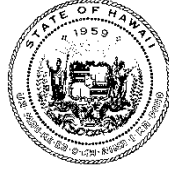


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**STATE OF HAWAII  
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August 18, 2022

TO: Board of Education

FROM: Bruce Voss  
Chairperson, Board of Education

AGENDA ITEM: Board Member Report on events attended: (1) July 15, 2022 Hawaii Business Roundtable Early Learning Forum; (2) July 29, 2022 Board Community Meeting; (3) August 12, 2022 Hawaii Education Research Networking meeting

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**July 15, 2022 Hawaii Business Roundtable Early Learning Forum**

Board Members Lynn Fallin, Kili Namau'u, and Makana McClellan attended the Hawaii Business Roundtable Early Learning Forum on July 15, 2022 which provided an update on the status of efforts to achieve the goal of 100% access to early learning by 2032 as outlined in Act 46. The panel was comprised of the following individuals:

- Jordana Ferreira, Executive Office of Early Learning;
- Chad Keone Farias, Hawaii State School Facilities Authority;
- Heidi Armstrong, Hawaii Department of Education;
- Dr. Nathan Murata, College of Education at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, and
- Dr. Terry Lock, Hawaii Early Childhood Educator Excellence and Equity Project at the University of Hawaii.

Board Members Fallin, Namau'u, and McClellan will provide an oral report on this event.

**July 29, 2022 Board Community Meeting**

The Board held a community meeting in July with the primary purpose of discussing communication between schools and families and share other general concerns. The community meeting occurred in the City and County of Honolulu on July 25, 2022 at the Pearl City Highlands Elementary School cafeteria (located at 1419 Waimano Home Road, Pearl City, Hawaii) from 6:00-7:00 p.m. I hosted the meeting with Board Members Lynn Fallin, Makana McClellan, and Bill Arakaki. There were approximately 60

attendees which included the superintendent, assistant superintendents, complex area superintendent, principals, vice principals, teachers, parents, guardians, and students. Attendees broke into small group and discussed communication issues and solutions. Attendees reconvened and shared communication solutions and next steps and discussed general concerns. Attached as **Exhibit A** is a distillation of the notes that were generated during the small group session and the solutions shared when the group reconvened. I organized the concerns into five general categories, transparency, timely communication, communication access, engaging families, and tri-level system. Board Members Fallin, McClellan, Arakaki and I will also provide an oral report on this event.

**August 12, 2022 Hawaii Education Research Networking meeting**

Board Members Bill Arakaki, Lynn Fallin, Kili Namau'u, and I attended the Hawaii Education Research Networking event held on August 12, 2022 to engage on thoughtful reflection about research partnerships across Hawaii.

## **Exhibit A**

### **July 29, 2022 Board Community Meeting on communication**

#### **CONCERNS**

##### **Transparency** Families want . . .

- To understand the data, research, and decision-making process behind Department decisions relating to things like curriculum, resource materials, and controversial issues.
- Advance communication when the Department is implementing a program or approach and want to be able to review material in advance.
- Options and accommodations for their children if they do not agree with what is being taught or the Department's requirements.
- To be able to visit school campuses and classrooms.
- The Department to look at the practical situation (students mingling on buses and playgrounds) and not the organizational divisions (classrooms) when determining which families to notify of possible exposure to infectious diseases.
- Clear communication of the circumstances under which a school will not communicate sensitive student matters to families, like those relating to gender identity.

##### **Timely Communication** Families want . . .

- Schools to notify them of changes before the start of the school year so they have time to consider any changes and make decisions.
- To receive information well in advance of the opening of the school year.
- The Department to use news media to get information out quickly.
- Schools to identify a communication coordinator or spokesperson at schools.
- Information that is accessible and easy to understand.
- Schools to proactively reach out to families before there is an issue.

##### **Communication Access** Families want . . .

- More translators and Bilingual School Home Assistants to address language access issues.
- An understanding of the challenges parents and guardians face when engaging with schools (jobs, language barriers) and finding ways to address these challenges.
- Schools to think about how to inform families that do not have access.
- Schools to figure out the best methods of communication (email, phone call, texting, virtual meetings) and determine the effectiveness of the communication through monitoring.
- A clear way to raise issues and complaints, share ideas, and get action on ideas.
- A way to provide input on issues outside of a Board agenda.
- A strategic approach to language access issues, like using data to identify widely spoken languages and translate as many resources as possible into these languages.

### **Engaging Families** Families want . . .

- A clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of families and schools.
- To hear directly from Superintendent to build trust.
- Proactive, periodic interactions between families and schools to strengthen ties, especially in secondary schools.
- To be engaged when the Department is developing things like health and safety guidelines.

### **Tri-level System** Families want . . .

- To understand how and when schools send out communications and when the larger Department system sends out communications and how these communications are coordinated.
- A systemic and strategic approach at the complex area or state level to track and analyze issues across all schools and pass that information to the relevant decision-maker.
- Consistency of rules and information across all schools.
- To have a voice at the state level and to be engaged in the decision-making process.
- More School Community Council (“SCC”) meetings and greater awareness of SCCs.
- Formation of or increased participation in parent or guardian, teacher, and/or student organizations.
- Community forums or meetings at the complex and district levels.
- Contact information for all levels of the Department (school, complex area, state) more readily available, particularly teacher contact information.

### **POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS SHARED**

- Parent liaison to help families navigate schools.
- Building up awareness of SCCs.
- Push information out to families statewide.
- Orientations and school meet-and-greets before school starts.
- Discuss curriculum at back-to-school events.
- Principals talking to families about programs.
- Ensuring consistent communications and policies.
- Ensure translations are done in a timely manner.
- Use multiple modes of communication (news media, email, phone, text) with the same message to reach as many people as possible.
- Allow families to provide input on controversial issues.
- Explain curriculum development and vetting process.
- Regular virtual or in-person meetings between teachers, administration, and families.
- Having more engaged parents and guardians reaching out to others.

- Changes to the Board's meeting schedule to make it easier for families to participate in meetings.
- Use existing resources, like churches, cultural groups, community groups, PTAs, and other parents and guardians to reach out to families.
- Ensuring parent voice is included in decision-making at the state level.