staff, SchoolMessenger copy, and coordinating a communications response with Department leadership.

In the event of an emergency or crisis situation, schools should follow communication protocols in HIDOE's Emergency Operations Plan.

The HIDOE Emergency Operations Plan can be viewed at:

<http://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/DOE%20Forms/HIDOE%20Emergency%20Operations%20Plan.pdf>

If media contacts a school, administrators are encouraged to work with the Communications Branch to ensure accurate and timely information is provided while also protecting student and employee privacy, as required by law.

Communications Branch contacts:

- Main phone line: (808) 784-6200 (staffed Monday through Friday, 7:45 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.)
- Email address: doeinfo@k12.hi.us (monitored Monday through Friday, 7:45 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.; however, in an emergency situation it is not recommended to email this account.)
- For after-hour emergencies, administrators should make sure they have the cell phone number for the Communications Director. If not, they can contact (808) 784-6200 during business hours to get it or work with their complex area superintendent.

FISCAL UPDATE

Financial support for the implementation of schools' academic and financial plans while responding to the logistical challenges posed by on-going COVID-19 pandemic is expected to come from:

- **Existing budget appropriations for the fiscal year (FY) 2020-21** contained in Senate Bill 126, which was passed by the Legislature on June 26, 2020. None of the Board of Education's requests for additional funding were approved, including for projected

shortfalls for electricity and workers' compensation, and \$100.2 million of state funding was reduced for various payroll and specific and lump-sum non-payroll expenses. As a result, this bill provides less state support for operations compared to the prior fiscal year. Further confounding strategic planning is the potential of restriction (withholding) imposed on these appropriations by the State Department of Budget and Finance. Preliminary State Budget Execution instructions for FY 2020-21 call for release to the Department of first-quarter funding only with a "temporary" restriction of 10%. The Department has initiated the distribution of first-quarter funding to facilitate continued preparation by schools and offices for the opening of schools for School Year 2020-21.

- **Unspent prior-year appropriated funds (carryover).** Schools and offices were encouraged to reduce spending in the last quarter of FY 2019-20, which is how the Department anticipates managing the \$50.0 million budget cut to state support contained in S.B. 126 for FY 2019-20. Any available balances of state funds remaining at the end of FY 2019-20 will be carried over directly to schools to be used in FY 2020-21, or, in the case of funds that were not allocated to schools, carried over centrally to be used to manage projected program shortfalls. Details on available carryover funds will be reported on when they are available.
- **Reprioritization of available funds.** Over the course of FY 2020-21, expenditures will be closely monitored and scrutinized to facilitate the reprogramming of limited resources to support high priority activities.
- **Assistance from the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency (Hi-EMA).** To the extent possible, the Department will continue to seek the direct provision of personal protective equipment (PPE) and health and safety supplies from Hi-EMA, as well as reimbursements through Hi-EMA for expenditures made for these purposes by schools and offices.
- **Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund.** The federal funds appropriated in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act and awarded directly to the Department are ESSER Funds. This \$43.4 million award represents approximately 2% of the Department's annual operating budget. Since awarded on May 14, 2020, these funds have provided a reliable source of support during very fiscally uncertain times, allowing the Department to commit to several strategic and leveraged investments to support schools during the pandemic. The following is a summary of the approved uses as of June 29, 2020:
<http://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/DOE%20Forms/budget/HIDOE-CARES-Act-ESSER-Funds.pdf>
- **(New) Federal Grants and Donations.** The Department will continue to seek additional resources from federal grants and private donations and, to the extent possible, seek to leverage these funds to support school operations. Examples of these federal sources include the CARES Act appropriations for the Coronavirus Relief Fund, which are also known as State and County Assistance funds, and the Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund.
- **(Potential) Additional Federal COVID Response Funds.** The Department continues to remain cautiously optimistic that in the months ahead, as the financial fallout from the pandemic mount, Congress will authorize additional assistance for a variety of purposes, including support for state governments and school districts in particular.

The Honorable Catherine Payne
July 9, 2020
Page 8

As a system, we will remain agile and responsive to the evolving logistical and operational challenges due to the COVID pandemic, and will address budgetary challenges by prioritizing and preserving financial support for the implementation of schools' academic and financial plans.

Our plan for the reopening of schools and maintaining quality educational programs will be updated in response to changing conditions and guidance received from the Hawaii State Department of Health to ensure that we are providing a safe learning and working environment for our HIDOE 'ohana, within the context of our learning organization and mission.

Mahalo for your support and dedication to our haumana. By working together, we can deliver on the promise of public education to Hawaii's students.

CMK:cm

c: Phyllis Unebasami, Deputy Superintendent
Assistant Superintendents